

# Spirituality Policy

## Our shared vision

*As a community, we are working together to ensure educational excellence underpinned by our Christian ethos and values, enabling all to live a rich and abundant life and to achieve their full potential. Each individual should leave us fully prepared for the next stage of their life. (Reflecting John 10:10)*

*Jesus said, 'I have come to give life – life in all its fullness.'*

## Our definition of spirituality

As a Church School, spirituality is all about our relationship with God the Father, whom we come to through Jesus his Son, united in the Holy Spirit. We define Spirituality as an ongoing, reflective journey. It is something that teaches us about questioning, understanding and relationships: relationships with ourselves, others, the world and beyond.

Our school and trust values are firmly rooted in our approaches. Spirituality enables our children to be happy, flourish and succeed, and live life in all its fullness. Life in all its fullness means we can shine, achieve our God-given potential, love ourselves, others, the world and God. At Snarestone, we acknowledge spiritual development is not a direct path – it is cyclical and goes through many phases through all aspects of life.

Rebecca Nye suggests that spirituality can be defined as relational awareness. That means awareness of the 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)
- Divine (relating to the transcendental and understanding experiences and meaning outside the 'everyday')



*(Nye R (2009) Children's Spirituality: What it is and why it matters London: Church House Publishing*

Our pupils understand spirituality as, **‘looking up, looking out, looking in’**.

### Spirituality means . . .

<b>Looking up</b> <i>How we fit into the bigger picture</i> <b>Love God</b>	<b>Looking out</b> <i>Thinking about or helping others</i> <b>Love your neighbour</b>	<b>Looking in</b> <i>Ourselves – mind and body</i> <b>Love yourself</b>
Love the <b>Lord your God</b> with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. The second is this: <b>‘Love your neighbour as yourself’</b> . (Mark 12: 30-31)		
Spirituality often connects deeply with values like <b>endurance, trust, wisdom, hope, and friendship</b> because these are qualities that help individuals navigate life's challenges and grow in personal and communal development. Here's how each value links with spirituality:		
<b>Endurance</b> Spirituality can offer strength and resilience in the face of hardship; and perseverance through life's difficulties, viewing challenges as opportunities for growth. It's about trusting in a higher presence or in our own spiritual path to overcome adversity.	<b>Trust</b> Spirituality is about trusting in a higher power, having faith in oneself and each other. It is about developing trust by fostering a belief that there's a greater plan at work.	<b>Wisdom</b> Spirituality promotes self-awareness, reflection, and understanding. It encourages individuals to look within and recognise deeper truths about themselves, others, and the world around them. Wisdom is an understanding gained through experience, compassion, and mindfulness.
<b>Hope</b> Spirituality offers hope by reminding individuals that there's always a path forward, that struggles are temporary, and that <b>change</b> and healing are possible. It often fosters an optimistic outlook on life, grounded in trust that better things can come.	<b>Friendship</b> Spirituality places great value on relationships, especially those that promote love, compassion, and mutual respect. True spiritual friendships are based on deep connections, shared values, and an understanding that we're all part of a greater whole.	

### Spiritual development comes through:

#### 1. Self-Awareness or Self Knowledge

All humans need to be aware of, and acknowledge, their own inner life of thoughts, feelings and emotions. Jesus taught what it is to be faithful to God and gave an example to us. He gives his Holy Spirit to guide us and shape our lives to be like his. (Galatians 5:21) The New Testament provides examples of what is right and wrong (Ephesians 5) and what it means to be a disciple of Jesus.

- What values shape my life? What's right and what's wrong?
- How can I become who I want to be?
- What shapes my character, lifestyle and decisions?
- What does a life well lived, look like?

#### 2. Forming Relationships

An important part of personal growth is being able to develop relationships with others, recognising them as people of worth and value. This includes developing a sense of community and building social relationships. The Bible tells us about God and his ways. In it we discover his character and commands (e.g. the 10 commandments, Exodus 20) We read of people living faithfully and well; we read of people falling short of God. God

consistently acts with love, faithfulness, mercy and justice; he summons us to respond to his love by loving one another. (Matthew 22:34-40)

- How can I show empathy to others?
- How do I react to different people from different backgrounds?
- What can I do to empower my community?
- What would make the world a better place?

