



## St Mary's and St Peter's C of E School

### Spirituality Policy

We believe high standards of care and love are an integral part in the quality of teaching and learning across the whole curriculum. Our Christian vision of 'Life in all its fullness' is at the heart of our school and we believe that all within our community should be able to flourish and achieve their full potential.

This policy, along with all our policies and practices, has been written with our vision of *life in all its fullness* for the children, staff, and wider community in mind, and to support us in realising that vision.

#### What is Spirituality?

The concept of spirituality can be found in all faiths and cultures. It can be defined in many ways and will mean different things to those in our school community. It might include the following:

- Spirituality is about being contemplative in action (or enabling reflective practice).
- 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 an increasing awareness of the concept of others. It is a growing sense of empathy, concern and compassion and an ability to reflect on how values and principles affect 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.
- Spirituality is a way of living in a relationship with God.
- Spirituality is finding God in all things.
- Christian spirituality is a life nurtured on the example of Jesus Christ and his care for others.

#### Aim of Policy

Through this policy we aim to foster a learning environment that enables the spiritual development of all. We do this through the following objectives:

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;
- Develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values (wisdom, hope, community and respect) and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;

We value wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others);
- Develop strategies to build good mental health;
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions;
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life;
- Develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others;
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination;
- Develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc.
- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation;
- Link with local churches through Chaplaincy team.

These objectives will enable the pupils to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

### **Teaching and learning**

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

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life are driven by our school's Christian vision statement '**Life in all its fullness**' and our associated values (wisdom, hope, community and dignity);
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and promoted in all areas of school life (see appendix for specific examples);
- 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 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 (e.g. celebrating Mental Health Day/Week);
- Opportunities to link with local churches and clergy team.

## **Approaches**

At SMSP we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to children's spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning by:

- Seeking to foster spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy;
- Allowing children the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions and to celebrate diversity;
- Providing opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness;
- Sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement;
- Encouraging children to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values;
- Enabling children to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community and how these impact on their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today;
- Providing an environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder.

## **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. RE books, PSHE books, creative writing, art;
- Regular inclusion in the SEF;
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

**Policy Date: Autumn 2023**

**Review Date: September 2024**

## Appendix – Examples of how spirituality is promoted at SMSP

- A 'Sacred Space' is created through use of an 'altar' which helps pupils sense the difference between collective worship and other curriculum uses of the hall space. Candles, a cross and other items to reflect special occasions provide a focus point for the children. Hall displays remind children of the school's vision and values.
- Candles are lit at the start of collective worship to focus the children and direct their thoughts towards people to reflect on or pray for, e.g. friends, families, the local community, the wider world.
- Each act of collective worship closes with a prayer. This is often the school prayer which children will join in with. Sometimes members of the RE Steering Group will lead prayers.
- Liturgy is often used, e.g. 'This is the day that the Lord has made.'
- The Clergy team lead weekly acts of collective worship.
- Collective worship themes reflect the school vision, school values, Christian festivals and a number of themes follow the LDBS School Collective Worship Calendar.
- Collective worship songs promote a sense of awe and wonder. A wide range of songs and hymns are selected.
- Year group chaplains support the teaching of RE.
- Pause Days give the children time to explore and reflect on a theme, e.g. Harvest, Easter.
- Key festivals celebrated through special assemblies and visits to the local church (Each year group leads a service at St Mary with St Alban: Year 3 Easter, Year 4 Pentecost, Year 5 Christmas, Year 6 Harvest; Ash Wednesday service at school).
- Big Question enquiry approach to the teaching of RE. Children encouraged to ask questions and think deeply.
- LDBS syllabus uses an approach that engages with the Biblical text and theological ideas.
- Thematic units taught in Year 6, e.g. The Journey of Life and Death.
- Visits to places of worship, e.g. Year 5 Gurdwara, Year 4 pilgrimage to local churches.
- Special experiences led by local churches, e.g. The Christmas Journey, The Easter Experience, Loving your burial ground week.
- A sense of 'awe and wonder' about the natural world is encouraged through the curriculum, e.g. science, geography, art.
- The history curriculum provides an opportunity to foster a sense of appreciation for humanity's achievements and developments, e.g. Mayan culture, the Stone Age, Ancient Egypt.
- Displays to promote spirituality, e.g. Icon displays.
- Reflection spaces in classrooms with crosses, Bibles, prayer boxes.
- RE steering group are involved in leading acts of collective worship.
- Bibles are given as a gift to Year 6 leavers.
- Special extra-curricular opportunities are provided. These change year on year to keep the children inspired, e.g. whole school nativity trail, nativity box project, decorating an Easter cross, 40 Acts of Kindness.
- Staff INSET, e.g. vision and values, 'Art of Being Brilliant', Spirituality