



# Spiritual Development Policy

<i>Policy approved by</i>	<i>(Governing Body)</i>	<i>Date: July 2020</i>
<i>Policy implemented on</i>		<i>Date: July 2020</i>
<i>Policy review date</i>		<i>Date: July 2023</i>

## **Rationale**

Spirituality is a powerful force that determines what we are, and our self-understanding. It forms the basis for successful relationships, and shapes our behaviour and outlook on life, others and the world.

Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which we acquire insight into our personal experiences which are of enduring worth.

At Milldown Church of England Primary School the spiritual dimension is expressed through our strong Christian faith, and the recognition of the spiritual nature of mankind. Spirituality concerns a person's relationship with themselves, with others, with God (or the transcendent), and with nature and the environment. These four elements: self; others; transcendence and beauty form the basis of our work with children in developing a strong sense of spirituality.

It is also vital that all of the adults in school also see the need to develop their own spirituality for their own wellbeing, and so that they can effectively support and help our children and each other.

### **The four elements - what these consist of:**

#### **Self**

- Awareness of feelings; ability to reflect and express
- Awareness of our uniqueness; happiness with who we are
- Gratitude for the things we have and the person we are
- Exploration of personal faith
- Development of imagination and creativity

#### **Others**

- Empathy and understanding; respect, tolerance
- To love and be loved (loving your neighbour)
- Making a difference; duty

#### **Transcendence (Beyond)**

- Encountering/experiencing God (having a sense of what lies beyond the material/physical)
- Ability to formulate and discuss the 'Big Questions' (eg about life, death, suffering, nature of God)
- Opportunities for prayer, connecting with God
- Making sense of the world

#### **Beauty**

- Developing a sense of awe and wonder

- Enjoying the miracles of everyday life
- Taking time for what really matters
- Appreciating beauty in art, music, nature

Our ethos enables and encourages all children to grow and flourish spiritually.

It is our aim that the children's individual spiritual development is fostered as an integral element of the range of learning opportunities and experiences they encounter as part of the curriculum, and that it permeates all strands of school life.

Our policy has been influenced by David Smith's work for the Stapleford Centre 'Making sense of Spiritual Development' 1999.

He suggested four windows into spiritual development:-

- **Spiritual Capacities:** recognition that all human beings are capable of spiritual growth through capacities such as self-awareness, reflection, empathy, imagination and creativity.
- **Spiritual Experiences:** ways in which pupils can encounter the spiritual dimension of life
- **Spiritual Understanding:** the need to have developed an understanding to make sense of the spiritual experiences encountered and capacities exercised
- **Spiritual responses:** how this experience and understanding impacts on our lives and shapes the way in which we live our lives.

Our school utilises the work of Liz Mills who again worked with the Stapleford Centre. Liz developed the concept of the Spiritual Ring Doughnut.



The Doughnut represents the Whole Child. The outer ring is the tangible (Mind and Body), the hole represents the intangible (Spirit) but if there was no hole it wouldn't be a doughnut. This remains perhaps the best definition of spiritual development; it is the exploration and development of that hole in our centre that makes us whole.

Liz also took David Smith's work a stage further by refining the windows concept into a 'Windows Mirrors Doors'. We use this representation within our curriculum to support spiritual development.

**Window:**

Opportunities to look out on the world to gaze and wonder: The Wow and Ows moments. The things we find amazing and bring us up short.



Encounter: The learning about life

**Mirrors:**

Giving opportunities for children to reflect, to look inward to consider some of the big questions of life: To explore their own insights and those of others.



Reflection: The learning from.

**Doors:**

Giving opportunities to children to respond, to do something to go through the door of a creative expression of their own thoughts and convictions.



Transformation: The learning to live by putting into action what they believe.

**Aims**

The aims for spirituality at Milldown Church of England Primary School are:

- To provide a context of faith, security and loving relationships to support each child's spiritual search.

