

The Bishop's Spirituality in School Policy

Our vision

Learning to live life in all its fullness in our safe and happy community

To have a culture of respect, where friendships are important and we forgive to grow together. We have courage to aim high, we persevere to achieve and serve all on our community's journey. As shepherds, we include everyone in our safe and happy school to live life in all its fullness.

Theological Reference:

We have worked with Chris Allen, The Diocese Religious Education Adviser to link a bible reference to our ethos and vision.

Jesus was God's shepherd on earth and his flock was not just for his followers but was open and included anyone – open to all. At Bishop's CE Academy our community is diverse and is our flock, we serve that flock as its shepherd to ensure everyone is able to learn and achieve by being safe and happy.

Biblical Reference: John 10: 1-21

The Good Shepherd and His Sheep

Our vision influences the ethos of our school and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is a core thread that runs through our school and we attach great importance to it for both children's development and for the growth and well-being of all within our school community.

We aim for children, and adults, to grow in their ability to:

- be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection /meditation /prayer
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others
- be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life like friends and family, and show generosity towards others

(From David Smith's work on Spiritual Capacities)

Our working definition of 'spirituality'

As a staff and governor team, we have agreed on a definition of spiritual development in our school community to support us as we talk about spirituality.

Our children learn in the curriculum that they need to eat and drink to stay alive, that eating good food and drinking plenty of water keeps their body healthy. We use this as a link to discuss the importance of spirituality and how this is what keeps our brains, hearts and souls healthy.

Spirituality is our water, it runs through us; feeding and nourishing our mind, body and being, connecting us to each other and everything around us. It keeps us alive.

What is spirituality?

Spirituality is a core component to 'living life in all its fullness' as the mind, body and soul needs to be nurtured equally. It relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life, which affect everyone, and is not dependant on a religious belief. It is also based on the search for ways to answer questions about life and a search for identity.

Rebecca Nye, (Nye R (2009) [Children's Spirituality: What it is and why it matters](#) London: Church House Publishing) suggests that spirituality can be defined as:

Relational awareness. That means awareness of my relationship with:

Self (*being a unique person and understanding self-perception*)

Others (*how empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships*)

World and Beauty (*perceiving and relating to the physical and creative world through responses to nature and art*)

Beyond – (*relating to the transcendental and understanding experiences and meaning outside the 'everyday'*)

Phrases we can refer to which inspire our definition and support our understanding include the following statements.

Spiritual development is the development of an awareness that there is "something more to life than meets the eye, something more than the material, something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to." (Terence Copley)

Spirituality is delighting in all things, being absorbed into the present moment, not too attached to self, and eager to explore boundaries of 'beyond' and 'other', searching for meaning, discovering purpose, open to more. (Rebecca Nye)

Spirituality is an awareness of mystery and its value to human flourishing.

"Spirituality was generally viewed as enriching individuals in their understanding of and ability to relate to, others and of society as a whole". Education for Adult Life (SCAA 1996)

"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 to 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, 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.” SCAA discussion paper

Spiritual development is not about becoming, more spiritual (in a measurable or expansive sense). It is about realising or becoming more and more aware of one’s natural, innate spirituality. This is sometimes a slow and gradual process, at other times there might be significant stages of realisation, which are part of the ongoing ‘developing’ process. Unlike the development of a photograph, people don’t reach a finished state of spiritual development, but participate in the ongoing process of spiritual realisation. If spirituality were something which developed or grew in a quantifiable sense, then surely adults would be more spiritual than children. Many would argue that children seem to be far more spiritually aware than adults, Perhaps as a part of growing older, the pressures of life can distract or distort our interests so that as adults, our spiritual awareness is dulled and we do not ‘realise it’ to the full.

Legal requirements:

Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 states:

The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which: (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and (b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The SIAMS Schedule (amended September 2021) references spirituality in both the RE and Collective Worship strands but the main focus is part of strand two on Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills. The Church of England Vision for Education has a core desire for ‘Life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10) which requires educating the whole person.

The OFSTED framework 2021 states that pupil’s spiritual development is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people’s faith, feelings, and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

We support pupils in their spiritual development by:

- providing opportunities for spiritual development in collective worship - providing opportunities for spiritual development in RE. Pupils will be given the opportunity to pause and reflect. Examples of this include responding and questioning works of art, which refer to the Bible. In worship with song, pupils will learn a variety of song, both traditional and modern. They will also learn a variety of bird song which they may recognise when in the local environment. The local vicar will lead regular worship and pupils will be given the opportunity to visit places of worship.

Pupils will be involved in prayer or silence to consider the purpose of coming together and the theme of the day’s worship

- providing opportunities for spiritual development in the wider curriculum - capturing opportunities for awe and wonder as they arise. Staff have received training to support this knowledge and have been given examples of where this can thread through the curriculum. Subject leaders, as they review their subject, will build in further opportunities to develop and deepen this.

-the school provides ways for pupils to awaken to the local environment- capturing opportunities to explore learning about themselves, use their imagination and creativity and gain a sense of enjoyment from being outside the classroom through:

- A residential staying in the forest
- Building dens at lunch time
- Climbing trees

- Forest schools
 - Citizen science: river project
 - Litter picking
- providing 'Sacred Spaces' in classrooms, public spaces, outside, and by using the church building, and through the 'Prayer Spaces in School' website
- offering pupils opportunities to develop their own spiritual leadership, through leading collective worship and other opportunities. The worship committee meets regularly to discuss song and prayer through the school as well as the aspects of collective worship itself.
- Pupils are given the opportunity to share their voice and raise awareness of things they care about through the following committees:
- School council
 - Sport's leaders
 - Play leaders
 - Young carers
 - Worship committee

As a staff team:

- We have a staff understanding of spiritual development.
- We have a culture within our school that recognises the importance of spirituality to individuals, both children and staff.
- We revisit spirituality as an area for consideration in our staff meetings and offer training through our Diocese links.
- Our governors monitor the impact of our spirituality focus.
- We have a variety of spiritual spaces both inside and outside the school building. - We are aware of spiritual development shown across four key areas of Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond (Andrew Rickett / Rebecca Nye).

We aim to help each pupil to develop a spiritual understanding in terms of their own cultural context.

- We share with parents, whenever possible, the outcomes of our focus on spiritual development through newsletters, social media, displays and our website. - We discuss spirituality with our church and others who can further support this thread.

Our awareness and understanding of spiritual development will enrich what we offer to the children and to all in our school community.

Referenced reading:

Church of England Education Office (CEEO) Spiritual Development – Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom (2019)

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-effectiveness/re collective-worship-and-spirituality/spiritual-development/>

