

Saint Patrick's Catholic Primary School



Mission Statement

St. Patrick's Catholic Primary School offers distinctive education within a caring Christian community where everyone can feel valued, confident and secure.

We believe that each person is gifted, unique and loved by God. By working in partnership, we create a challenging, stimulating and effective learning environment where Christ is our inspiration.

Spirituality Policy

Adopted date: 25.3.21	Ratified date: 02.3.23
Who ratified: P&S	Next Review: Spring 2025
Head teacher Signature Ann-Marie McGough	Chair of Governors' Signature: Catherine Hennis

Mission Statement:

Loving- Laughing- Learning
We are God's Amazing Gifts

Introduction:

In contrast to other school policies for specific curriculum areas, this policy relates to the whole life of the school. It is promoted through all the subjects of the curriculum; it reflects our approach to teaching and learning; and its promotion is influenced by the quality of relationships and the experiences of prayer and worship. Spiritual development is intrinsically linked with moral, social and cultural development.

Rationale:

The Education Reform Act (1988) requires the curriculum of a maintained school to 'promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school'

The connection between high standards in the curriculum and effective spiritual development is widely recognised and is evident in many OFSTED and Diocesan inspections.

Spiritual development is at the heart of Catholic education and therefore at the heart of our school: being called to nurture the human wholeness of all our children calls us to ensure that we develop all aspects of our children.

Definition of Spiritual Development:

We believe that spiritual development is a significant aspect of educating 'the whole child'. It relates to the search for meaning and purpose in our existence in God. It is associated with feelings and emotions, and attitudes and beliefs. It is accessible to everyone and is rooted in our Catholic Christian faith. (See Appendix 1 for some further definitions)

Aims of Spiritual Development:

- The ability to listen and be still
- The ability to sense the sacred, the holy, our God
- The ability to sense wonder and mystery
- The ability to sense the special nature of human relationships
- The ability to transcend the mundane
- The ability to reflect and to appreciate beauty

Objectives for Spiritual Development:

- To develop the skill of being physically still, yet alert
- To develop the ability to use all of one's senses
- To consider the mystery of God, to relate to the person of Jesus and the wonder of God's world
- To find an inner self confidence and peace
- To develop in individuals a self-confidence to express inner thoughts in a variety of ways
- To encourage quiet reflection during a lesson or assembly
- To promote an awareness of and enjoyment in using one's imagination and creativity
- To promote the ability to form good relationships with others

Opportunities for Spiritual Development:

Staff will provide a role model to children by sharing in the joy of discovery and in the wonder of creation. Our enthusiasm for education that truly nurtures human wholeness will be significant in creating the appropriate ethos for the human spirit to thrive.

1. Within the curriculum, children will be able to explore:

- An imaginative approach to God's world

- A spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness
- A recognition of the presence of God everywhere, with no distinction between the sacred and the ordinary

2. Opportunities will be provided for children to:

- Express their creativity and imagination
- Foster a sense of respect for the integrity of each person
- Engage in an atmosphere that encourages them to talk freely about their feelings and beliefs
- Experience a variety of formal, informal and spontaneous prayer, meditation and retreats
- Experience awe and wonder, excitement and enjoyment
- Understand human feelings and emotions
- Experience, silence, stillness and reflection and to learn from reflection
- Develop the skill of journaling and have regular opportunities (especially in KS2) to journal
- Experience and appreciate a range of music, art, literature, designed to 'lift the spirit'
- Participate, as appropriate, in the life of our parish community from which the school is derived

Teaching and learning

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues the aims and objectives by ensuring:

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values;
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life;
- Unplanned and spontaneous spiritual opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and children;
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this;
- A solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed;
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer;
- That children's spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies making use of the outdoor environment and relevant educational visits;
- The provision of opportunities to listen attentively and observe carefully, listening with discernment, valuing what is good and worthwhile and making judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas;
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others;
- That moral development is linked to spiritual development through strategies such as 'windows, mirrors and doors' (see Appendix 2);
- That the outstanding RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives;
- That children are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and to develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished and protected;
- Promotion of strategies for positive mental health (see Appendix 3).

Role of Co-ordinator

The named co-ordinator has responsibility for overseeing the planning, provision and the monitoring and evaluation of spiritual development. The co-ordinator will keep in touch with local, diocesan and national developments and will act in an advisory capacity, supporting and encouraging colleagues. Specifically, the co-ordinator will identify and purchase appropriate resources; identify and plan appropriate staff development and reflection.

Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to children for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways;

- Observing and listening to children
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values;
- Sharing of classroom work and practice
- Ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school by providing them with induction and development training
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflective diary, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art
- Regular inclusion in the SEF
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools

Responsibilities:

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that this spiritual development policy is put into practice and monitored by the appropriate governor. The governing Body will review this policy, formally, every two years from the date of its adoption. Informal review will be on-going and will be the responsibility of the co-ordinator.

Appendix 1 Examples of a variety of definitions of spirituality

The examples below are intended to be a starting point for discussion as, 'the school community applies its own understanding of spiritual development so that teachers have the confidence and ability to move beyond planned opportunities to make the most of questions raised by the curiosity of pupils and opportunities that occur spontaneously across the curriculum' SIAMS schedule April 2018.