- To foster the spiritual development of each child, regardless of age, sex, ability or cultural background.
- To foster self-awareness and promote a feeling of self-worth.
- To develop a set of values, principles and beliefs.
- To develop positive human qualities.
- To develop respect and empathy for other people and their beliefs.
- To foster a respect for different people's feelings and values.
- To develop the children's enthusiasm to explore and learn through enquiry and first hand experiences.
- To enable the children to attribute meaning to experiences.
- To enable the children to value the non-material dimension of life.
- To foster reflection and stillness.
- To foster a sense of meaning, purpose and direction in life.
- To encourage imagination and creativity.
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder at the miracle of creation, life and the natural world.
- To enable the children to experience a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them, including the intangible.
- To share Christian stories and respond to Christian festivals, rituals and symbols, particularly those from the Anglican tradition.

### **Organisation and Implementation**

Spiritual development is an important element of a child's education and fundamental to all other areas of learning.

Without curiosity, without the inclination to question, and without the exercise of imagination, insight and intuition, children would lack the motivation to learn. In view of this teaching styles are adopted which:

- Value the children's questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.
- Enable the children to make connections between aspects of their learning.
- Encourage the children to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference, e.g. asking 'why?', 'how?', and 'where?' as well as 'what?'.
- To encourage the children to reflect and act upon new learning and experiences via curriculum symbolisms of 'windows', 'mirrors' and 'doors'.

Spirituality is not taught, but is an inherent interwoven part of all aspects of school life and is nurtured and promoted as a natural element of the curriculum.

The following opportunities will be made available, as an integral part of the school's practice, in order to facilitate the development of spirituality:

- To explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives.
- Where children already have religious beliefs, to support and develop these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them as an integral part of the school's practice.
- To engage in enquiry and exploration as part of experiential, first hand learning.
- To look attentively and observe carefully.
- To be creative and imaginative.
- To listen with discernment.
- To reflect and respond to issues in moments of quiet or inspired through music, art, text, film or artefacts.
- To explore and develop what animates themselves and others.
- To understand human feelings and emotions, the way they impact on people and how an understanding of them can be helpful.
- To value what is good and worthwhile and to make value judgements through discussion and exchange of views.
- To work collaboratively with peers, valuing the contribution made by others.
- To respect all, as modelled by staff in their relationships with others.
- To experience silent, calm and tranquil moments which afford time for reflection.
- To work and live in harmony with others in the school and wider community.
- To have confidence to express ideas, views and opinions, even if others do not agree.

Opportunities for spiritual development are presented or naturally arise, and are promoted in all aspects of the curriculum and school life as the children become actively engaged in an enquiry based curriculum, which provides a wide range of experiential learning opportunities that enables them to question, consider, reflect and respond, and consider their own values, beliefs and feelings and those of others, with whom they are working alongside or with.

Our School Christian Values - based on The Fruits of The Spirit - allow our school community to live out these values in school creating a secure understanding of what they look like in real life.

Our Curriculum 6Cs ensure that children are given the opportunities to develop creativity, critical thinking, collaboration, communication, an understanding and value of a community and to develop interpersonal skills via our Christian Values.

Outlined below are some of the key ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted as part of the curriculum:

In Physical Education:

- Being a team member.
- Pushing yourself to the limits.
- Extremes of skill, endurance and achievement.
- Emotion in sport.
- Personal limitation and failure.
- Appreciation of perfection.
- Sportsmanship.

In Design and Technology:

- Discovering how something works.
- Appreciating genius.
- Beauty in design.
- Perseverance to solve problems.
- Personal achievement.
- Learning from others and nature.

In Literacy:

- Empathy with authors and the characters in stories and plays.
- The appreciation of beauty in language.
- Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech.
- The values of great works.
- Heroes and heroines in literature.
- Imagining oneself as someone else.
- Escaping into other worlds through literature.
- The element of wonder in literature.

#### In Numeracy:

- Infinity and nothing.
- Pattern and order.
- Shape and regularity.
- Truth, certainty and likelihood.
- The universality of mathematics over time and space.
- The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations.

