

Everyone Welcomed. Everyone Included. Everyone Belongs.



Spirituality Policy

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Responsible Officer:	Headteacher

Spirituality Policy

Vision

Everyone Welcomed. Everyone Included. Everyone Belongs.

“But I came to give life - life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)

At St Mark's CE Primary School, we strive to bring all together as one loving family. Through strong relationships, we offer a sense of belonging by nurturing all to flourish as unique and responsible children of God.

This policy intends to outline the policy and procedure for Spirituality at St. Mark's C of E Primary School. In our Church school, our vision is **Everyone welcomed. Everyone included. Everyone belongs.** This policy intends to outline how our whole school community lives this out in relation to developing spirituality.

This policy is firmly rooted in our Christian Values.

Christian Value	How is this value lived out in our spirituality policy?
Compassion	<p><i>(Colossians 3:12) Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.</i></p> <p>Compassion is a feeling deep within ourselves —a "quivering of the heart" — and it is also a way of acting — being affected by the suffering of others and moving on their behalf. The spiritual practice of compassion is often likened to opening the heart. First, allow yourself to feel the suffering in the world, including your own. Don't turn away from pain; move toward it with caring. Go into situations where people are hurting. Identify with your neighbours in their distress. Then expand the circle of your compassion to include other creatures, nature, and the inanimate world.</p>
Courage	<p><i>(Deuteronomy 31. 6) Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.</i></p> <p>Spiritual courage is the boldness to live out one's faith, face challenges, and demonstrate acts of kindness even in the face of adversity. It is a sense of strength and conviction to act based upon one's beliefs, regardless of potential external consequences or personal fears. Oftentimes it is linked to a deeper relationship with God as individuals trust Him to provide them with an extra measure of strength. Spiritual courage can manifest itself through evangelism, community service, prayer, or any number of other expressions that show faithfulness in the face of difficulty.</p>
Respect	<p><i>(Mark 10. 14) Let the children come to me</i></p> <p>Respect is an important virtue that carries multiple meanings. We are taught to respect parents, elders, teachers, family traditions, the country's flag and leader, and different races, religions, and opinions. Spirituality will look at how we respect those decisions and views of people.</p>
Justice	<p><i>(Deuteronomy 16:20) Follow justice and justice alone.</i></p> <p>Spirituality not only looks at the 'Wows' but it also looks at the 'Ows'. They need to become aware of the world in all its wonder but also a sad realisation of its many problems, i.e. to realise that the world is both 'awe-full' but also sadly 'awful' at times too. While looking at the Ows children will discuss how and if justice can be achieved.</p>
Trust	<p><i>(Psalm 20:7) Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.</i></p> <p>The journey of spirituality is something that involves many people. Establishing mutual trust amongst staff, children, families and the whole community will ensure that there is a trusting environment for all to develop their own spirituality journeys.</p>

Rationale

This policy outlines how spirituality is developed across St. Mark's school. Our children engage in many planned and unplanned development opportunities throughout their time in school.

The Church of England's Vision for Education outlines a desire for life to be lived "*in all its fullness*" (John 10:10). It is also said that: "*For a human being, especially a child or young person, to have full quality of life, spirituality in all its aspects must be nurtured and affirmed*" (John Bradford)

The approach towards spirituality development at St. Mark's looks to educate the whole child in fullness across broad, rich curriculum opportunities. Spiritual development is not specific to one curriculum area or activity.

In line with our school vision, we define spiritual development as:

- an ongoing, reflective journey. It teaches us about questioning, understanding and relationships: relationships with ourselves, others, the world and beyond.
- Spirituality enables our children to be happy; flourish and succeed and live life in all its fullness.

The four elements of spirituality development:

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet, in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.

Spiritual development can be encouraged through a range of activities. These will include both planned and unplanned learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to ask questions and explore topics, discussing and responding to issues around them.

Whilst spiritual moments can just happen, we plan to provide high quality, thought provoking and purposeful opportunities for spiritual development.

The four elements of spiritual development form the basis of our work with children in developing a strong sense of spirituality. We also believe that it is vital that all 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 help each other.

Element	What does this involve?
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy and understanding; respect, tolerance• To love and be loved (loving your neighbour)• Making a difference; duty
World	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a sense of awe and wonder• Enjoying the miracles of everyday life• Taking time for what really matters

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appreciating beauty in art, music, nature
Beyond (transcendence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encountering/experiencing God (having a sense of what lies beyond the material/ physical) • Ability to formulate and discuss the 'Big Questions' (e.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God) • Opportunities for prayer, connecting with God • Making sense of the world

Opportunities to develop and support spirituality

Opportunities for spiritual development are both planned and unplanned for and exploited spontaneously. Children are encouraged to reflect on their own development using the "Windows, Mirrors and Doors" framework.

Opportunity	What is involved?
Windows (learning about life)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • We can wonder at the world, technology, art, music, scientific advances all around us. We may work outside, visit places of interest, celebrate inspirational people. We can reflect on injustice and inequality in the world.
Mirrors (learning from experiences)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. • This could be compared with looking in a mirror. Look at yourself in a situation... How would you react, what would you say or do? These are questions which may arise through circle time
Doors (learning to live out our values and beliefs)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Giving opportunities to children to respond, to do something to go through the door of a creative expression of their own thoughts and convictions. • Children would be living out our Christian values, considering how our own beliefs and faiths drive changes in the wider world.

Where will spiritual development opportunities occur?

Spiritual development occurs in many ways, both planned and unplanned. However, 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 role 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.

In addition to the above, we have identified specific areas which contribute to the spiritual growth of pupils: collective worship, the whole curriculum, including RE and the general ethos of the school within daily life.

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of St. Mark's C of E Primary School. It provides the opportunity for our school community to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality, which we use as a school, is regularly and explicitly shared. Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present which are often linked to invitations to pray. Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for hearing the Christian story. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or observe, Christian spiritual practices such as: prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy and are introduced to different musical traditions.

Opportunities to reflect on the wows of life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise with the low moments of disappointment or pain. Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time is given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark seasonal Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. Collective Worship is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

Spirituality in Religious Education

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality. Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils' ideas of spirituality.