### 3. Asking Big Questions

This is the search for meaning and purpose in life. The youngest children often ask the most profound questions of this type and deserve to be taken seriously when they do so. We believe that it is important that this area of reflection and challenge is encouraged, not stifled. Ultimate questions are not limited only to RE and collective worship but can arise at any time. Contemplating the suffering, pain, evil and brokenness of the world confronts us with the reality that all is not well (Genesis 6:5, Psalm 73:3, Romans 3:10-18). When life is hard, Jesus tells us that he is present with us in the midst of suffering.

- What makes me happy?
- Where do I find meaning and purpose for my life?
- How do I respond to suffering and pain?
- What happens when we die?

### 4. Uncertainty, Awe and Wonder.

Children are born inquisitive, and it is our duty to nurture this natural curiosity and guide them towards looking at the world and noticing, with awe and wonder, the natural and man-made delights all around us. The Bible tells us that people are created as part of the whole earth and universe God created (Gen 1). Aside from people, the natural world and heavens declare the glory of God (Psalm 19:1, Psalm 24:1). Unsurprisingly the natural world engenders a sense of awe and wonder with which our spirituality connects. Considering our place in the world expands our view beyond ourselves.

- What inspires me about God's wonderful world?
- How should we care for the environment?
- Where do I fit in with other people, plants and animals?
- What action can I take to protect God's world?

## 5. Beliefs and Values.

This is the search for, and development of, personal beliefs and values. Christian faith is Trinitarian, understanding God to be Father, Son and Holy Spirit (Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 28:19). As a church school, we believe there is a spiritual dimension to the world we cannot see (Ephesians 6:12). The development of beliefs and values naturally includes the development of Christian beliefs, and as a church school we seek to be a supportive environment in which people can explore and clarify their own belief and values.

- Is there a God?
- Who is God?
- How do I know what God is like?
- What do I believe?

## 6. Creativity.

This is the exercising of the imagination or intuition and insight to express one's innermost thoughts and feelings, especially through the creative arts. Creative work can be an important tool for exploring some of the other areas of spiritual development, including music, art and opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting. The Bible tells us that people are made in the image of God (Genesis 1:26) He has created human beings with the unique capacity to relate to him (Psalm 8:4).

- How do I feel?
- How does the creativity of others make me feel?
- What thought or feeling is being created through this medium?
- What do I want to express and how can I best express this?

## 7. Feelings and Emotions.

The sense of being moved by kindness or beauty, or being hurt by hatred and injustice. This should bring a growing awareness of when it is important to control feelings and emotions. Pupils will be able to foster their emotional life and express their feelings in the community of the church school, knowing themselves to be accepted and loved as unique individuals. The Bible tells us that he who is slow to anger is better than the mighty, and he who rules his spirit, than he who captures a city. (Proverbs 16:22)

- How can I be resilient when things don't go the way I intended?
- How do I process this emotion?
- What can I do to support the feelings of others?
- What can I do to forgive or ask for forgiveness?

## **What does Spiritual Development look like at Snarestone?**

Promoting spiritual development is at the core of our curriculum design. Our approach at Snarestone first starts with acknowledging that spirituality will be a different experience for all individuals and that children will be at different stages of their own journey. The everyday experiences that our children encounter support asking the 'big questions' and allow them to explore the awe and wonder of the world around us. Spiritual experiences will offer time and space to consider topics that are possibly unknown or challenging as concepts but central to the development of individual values and beliefs. The experiences will explicitly develop our children intellectually, emotionally and morally.

Our pupils understand spirituality as, '**looking up, looking out, looking in**' (see appendix 1)

## **Opportunities to develop spiritually at Snarestone:**

Spiritual development occurs in many ways. We aim to ensure that children:

- Have regular times in the day for quiet and reflection. This might be listening to a story, lighting a candle in worship, engaging in reflection activities in spaces around school ...
- Will be provided with many opportunities for creativity and imagination.
- Will be provided with purposeful and regular opportunities for prayer. This can take many forms but should include being thankful and allow the children an opportunity to open themselves up to God.
- Will have regular opportunities to explore, express and share feelings.
- Will see positive relationships modelled around school. The importance of relationships will be reaffirmed to them. This will include clear exploration of how we talk to and relate to each other.
- Have opportunities to express awe and wonder, appreciate beauty in all its forms and appreciate connections and unity in the world.
- Will be encouraged to reflect on mistakes and say sorry, where appropriate.
- Will be encouraged to show perseverance, respect and trust and express these in practical ways.
- Have opportunities to explore 'Big Questions', particularly through RE learning.