Spirituality is finding God in all things.

Spirituality is about being contemplative in action (or enabling reflective practice).

Spirituality is about freedom and detachment, helping us not being tied down by unimportant things and keep mindful of important things such as God and other people i.e. not 'things and accomplishments'

Spirituality is the inward journey, a move towards the depths of our being, where, according to the mystics, God is experienced.

Spirituality enables us to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves.

Spirituality is the nurturing of the inner life of the soul of a child, enabling and embracing their questions, doubts and wonder of existence.

Spirituality is a way of living in a relationship with God

'Within the Christian tradition all spiritualities have the same focus, union with God, an emphasis on love and a belief in Jesus as the Son of God. But each spirituality emphasis different aspects of the tradition which over time have become Schools (of Spirituality) e.g. Franciscan, Catholic, Evangelical.' James Martin

'Spirituality is like a bridge. Every bridge does pretty much the same things - gets you from one place to another, sometime over perilous ground, a river, or great heights. However, they do so in different ways. They might be built of rope, wood, bricks, steel or suspension bridges. Like bridges, every spirituality offers you a distinctive passage to God. 'James Martin

Christian spirituality is a life nurtured on the example of Jesus Christ and his care for others

Our capacity for being – God's ways of being with us and our ways of being with God.

Or our capacity for:

- being in a relationship with God and God with us,
- nurturing our awareness of God being with us,
- being attentive to God being with us.

Our capacity for being, recognising, and supporting God's ways of being with children, and their ways of being with God.

Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life, which affect everyone. Whilst these questions are not dependent on religious affiliation or on the prerogative of religions, religion explains and addresses the fundamental questions, which affect everyone.

The term spiritual and moral development needs to be seen as applying something fundamental in the human condition, which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and /or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death or suffering. It is a way of coping with challenges and recognising success and happiness, enabling a child to flourish.

God's way of being with children and children's way of being with God

The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in their discussion paper point out that "spiritual" is not synonymous with "religious". All areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development. Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life, which affect everyone, and is not dependant on a religious affiliation.

It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live

Having a higher awareness and deeper awareness and concern for others in the world around us.

An increasing awareness of the concept of others. A growing sense of empathy, concern, compassion, and an ability to reflect on how their values and principles affect their relationships with others.

Spirituality is an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful and, in relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving. The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and praise, in endeavour and enquiry.

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experience beyond the everyday. Spiritual learners search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.

The search for God in response to God's search for us.

Sources and further reading:

Children's Spirituality – what it is and why it matters? - Rebecca Nye with quotations from Gerald May , Rowan Williams and Jo Anne Taylor

The Diocese of Salisbury Derek Holloway and David Rickett

The Diocese of Exeter

Making sense of spiritual development – David Smith

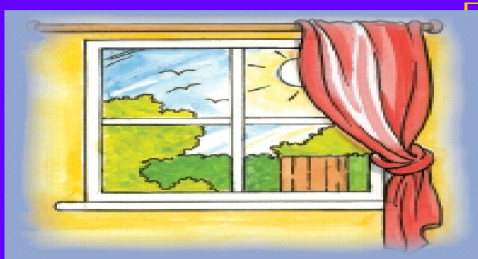
More than Caring and Sharing. Making a church school distinctive – John Cox

Ofsted SCAA discussion paper

Adams, K, Hyde B, Wooley R (2008) The Spiritual Dimension of Childhood. London and Philadelphia: Jessica Kingsley Publishers

Appendix 2 Windows, mirrors and doors approach to spirituality. (Taken from Salisbury Diocese Sprituality Policy – Derek Holloway/Andrew Rickett 2012)

WINDOWS:



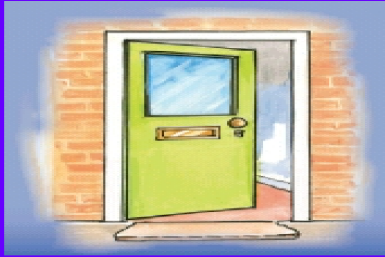
giving children opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways; to **wonder** about life's 'WOWs' (things that are amazing) and 'OWs' (things that bring us up short). In this children are learning *about* life in all its fullness.

MIRRORS:



giving children opportunities to *reflect* on their experiences; to **meditate** on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. In this they are learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

DOORS:



- giving children opportunities to *respond* to all of this; to *do* something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to *live* by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value.

Appendix 3 Extract from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Guidance; Advice for Schools and SIAMS Inspectors 2018

1. Spirituality and mental health

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published some useful guidance on spirituality and mental health where they identify ways in which some aspects of spirituality can offer real benefits for mental health. They identify spirituality as being within and beyond formal religion and recognise that it 'often becomes more important to people in times of emotional stress and physical and mental illness, loss, bereavement and the approach to death.

They recommend that a person with a religious belief may need support which acknowledges and gives space to their faith as part of their support. Schools should therefore look to provide opportunities for inclusive spiritual development that supports good mental health as well as opportunities to learn from people of different faiths and beliefs about how their spirituality shapes them and supports their mental health and wellbeing. Religious Education, which offers the opportunity for young people to engage with a diversity of people, can support this. Schools would also benefit from building relationships with the religious leaders in their community.