

'Together We Grow: Together We Give'



Wimborne St Giles CE First School and Nursery

Spirituality Policy

"The fact that I can plant a seed and it becomes a flower, share a bit of knowledge and it becomes another's, smile at someone and receive a smile in return, are to me a continual spiritual journey"- Leo Buscaglia

"A church school should: help children develop a personal spirituality and faith in something which guides us" Andrew Ricketts, Spirituality training

"Ask and it shall be given to you; search and you will find; knock and the door will be opened for you. Matthew 7:7

Introduction

In shaping our policy on Spiritual Development, the school has taken into consideration several key documents:

- Church of England Vision for Education
- Valuing All God's Children
- Spiritual Development Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom
- Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach
- SIAMS Evaluation Schedule.

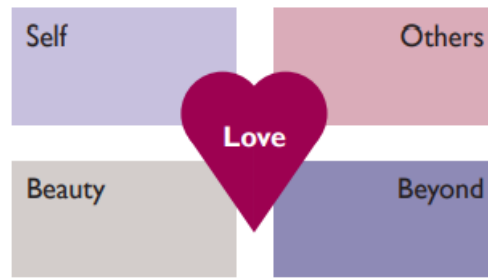
Aims and Guiding Principles

At its core, spiritual development should enable all pupils and adults to grow and flourish. It should provide opportunities to stop, think and question the world, helping children to make sense of the world in which we live and to understand a little more of their place within the created order. Spiritual development is not about one specific religion, or indeed, a religious experience, as it is not the same as faith; however, some of these ideas may contribute to a pupil's spiritual development.

School Statement on Spirituality and Spiritual Development

Spirituality has many different connotations for different people. Spirituality is about more than just awe and wonder, more than just developing a moral compass. Spirituality is the space between the everyday and the extraordinary. At WSG we define spirituality as the act of being fully human by revealing ourselves, our relationships with others, with beauty and the beyond and doing so through love.

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- **Self:** Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of self – the inner person and the way that this shapes an individual’s perception of themselves as a unique human being. Spiritual learners reflect on the relationship that they have with their sense of being a unique person.
- **Others:** Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of others – a growing empathy, concern and compassion for how to treat others. Spiritual learners reflect on how their values and principles affect their relationships with others.
- **World and Beauty** Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of a physical and creative world – a growing relationship with beauty through the ability to respond emotionally to experiences of the wonder of the natural world and the results of human creativity. Spiritual learners explore their understanding of beauty and the affect this has on their perception of and relationship with the world
- **Beyond:** Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of the beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday. Spiritual learners search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.

The spiritual growth of pupils is not only dependent on learning in RE, opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners are developed in every aspect of our school life. We support the whole school community to share this responsibility and to develop the shared language of spirituality. Opportunities are available for all to develop spiritually in our supportive and nurturing school inspired by our vision and lived out through our Christian values. We have developed planning based on these four areas which show progression across the key stages and we have chosen to record moments when children display encounters with spirituality, moments of beauty, awareness of self, others and relationship with ideas beyond our everyday experience. Spirituality is planned for within, and across, the whole curriculum (see Appendix A) but we also acknowledge the moments when we capture pupils engaging with the world in a creative and spiritual way.

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At Wimborne St Giles First School and Nursery, we enable to give all children opportunities to think about themselves, others, beauty and creation and the world beyond. We encourage children to become independent thinkers and wonderers. We model an environment of inclusion and respect. We allow children the space, process, imagination, relationships, intimacy and trust to be spiritual beings.

Our Christian values of Love, Hope and Joy create an ethos within the school where all children are valued equally, we work together as a team and all seek to achieve their potential. Our values and vision statement are explored in the context of biblical stories so we can root our values in biblical precedents.

When exploring the ways in which we can develop opportunities for spiritual growth and flourishing, we have been very grateful to the work of colleagues as part of the project led by Shahne Vickery in Worcester based on *Making Sense of Spiritual Development* by David Smith (*Church of England, Spiritual Development - Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom*).

David Smith outlines three elements relating to spiritual development:

- spiritual capacities
- spiritual contexts
- spiritual experiences

He notes a number of human capacities commonly identified as related to spiritual development and we are using these when thinking about how to provide opportunities in class that would build on what had gone before. In this sense spiritual development can be planned for.

Spiritual Capacities - which include children's 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

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Spiritual Contexts

At WSG, we root these capacities in a Christian context and in our school vision and values (see Appendix B)

Spiritual Experiences

There is a danger that spirituality...could be trivialized if it is reduced to a welter of nice feelings or gasps of momentary admiration. Spiritual growth will involve reflecting on the significance of an experience for our lives. If there is no such reflection, a feeling remains just a feeling.

