



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.

This policy has been equality impact assessed and we believe that it is in line with the Equality Act 2010 as it is fair, it does not prioritise or disadvantage any pupil and it helps to promote equality at this school.

<i>This Policy was reviewed and amended and Staff were consulted on this document in:</i>	<i>June 2021</i>
<i>The policy was ratified by the Governing Body in:</i>	<i>7th July 2021</i>

To be reviewed July 2022

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 it 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'.

Appendix 1: Spiritual Capacities in a Christian Context (adapted from The Church of England's *Spiritual Development* document 2019) p.17

Spiritual Capacity

I 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

I 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

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

Spiritual Development

Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom

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

I 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

I 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

Appendix 2:

Here is an example of a working document used to give examples of how we can focus on 'ways of reflecting' to support the development of different spiritual capacities. The Windows, Mirror and Door model is used as a way to describe the journey from experience through reflection to growth and transformation. This is updated as part of our termly curriculum review as a teaching staff.

Spiritual Capacities	Experience Window	Reflection Mirror	Growth Door
Reception and Year 1 Be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and others.			
Year 2 Love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges.			
Year 3&4 Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions.			
Year 4&5 Be guided by our beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend.			
Year 6 Be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community.			
Whole school Be comfortable with stillness and silence and able to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer.			
Whole school Appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life and show generosity towards others.			