

St John's C E First School, Bishops Wood
'I will give thanks to you because I have been so amazingly and
miraculously made' (Psalm 139: 13-14)

Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Policy (SMSC)

General Principle

At St John's C E First School the spiritual, moral and cultural dimension of life is expressed throughout the school and additionally as a Church school through the Christian faith and through recognition of individuals' spiritual nature. Pupils' individual spiritual development is fostered throughout the curriculum and Religious Education and Collective Worship have a major contribution to this area of experience.

Legal Requirements

The legal requirements were first identified in the 1944 Education Act alongside the moral, the aesthetic, the linguistic, the mathematical, the technological and the physical. Its importance is promoted through the OfSTED framework, where judgements are made on how pupils are responding to this area of experience and how schools are accounting for provision and enabling spiritual sensitiveness to be fostered.

Aims of Spirituality

General

- To foster the spiritual development of each pupil, regardless of age, ability, sex or cultural background;
- To value the inner self;
- To foster reflection and meditation;
- To value each individual's spiritual journey;
- To encourage imagination, creativity and a sense that there is "more to life than meets the eye";
- To foster empathy for others as feeling, thinking individuals;
- To foster a sense of meaning, purpose and direction in life;
- To provide a safe, supportive environment for spiritual development to be fostered.

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Additional aims for our Church School

- To foster a reverential attitude to the Divine (God);
- To appreciate how important beliefs are to adherents, in such a way that their behaviour and lifestyle are affected;
- To respond to Christian Festivals, rituals and symbols and encounter the Christian faith.

Provision

The whole school staff take responsibility for this area of experience and account for the spiritual in planning and policies. There is no curriculum leader or timetabled allocation, spirituality permeates all areas of the curriculum. Opportunities need to be planned in, but will also occur spontaneously. However, in accordance with good practice in church schools, and taking account of current OfSTED guidance, the schools provision is:

- Develop a sense of wonder, awe and mystery, and the joy of being alive in God's world;
- Enjoy and respond to times of silence, stillness and reflection, both in Collective Worship and at other times;
- Develop positive relationships throughout the school based on respect, acceptance and the value of others;
- Learn to live with others and to develop an understanding of friendship and the school as a family;
- Reflect on the place and evidence of the Christian faith in their own and others lives;
- Explore symbolism, myths, signs and symbols;
- Begin to develop beliefs and values by which to live and learn to respect the beliefs and values of others;
- Identify issues of spiritual significance and to explore the Christian response to them;
- Learn to live with success and failure for themselves and with others;
- Respond to the ultimate questions of life;

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- Begin to have some understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of sacred texts.

Material supporting good practice

Definition

Spirituality is difficult to define, possible definitions are:

"A search for meaning in life through an awareness of inner feelings, beliefs and experiences."

"To be spiritual means to be emotionally moved"

Church schools are different in that sometimes these experiences point to God or have God as a possible answer.

"To encourage children to respond to ultimate questions and values in relation to the Christian Faith in God."

Current Practice

The spiritual curriculum is recognised in all areas of school life, particularly in:

- Worship;
- Assembly;
- Values and relationships;
- Whole school curriculum;
- Mission statement;
- Church/School ethos links - Church services, Rector and other congregational members in and out of school.

Spirituality in the R E Curriculum

- Specific teaching approaches;

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- Offering responses from different faiths to human experiences and feelings;
- Promoting different understandings of spirituality;
- As part of teachers' planning in content and method.

Through aspects such as:

- Tolerance and respect;
- Valuing own and others' faiths;
- Exploring issues eg: suffering, life and death, supporting bereaved children
- Awe/wonder/curiosity/mystery.

Exploring prayers/holy books/holy places/concept of God.

Exploring artefacts.

Key Words

- **Opportunity** for spirituality eg: through music, poems, visits etc;
- **Response** (time for) Children will respond in a variety of ways. The teacher should not respond first as this might influence the child's response;
- **Invite to share** - children cannot be made to respond, only invited;
- There should be no judgement on children's responses because it's an **Affective** experience, ie: it affects individuals.

Promoting opportunity for Spirituality throughout the school

- Inspirational/thought provoking posters on display when appropriate.
- Inspirational/thought provoking books included in the library.
- A "quiet" space in school.
- Relationships:
 - Value given to each individual;
 - Value given to others (eg: charities);
 - Celebrating success.
- Quality of outside environment: Children are able to use the seating area around the planters in the garden for a quiet reflective time.

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- Circle time.
- School Council/pupil views.
- Mission statement/aims/values.
- Collective Worship.
- Visits - new experiences: awe and wonder.
- Artist in residence and other visitors.
- Calming environments in and around school.