David Smith - Making Sense of Spiritual Development

We feel that spiritual experiences are an everyday part of school life but reflection is crucially important in facilitating learning and growth. The quality of the opportunities we offer for the children to reflect are carefully planned to enable the learning from the experiences to have greater depth. In developing spirituality through reflection, we may encounter the process of: Windows, Mirrors and Doors.

- **Windows:** Giving children opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways; to wonder about how amazing life is but also how challenging it can be. In this, children are learning about life in all its fullness.
- **Mirrors:** Giving children opportunities to reflect on their experiences; to think about life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. In this they are learning from life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.
- **Doors:** Giving children opportunities to respond to all of this; to do something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to live by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value

We already use the Windows, Mirrors and Doors model in our Roots and Fruits worship sessions as a way to describe the journey from experience through reflection to growth and transformation. We use this as a scaffold so that each of the ten capacities is exemplified through the work of each year group. (See Appendix C)

It is important that spirituality is developed and promoted in all aspects of the curriculum both incidentally and deliberately. Pupils should be given opportunities to see awe and wonder in all subjects and also to ask deep and engaging questions.

Outlined below are some of the ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted:

- Through our school's Christian vision and values
- In whole school and class collective worship
- Visits and visitors – Reverend Ian, Reverend Robert, Open the Book, Salisbury Cathedral
- Through 'Grow and Give' time at the end of the week
- Value Stars of the Week and Spotlight Children

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- Church services and celebration of Christian festivals (Harvest, Remembrance, Christingle, Easter)
- Through our natural environment and Muddy Church trails which allow us 'to wander and to wander'
- Through Forest School sessions which help us to develop a sense of wonder at the natural world and the responsibility we share to preserve its beauty
- In RE lessons and across the curriculum
- Through relationship with our local, national and global communities and the church
- Through our Prayer Space in school
- Through our Philosophy for Children (P4C) communities of enquiry
- In our Relationships Blueprint
- Through displays and images in the school
- Using Understanding Christianity –reflecting on the truth of the Nativity story: self, others, beyond
- Using art to encounter bible stories
- Heart Smart sessions which focus on Letting Love In and learning how to love others
- Circle time – Christmas, lighting a candle, a safe space for children to express sadness at the loss of a loved one
- Eco Crew – The opportunity for children to make decisions and change and improve their world.
- Clear stages of experience/reflection/growth

Monitoring and evaluation

How do we review spirituality?

- Through foundation governors
- Through pupil and teacher feedback and assessment
- Through worship times
- Through the use of reflection journals
- Through school council and worship team
- Through an annual review of our policy
- Through SIAMS inspections and continued professional development

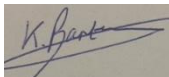
Approval/review by governing body

Headteacher signed:



Date: 5th October, 2022

Chair of Governors signed:



Date: 5th October, 2022

Date of next review:




Date: October, 2023

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Appendix A

Vision personalises our curriculum

Curriculum Drivers: Communication, Aspiration, Resilience

	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer
VISION	Together We Grow	Together We Give	Together We Grow	Together We Give	Together We Grow	Together We Give
VALUES	 LOVE I know I am loved and I show love to others.		 HOPE We stand up for what we believe and try to make the world a better place.		 JOY We are curious and actively engaged.	
Spirituality	SELF	OTHERS	BEAUTY of the WORLD		BEYOND	
Curriculum Focus	<i>Letting love in</i>	<i>Showing love to others</i>	<i>Making a difference in our communities</i>	<i>Making a difference in the world</i>	<i>Creativity</i>	<i>Dreaming Big Dreams</i>
Nursery	What makes me happy?	Who are your friends?	What is special to you?	What is beautiful about our world?	Can I create new things?	What do you want to be when you grow up?
Reception	What is special about me?	What makes a good friend?	What is special about where we live?	What does caring for the world look like?	How can I use my imagination to create new things?	Who are your heroes and why do you admire them?
Year 1/2	Why is it important to love myself?	How can I show love to others?	How can I make where I live more beautiful?	How can I make a difference in the world?	How can being creative bring me joy and bring joy to others?	What does it mean to dream a 'big dream'?
Year 3/4	How does my self-image support my mental health?	How am I responsible for showing love to others?	How can we work with other organisations to make positive change?	How can I embrace justice?	What impact has creativity had on the world and how can it inspire me?	How can dreaming big change your life and the world?

Appendix: Spiritual Capacities in a Christian Context

Spiritual Capacity

- Be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community

Bible Reference

So God created humankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them. Genesis 1. 27

Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. John 13. 14 & 15

Our children will experience the Bible's teaching that every person is made in the image of God and is loved unconditionally by him. Through a focus on Christian values such as compassion, friendship, dignity, service, justice and community they will be offered opportunities to imagine what it means to walk in the shoes of another, recognising their intrinsic value and acting toward them with the respect that stems from a deep awareness of their dignity as fellow human beings.

