

**Learning Together for Life**

*Jesus said, 'Love one another as I have loved you' John 15:12, New Testament ('Injil')*

# **Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School**



## **Spirituality Policy**

Policy Reviewed/Approved	By Committee, Individual Governor or Head teacher
Policy Renewal Date	SPRING 2023

Learning Together for Life.

**Jesus said, “Love one another as I have loved you.” John 15:12 New Testament (Injil)**

At Stepney Greencoat we recognise all of our children as individuals, created in God’s image. The aim of this policy is to provide opportunities for spiritual experiences and spiritual reflection for all within all aspects of the school day.

**Learning:** Whilst we recognise that spirituality is not a subject that can be planned for in the same way that we plan English or Religious Education lessons we believe that providing spiritual opportunities for our children’s learning is equally important. Our subject leaders look for opportunities within their subject areas where spiritual opportunities may arise and ensure that class teachers are promoting these within their classrooms for children.

**Together:** We believe that in order for children to experience spirituality and to be spiritual beings, a sense of belonging and togetherness is vital. This is provided within the context of our small school.

**Life:** We recognise that spirituality is a vital aspect of human life and that it develops and grows over time. We hope that the spiritual opportunities and experiences which children have in our school equip them for a lifelong spiritual journey.

At Stepney Greencoat Church of England Primary School, we describe spirituality as becoming aware, inspired and in awe of ourselves, one another and of the world around us. We believe that all members of our school community are spiritual beings, able to experience spiritual moments. As a Church of England school we also understand that for people with a strong religious faith spirituality can deepen this belief.

**Our aim is to:** establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual development of all pupils through the following objectives;

- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination;
- Develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion and beauty;
- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation;
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community;
- Develop strategies to build good mental health;
- Foster self-awareness and encourage to make informed decisions;
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life;
- Develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others;
- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;
- Develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;

These objectives will enable the pupils to have a quality of life that encompasses the school vision and our values of respect, perseverance, truth, trust, friendship and love.

### **Teaching and learning**

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues the aims and objectives by ensuring:

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values;
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life;
- Unplanned and spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and children;
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this;
- A solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed;
- That we allocate appropriate areas in the school building and outdoor environment which provide time for silence, stillness and prayer;

- That children's spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies making use of the outdoor environment and relevant educational visits;
- The provision of opportunities to listen attentively and observe carefully, listening with discernment, valuing what is good and worthwhile and making judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas, in lessons, collective worship and daily interactions with adults.
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others;
- That moral development is linked to spiritual development through strategies such as 'windows, mirrors and doors' (see Appendix 1);
- That the RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives;
- That children are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and to develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished and protected;
- Promotion of strategies for positive mental health (see Appendix 2).

### **Approaches**

In our school we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to children's spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning by:

- Seeking to foster spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy;
- Allowing children the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions in a safe environment and to celebrate diversity;
- Creating and using opportunities where children can think and share their contributions regarding fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone.
- Providing opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness;
- Sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement;
- Encouraging children to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values
- Enabling children to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community and how these impact on their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today;
- Providing an environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to children for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways;

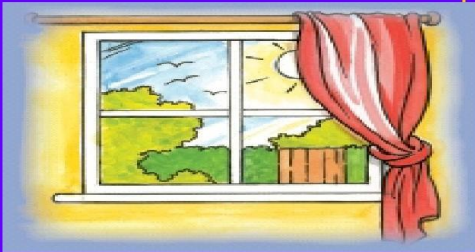
- Observing and listening to children;
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values;
- Sharing of classroom work and practice;

- Ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school by providing them with induction and development training;
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. RE books, science work, creative writing, art;
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

**This policy was adopted by the governors:**                      *date*

**The policy will be reviewed:**                      *date*

## WINDOWS:



giving children opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways; to **wonder** about life's 'VOWs' (things that are amazing) and 'OWs' (things that bring us up short). In this children are learning *about* life in all its fullness.

## MIRRORS:



giving children opportunities to *reflect* on their experiences; to **meditate** on 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.

## **Appendix 2 Extract from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Guidance; Advice for Schools and SIAMS Inspectors 2018**

### **1. Spirituality and mental health**

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published some useful guidance on spirituality and mental health where they identify ways in which some aspects of spirituality can offer real benefits for mental health. They identify spirituality as being within and beyond formal religion and recognise that it 'often becomes more important to people in times of emotional stress and physical and mental illness, loss, bereavement and the approach to death.'

They recommend that a person with a religious belief may need support which acknowledges and gives space to their faith as part of their support. Schools should therefore look to provide opportunities for inclusive spiritual development that supports good mental health as well as opportunities to learn from people of different faiths and beliefs about how their spirituality shapes them and supports their mental health and wellbeing. Religious Education which offers the opportunity for young people to engage with a diversity of people can support this. Schools would also benefit from building relationships with the religious leaders in their community.