

Holy Trinity Pewley Down:

A Federation of
Holy Trinity Church of England Junior School and Pewley Down Church of England Infant
School, Guildford

Spirituality Policy

Opening Statement

As a Church of England school, our spirituality is expressed through our understanding of the Christian gospel, rooted in the person of Jesus Christ. We fully respect that our pupils come from Christian families, from families of other faiths and from families of no faith, and that pupils will hold beliefs and values of their own. Through our spirituality policy, our aim is to enable all our pupils to reflect deeply on what it means to be human and to ascribe meaning and value to human existence.

At Holy Trinity Pewley Down, we describe spirituality as finding God in all things, enabling reflection to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves. Of course, it is closely linked to our collective worship and to the teaching of religious education and these policies are closely linked. However, we recognise that human spirituality is far more all encompassing. It is the nurturing of the inner life of the soul of a child, enabling and embracing their questions, doubts and the wonder of existence. It is particularly expressed in our school value, "Seeing heaven in the moment."

We seek to enable spiritual development such that children reflect on their capacity for:

- being in a relationship with God and God with us,
- nurturing our awareness of God being with us,
- being attentive to God being with us.

Christian spirituality is to point towards a life nurtured on the example of Jesus Christ and his care for others; we aim to develop within children a growing sense of empathy, concern and compassion and an ability to reflect on how our school values affect our relationships with others: "Imagining the journey in another's footsteps," and, "Everyone treasured and loved as a unique child of God."

Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. Whilst these questions are not dependent on religious affiliation or on the prerogative of religions, as a church school we set this development within a Christian framework, encouraging all to "Embrace the future with hope and confidence."

Spirituality is an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful, and, in relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving. The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and praise, in endeavour and enquiry.

Spirituality is something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and /or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death or suffering. It is a way of coping with challenges and recognising success and happiness, enabling a child to flourish, and is encapsulated in our vision of "Learn to live" – the fullest of human flourishing.

Aims

We aim to establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual development of all pupils through the following objectives:

- 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 Holy Trinity Pewley Down 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
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others)
- Develop strategies to build good mental health (see appendix)
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions
- Develop the skills and language required to enable children to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life
- 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
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination
- Develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc.
- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation.

Our curriculum

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 spiritual 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
- An understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces 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
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others
- 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.

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 and to celebrate diversity
- 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. reflective diaries, assembly feedback, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art
- Regular inclusion in the school's evaluation
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

Review

The Governing Body of HTPD first adopted this policy in 2019. It will be reviewed biennially, or more regularly in the light of any significant new developments.

Date last reviewed: November 2023

Date for next review: November 2025

Signed:

Clare Brunet

Headteacher HTPD

Appendix: 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.