We also provide rich opportunities for our children to develop spiritually within our curriculum.

### *Physical Education*

- By delighting in movement, particularly when pupils are able to show spontaneity.
- By taking part in activities such as dance, games and gymnastics which help pupils to become more focused, connected and creative.
- By being aware of one's own strengths and limitations.

### *Computing*

- By wondering at the power of the digital age e.g. use of the internet and social media.
- By understanding the advantages and limitations of modern technology.
- By using the internet as a gateway to big life issues.

### *English*

- By allowing for insight, self-expression and the chance to walk in someone else's shoes and consider other viewpoints
- By writing creatively, embracing our own skills and imagination, understanding of words and language
- By exploring texts and stories that challenge our perspectives and express 'big ideas' about life and ethical issues

### *Music*

- By allowing pupils to show their delight and curiosity in creating their own sounds.
- By considering how music makes one feel and can 'move us' deeply.
- By understanding the way artists communicate their feelings through their music

### *Art and Design & Technology*

- By enjoying and celebrating personal creativity and reviewing and evaluating created things.
- By exploring different artists' interpretations of a key figure or event and asking what the artist was trying to convey.
- By allowing pupils to show what they know through their own expression of big ideas about life and the world around them

### *PSHE/RSE*

- By developing awareness of and responding to others' needs and wants.
- By exploring meaning and purpose for individuals and society.
- By developing resilience and inner strength.
- By valuing self as unique in the image of God.
- By cherishing relationships.

### *Religious Education*

- By experiencing wonder and joy through learning about and from stories, celebrations, rituals and different expressions of religion and worldviews.
- By asking and responding to questions of meaning and purpose.
- By considering questions about God and evaluating truth claims.
- By exploring spiritual practices such as worship and prayer, and considering the impact of these on believers as well as relevance to their own life.
- By developing our own beliefs.

### *Geography*

- By using maps and asking pupils to imagine what it might be like to live in different parts of the world and comparing their lives with others.
- By making links with history when exploring the environment and speculating on why the landscape has developed in a certain way, and human impact upon this.
- By exploring the awe and wonder of the natural world

### *History*

- By considering how things would be different if the course of events had been different
- By looking at local history and investigating the reasons why our community developed in a certain way
- By considering how we mark important events from history and the people who shaped them.

### *Science*

- By demonstrating openness to the fact that some answers cannot be provided by Science.
- By creating opportunities for pupils to ask questions about how living things rely on and contribute to their environment
- By experiencing awe and wonder of the natural world and the diverse individuals who contributed to the field of science.

### *Maths*

- By developing resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge
- By reasoning and solving problems, understanding other points of view or approaches
- By developing an appreciation of the intangible and abstract

### *MFL*

- By exploring the beauty of languages from around the world.
- By exploring the way language is constructed.
- By developing an understanding of the language of others.

## **Roles and Responsibilities**

Recognising there are opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners in every aspect of our school life, every member of our staff team is committed to support this spiritual growth wherever appropriate. The Headteacher is responsible for supporting and leading spiritual development in our school, including monitoring opportunities for spiritual growth in collective worship, the curriculum and the general ethos of the school within daily life. This role also includes:

- Ensuring personal knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by participating in CPD and shared good practice.
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary.
- Ensuring all staff are familiar with the shared language of spirituality.
- Acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary.
- Monitoring the opportunities for spiritual growth through regular observations and learning walks in both formal and informal contexts, discussions with colleagues and pupil voice.
- Contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process.

## **Staff Development and Training**

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. ECTs and staff who are new to school will receive training and support from the staff member identified as leading on spirituality. This policy is shared on the school's website and is part of the induction pack for new staff and new governors. It is reviewed every 3 years, or more frequently, as required.

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