#### In Science:

- Wonder as the basis of science.
- Questions of beginning, creation and evolution.
- Discovering the limits of experimentation.
- Birth, life, death and renewal.
- The universe and beyond.
- Regularity and order in science.
- Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists.
- The impact of scientific achievements.

#### In ICT:

- The wonder of worldwide instant communication.
- The speed of the growth of knowledge.
- The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.

#### In the Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance):

- The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places.
- Beauty, truth and goodness.
- Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs.

- Artistic creativity.
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses.
- The arts as means of expressing mood.
- Skill in creation and performance, and particularly in personal reflection upon their own creativity using various art forms.
- Effects on the emotions and senses.
- Personal response and preference.
- Mood.
- Skill.
- Pattern.
- Formulae.

#### In Geography:

- Wonder at the diversity of environments and people.
- Questions about the care of the environment.
- The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns.
- World (economic) development.
- Land formation.
- Empathy with people from other parts of the world.

#### In History:

- Being in touch with past people, things and ideas.
- Being part of history.
- Handling artefacts.
- Influential events and people.
- The commitment of significant people in history.
- War and peace.
- Interpretation in history.
- The nature and importance of invention and exploration.
- Empathy with people from other times in history.

#### In Religious Education:

- People, places, things, books, actions and ideas held by religious believers to be holy.
- Ultimate questions of meaning and purpose.
- Ideas of the divine/questions of God.
- Forms of worship.
- Use of music, art and drama to express beliefs.
- Varieties of beliefs, celebrations and rituals.
- Ideas of commitment and belonging to groups and institutions.
- The idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.

#### In Collective Worship:

- Opportunities for reflection and response are planned into worship.
- Stillness.
- Personal and collective beliefs are respected.
- Sharing and celebrating common beliefs.
- Celebrating success.
- Sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear, etc.
- Common activities such as singing, listening, laughing, praying, reflecting on a theme.
- Remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance.
- Emphasising common purpose and values.
- Experiencing emotions.

In addition, as part of the curriculum, the children have opportunities:

- To visit places of beauty, interest and challenge.
- To admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts.
- To work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations.
- To experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level.
- To engage in charity based activities.
- To participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches, etc.

In order to facilitate spiritual development the organisation of the school and the environment for learning are such that:

- Everyone involved in the life of the school is valued and seen to be valued.
- Policies and ensuing practices are clearly seen to reflect the worth of individuals.
- Behaviour and people management policies and practices are collectively arrived at and discussed regularly.
- All adults recognise the need to set good examples of mutual respect and considerate behaviour.
- The quality and nature of the learning environment and displays reflect the value placed on pupils and staff.
- Aesthetic awareness is encouraged.
- The atmosphere of the school welcomes differences in beliefs and values, and invites everyone to belong.
- The achievements, successes and efforts of everyone are recognised and celebrated.

### **Assessment**

Spirituality will be assessed as an integral part of curriculum practice and the children's involvement in the life of the school community.

These are areas in which children are expected to grow as part of their spiritual development:

- Reflecting on their experiences with increasing sensitivity.
- Question and explore the meaning of experience.
- Understand and evaluate a range of possible reasons and interpretations.
- Develop personal views and insights.
- Apply insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to their own lives in line with the school's Anglican status and history.
- Know that belief is valuable and that the Christian belief is endorsed by the whole school community.

### **Equal Opportunities**

We recognise that families may hold different beliefs or follow different religions and as such, by request, children may be withdrawn from some aspects of religious education, such as collective worship. However, all pupils will have access to spiritual development through the ethos of the school which underpins this policy. Spiritual development is, in itself, inclusive as it will enable each individual and their individual needs to grow spiritually.

### **Monitoring and Review**

Provision for spiritual development is monitored and reviewed by:

- Monitoring of teaching and learning and work scrutiny by RE/Collective Worship Leader, Senior Leaders, Head Teacher and governors.
- Pupil Conferences.
- A Spirituality Walk.
- Discussions at staff and Governing Body meetings.
- Audits of policies and schemes of work.
- RE and Collective Worship Development Plans.