Spiritual Capacity

- Be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them

Bible Reference

Stand firm then, with the belt of truth buckled around your waist, with the breastplate of righteousness in place, and with your feet fitted with the readiness that comes from the gospel of peace. Ephesians 6.14 & 15

Think of all the hostility Jesus endured from sinful people; then you won't become weary and give up. Hebrews 12. 3

Our children will learn that whilst full of love and compassion for the marginalised, Jesus was also uncompromising and courageous when he needed to be. Through a focus on Christian values such as courage, respect, perseverance and justice pupils will be given opportunities to reflect on their own developing beliefs and opinions. They will be able to hone their skills of advocacy, taking inspiration from other individuals past and present who, by standing up for their principles, have transformed society.

Spiritual Capacity

- Love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges

Bible Reference

'Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.' Joshua 1. 9

'Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.' Matthew 11. 28

Our children will observe/experience a range of different ways of praying and in so doing will understand that Christians can ask God for strength and courage in the face of any challenge that they might be experiencing.

Through a focus on Christian values such as trust, perseverance, hope and peace they will develop a habit of reflecting on what they can learn through times of struggle as well as success.

Spiritual Capacity

- Exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder

Bible Reference

When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is humankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them? Psalm 8. 3&4

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well. Psalm 139. 14

Our children will learn about the Christian belief in a creator God and that, made in his likeness, each of us is believed to share that creative potential. Through a focus on Christian values such as generosity, joy, thankfulness, courage and hope children's innate capacity for wonder, imagination and creative exploration of the natural world will be stimulated and developed.

Spiritual Capacity

- Be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life

Bible Reference

Just as you cannot understand the path of the wind or the mystery of a tiny baby growing in its mother's womb, so you cannot understand the activity of God, who does all things. Ecclesiastes 11. 5

"My thoughts are nothing like your thoughts," says the Lord. "And my ways are far beyond anything you could imagine." Isaiah 55. 8

Jesus took Peter, John and James up on a mountain to pray. And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was transformed, and his clothes became dazzling white. Luke 9. 28, 29

Our children, who begin school with a natural wisdom and wonder about creation, will be offered opportunities to understand the belief that God is at work in all that he has made. They will learn that love cannot be understood in purely rational terms and therefore will recognise the significance of mystery for many when thinking and speaking of God. Through a focus on Christian values such as joy, respect and dignity they will build a 'language' for appreciating the transcendent in the whole of life.

Spiritual Capacity

- Be comfortable with stillness and silence and be open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer

Bible Reference

Be still and know that I am God. Psalm 46. 10
Think about what I am saying. The Lord will help you understand all these things. 2 Timothy 2. 7

Our children will be given opportunities to spend time in mindful reflection, meditation and prayer. They will become familiar with stilling strategies to help them cultivate an inner calm and to prepare for prayer. Through focusing on Christian values such as wisdom, hope, joy and peace, they will be invited to reflect on things in their experience that they find puzzling or intriguing as well as some of the big questions of life.

Spiritual Capacity

- Be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others

Bible Reference

The Lord is merciful and compassionate, slow to get angry and filled with unfailing love. Psalm 145. 8
Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. Colossians 3. 13

Our children will learn that Christians believe that nothing is beyond the scope of God's forgiveness. They will be helped to appreciate that Christians believe that Jesus made forgiveness possible for all people through his sacrificial death and resurrection. Through a focus on Christian values such as hope, compassion, forgiveness and trust, children will begin to understand what is involved in offering forgiveness to others and also being able to accept forgiveness from others.

Spiritual Capacity

- Be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success

Bible Reference

David replied, "The Lord who rescued me from the paw of the lion and the paw of the bear will rescue me from the hand of this Philistine." 1 Samuel 17. 37

Meanwhile, Zacchaeus stood before the Lord and said, "I will give half my wealth to the poor, Lord, and if I have cheated people on their taxes, I will give them back four times as much!" Luke 19. 8

Our children will reflect on the person of Jesus who took huge risks to ensure he completed his mission which at first appeared to be a complete failure yet ultimately was transformed into victory. Through a focus on Christian values such as courage, justice, hope, trust and truthfulness, they will consider what might be sufficient reasons for taking risks in the light of what they have learned from past experiences.

Spiritual Capacity

- Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions

Bible Reference

Philip found Nathanael and told him, "We have found the One Moses wrote about in the Law, the One the prophets foretold—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph." "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" Nathanael asked. "Come and see," said Philip. John 1. 46, 47

One day as Jesus was praying in private and the disciples were with Him, He questioned them: "Who do the people say I am?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that a prophet of old has arisen." "But what about you?" Jesus asked. "Who do you say I am?" Peter answered, "The Christ of God." Luke 9. 18-20

Our children will learn from Jesus' readiness to use questions to make people think, to challenge assumptions and enable them to come to their own conclusions. A focus on the Christian values of truth and wisdom will help children look below the surface and the superficial in order to reveal new possibilities and avoid jumping to conclusions.

