



(DRAFT) Spiritual Development at Great Easton C of E VA Primary School



Our School Vision:

We are God's children and global citizens. We will be bold enough to use our voices, brave enough to evoke change in the world and strong enough to stand up for what is right. We are valued and are part of a Christian family that grows together in faith, love and kindness.

*'Let all that you do be done in love'. (1 Corinthians 16:14)
Love of learning, life and living.*

Associated values: Courage, Compassion, Forgiveness and Joy.

Spiritual development is essentially related to the non-material and non-physical dimension of what it means to be human. Therefore, it concerns everyone since every human being is more than simply a physical body. It is at the heart of the search for purpose, meaning and values by which to live. As such, it is part of the fabric of the moral, social and cultural aspects of human existence.

Spirituality is primarily about relationships, it is about understanding the internal relationship within ourselves, our external relationships with one another and from a Christian perspective with God.

‘Traditionally Christians believe that a person is not only made up of his or her soul and body. Each person has an immortal spirit. In Genesis God creates and breathes life into humanity so that all are made ‘in God’s own image’, that is with a spiritual dimension to their existence. It underpins Christians views about the sanctity of human life. Jesus’ resurrection is seen as proof of the spirit’s immortality since through it Christians are offered the hope of eternal life.’ (Pamela Draycott, PDD Consultancy). In order to seek God’s presence and to deepen a relationship with God, Christians undertake practices such as: worship; reflection, celebrating the Eucharist (and other sacraments such as baptism and confirmation), meditation and expressing faith in God through religious art, music or nature.

Our shared understanding of spiritual development :

Spiritual development is about considering what it means to be human and responding to life’s experiences through the search for meaning, purpose and values by which to live. It is about recognising and nurturing unique essence of the individual, created by and precious to God.

This definition was agreed by staff as most closely reflecting our vision and values as a school.

Our shared understanding of spiritual development is lived out in all that we do, all that we are and how we treat others. At Great Easton Primary we create a place where every individual feels they belong and have a place. You are free to be your true self and part of our family. Our vision and values underpin our policies and practices to ensure that we are a safe and inclusive space for all, including some of the most vulnerable and potentially challenging children. Our positive approach to managing behaviour sees each child as an individual whilst having the same high expectations for every single child. We recognise their individual journeys are unique and all staff build relationships based on respect, nurture and care. This in turn means that the children mirror this and base their relationships on patience, forgiveness, compassion; are respectful of differences and strive to be their best self.

Central to a child’s spiritual development is their emotional health, the way they see themselves and their sense of belonging. To foster this we are bold in making sure our approaches meet the needs of our school community. For example, our school dogs and chickens teach our pupils to care for God’s creation, show kindness and empathy in the way they treat others. Nature and animals bring to many a sense of peace and well-being. As well as the joy of playing in our wonderful school grounds, ‘Zen Zone’ and woodland area, children also take part in forest schools and Muddy Monday walks; enabling them to appreciate the natural world. Our ‘Cave’ provides an indoor space for reflection; the bubble tube and coloured lighting is a calming sensory space where children can hang in pods and talk to year 6 BFGs (peer mentors) and enjoy some quiet time.

Furthermore, as a school we decided to change our approaches to homework and our uniform policy. Our children are encouraged to be SMART learners who recognise the power of a growth mindset and are inspired to love learning. Activewear enables our children to be comfortable, be individuals, have choices and be ready for action! Children are given regular opportunities to develop their mindfulness and skills in yoga. Play and exercise are fundamental in having a healthy body, mind and spirit.

Our pupils are active global citizens who believe they have the potential to bring about change, impact others' lives by caring for others as well as themselves. Our 'Courageous Curriculum' termly projects are driven by a key enquiry question which encourages deeper philosophical thinking. This enables them to make connections between and across subjects and into real life. For example when looking at water as a theme, the question 'who owns the sky' led to an authentic outcome whereby the children planned and carried out a campaign in the local town to raise awareness about reducing plastics in the oceans. The children had considered who owns natural resources and who is responsible for maintaining God's creation. Every term, every class works towards a meaningful end goal or event. This gives them a sense of purpose, makes them 'experts' and develops their understanding of real-life careers. In addition, educational visits are a high priority as they fuel engagement in learning. The driving words underpinning the term's work include fundamental Christian Values such as: wonder, wisdom and sacrifice linking classroom learning with what it means to be human. They are able to hone their advocacy skills and take inspiration from individuals past and present who have transformed society **by standing up for what is right**. Through our work with School Parliament the children always have a global focus and work towards making a difference. Through collective worship the children look at global and national issues every week through our Picture News assembly. The main topic is shared with parents and carers in the weekly newsletter to encourage discussion at home.

Through collective worship and our strong links with the church the children have visitors or learn stories which focus on the Christian values such as courage, respect, perseverance and justice pupils are given opportunities to reflect on their own developing beliefs and opinions. By collectively reciting and signing our school vision and prayer - a sense of belonging and values by which to live are fostered.

Our RE teaching of Christianity and other world faiths fully supports children in considering what it means to be human and that someone's beliefs can be central to their spirituality. Through prayer and reflection our children learn how to respond to life's experiences and search for the meaning and values by which to live their lives.

Through our shared understanding of the development of the whole child, including their spiritual growth, we tailor one 'house team' day, every half term, to a specific focus. This enables us to have time and space to enhance the school community's understanding of various concepts such as: mindfulness, growth mindset, the importance of role-models, loving yourself for who you are, developing our vision and values as well as reminding the children how to develop their sense of self. In the same way our extra-curricular clubs and activities are chosen to meet the needs and interests of our learners. This includes our residential trips to the Isle of Wight and Danbury Outdoor Centre where children take risks, challenge themselves physically and emotionally requiring great strength of character and, at times, bravery to overcome fears. After school clubs such as Pokemon, cookery, gardening and singing and art all promote connectivity with their spiritual styles.

By providing children with these opportunities to develop spiritually we ensure their sense of worth, their place in the world and the ability to be happy in their own skin means that they have a 'love of learning, life and living'.