Spiritual Capacity

- Appreciate and be thankful for what is good in their lives and show generosity towards others

Bible Reference

Be thankful in all circumstances. 1 Thessalonians 5. 18
Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 2 Corinthians 9. 7

Our children will have opportunities to reflect on all that is good in life and appreciate the Christian belief that this is God's 'gift' rather than their entitlement. Through a focus on Christian values such as thankfulness, generosity, justice, community and service they will better learn to appreciate what they have. They will grow in their understanding that for many millions of people in the world life is a struggle, and will engage with issues of justice, poverty and the environment.

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Appendix C

Recognising Spiritual Development at WSG – some examples (staff reflect on spiritual growth in their year groups and across the school by regularly updating this document. All of the capacities will be addressed a number of times during the year by every class)

<i>Spiritual Capacities</i>	<i>Experience Window</i>	<i>Reflection Mirror</i>	<i>Growth Door</i>
<p>Reception</p> <p><i>Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions</i></p> <p>World, Beyond, Love, Joy,</p>	<p>Philosophy for Children: Children started with the stimulus 'Somebody Swallowed Stanley' As part of a community of enquiry, children worked together to decide the question that they wanted to explore as a group. This took turn taking and sharing and accepting the fact that their question might not get chosen</p>	<p>Children were able to listen to each other's ideas and share their own with each other in a really respectful way which showed that they really valued each others' thoughts and opinions and appreciated that these might be different</p>	<p>At the end of the session, the class teacher guided them to think about how well they had listened to each other and shared their ideas. They all showed good awareness that it was ok to disagree and that some questions didn't have a clear answer</p>
<p>Year 1/2</p> <p><i>Love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges.</i></p> <p>Others, Hope</p>	<p>Forest School: The children had been learning about the way that fire can be used to cook and keep warm in the outdoors. They were using fire starters to create sparks and start a fire. Certain children were struggling to create sparks with the fire starters. Some of these children were individuals of higher academic ability and were unaccustomed to failure. They were finding it difficult to persevere.</p>	<p>Children who were able to use their fire starters well, talked together and decided to go and help the others.</p>	<p>Being able to offer help to children who often seem to succeed at everything was very empowering to the helpers. It built their self-esteem and made everyone realise that we all need one another. The children were able to link this to our observable behaviours related to our whole school value of Hope and that 'there is a way through every situation'</p>
<p>Year 3/4</p> <p><i>Appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life and show generosity towards others</i></p> <p>Others, Love, Hope</p>	<p>We had been exploring the Parable of the Mustard seed and the work of the Mustard Seed Charity who demonstrate the love of God through positive community action. In Whole School Worship, we shared a Faith at Home worship with the theme of 'Belonging'. Part of this featured the work of the Campaign to End Loneliness.</p>	<p>The children were invited to imagine what it might be like to have no friends and be lonely. As we talked about what it might be like, we thought about people in our community who might be experiencing loneliness because transport is limited and the library bus no longer runs.</p>	<p>The whole school really want to raise money for a shared community library within the school grounds. Alongside this a member of ECO crew became really passionate about developing the outside space to include an Eco HQ and pond to be shared with the local community, particularly In Jolly Good Company a local dementia friendly group, with whom the school already had links.</p>
<p>Whole School</p> <p><i>Be comfortable with stillness and silence and able to engage in reflection/meditation /prayer.</i></p> <p>Self, Joy</p>	<p>Whole school worship: in Muddy Church, the children listened to <i>Be still for the presence of the Lord</i> and we shared the story of Hannah. We explored the idea that God speaks in the silence of the heart. Listening is the beginning of prayer. We then shared a time of stillness, silent reflection and prayer thinking about things that might want God to help them with, like Hannah did.</p>	<p>The candle had been lit to allow the children to reflect and help them with the meditation. They either focused on the candle or closed their eyes. We asked a few simple questions to guide the children's reflection (I wonder what you might want God to help you with? I wonder if silence helps us to listen?)</p>	<p>After the meditation, the children spoke about what they heard in the silence. One child said they heard 'God loving us.' Many children said they liked the stillness because it was peaceful. We discussed the idea that 'prayer' for many people includes the practice of spending time with Jesus in their imagination.</p>

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Other reading:

- Church of England, Spiritual Development - Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom
- Farnell, A. and Smith, D., Stapleford Centre, Making Sense of Spiritual Development in Religious Observance and the Wider Curriculum, ISBN: 978-1-90223447-2
- Nye, R. (2009), London: Church House Publishing, Children's Spirituality: What it is and why it matters