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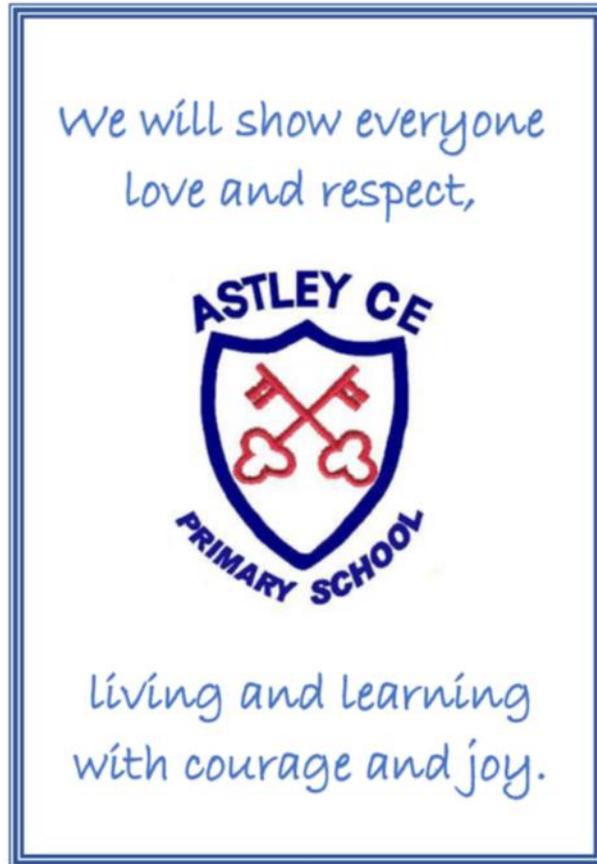
Title of policy



Governing body

Spiritual Development Policy

Our Vision and Values



*“Spirituality is like a bird:
If you hold it too closely, it chokes,
And if you hold it too loosely, it escapes.”*

Israel Salanter Lipkin

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**Introduction.**

Spiritual development is one of the stated purposes of schooling since the 1944 Education Act. It is a term which is difficult to define. But it is important to do so, to enable a shared understanding and ensure that spiritual development is a central thread of our Church Of England school.

This policy defines what we mean by the terms, spirituality and spiritual development. It also describes how we seek to '*create spaces where spirituality is affirmed and spiritual growth can happen.*' *Dave Smith: Making sense of spiritual development 1999*

"The term spiritual and moral development needs to be seen as applying 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 relationships to other people and for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity - with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live."
SCAA Spiritual and moral development 1995

What is spirituality?

Spirituality is the way in which we combine our thoughts and emotions to reflect, respond to, and seek to give meaning and purpose to the experiences that we encounter in life. It has to do with human wholeness, to our responses to both the awe filled and awful moments of life, it is part of our capacity for profound and significant thinking and being. It is entwined with a persons' morals and may or may not encompass a relationship with God. Put simply, to be human is to be spiritual.

What is spiritual development?

Spiritual development isn't something we believe can or should be measured, so there is no intention to make any judgements about children's spiritual development during their time with us. Whilst all human beings are spiritual, spirituality can be developed in a variety of ways. It is our responsibility as school staff, to offer experiences, opportunities and space for spiritual development to enable children to understand themselves, others and their world. It is strongly linked to mental well-being. We acknowledge that not all spiritual development is healthy and seek to provide children with the framework in which to make wise choices aligned to our school values of love, respect, courage and joy.

Spiritual development is enabled when uniquely *human capacities* are nurtured and encouraged. These include:

Beliefs – The development of personal beliefs, including religious beliefs; an appreciation that people have individual and shared beliefs on which they base their lives; a developing understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity and a willingness to take a stand to defend these beliefs.

A sense of awe and wonder – Being inspired by the beauty of the natural world, mystery, or human achievement

Experiencing feelings of transcendence – Feelings which may give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being, or the belief that one’s inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experience; being comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection or meditation or prayer.

Search for meaning and purpose – Asking ‘why me?’ at times of hardship or suffering; reflecting on the origins and purpose of life; responding to challenging experiences of life with curiosity and open mindedness.

Self-knowledge – An awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences; a growing understanding and acceptance of individual identity; the development of self-respect and the ability find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges; being willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success; making free and responsible choices with an awareness of their consequences and implications.

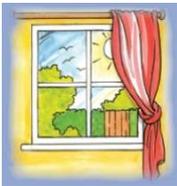
Relationships – Recognising and valuing the worth of each individual; developing a sense of community; the ability to build positive relationships with others, to empathise, to be thankful and to show generosity.

Creativity – Expressing innermost thoughts and feelings; exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight.

Feelings and emotions – The sense of being moved by beauty or kindness; hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions and feelings and how to learn to use feelings as a source of growth; being ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others.

How do we support and encourage spiritual development in school?

We have adopted Liz Mills’ *windows, mirrors, doors* framework which enables us to plan purposefully for spiritual development across the whole school curriculum and beyond.



WINDOWS: giving children opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways; to **wonder** about life’s ‘Wows’ (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.

Effective learning in itself is a *spiritual* experience. This is because learning involves engagement with and exploration of a new concept [windows], thinking deeply about it, trying to connect it to what we already know [mirrors]. If we can successfully fit this new concept to our pre-existing web of understanding, this evokes a positive emotional response [we often describe this as: the penny drops!] With each new concept acquired, we transform ourselves [doors], moving forward in life a little altered, intrinsically motivated, fulfilled and inspired by the experience.

Why is spiritual development important?

As a church school we believe that our role is to educate the whole child and that the spiritual growth of our children is as important as, and indeed is a vital contributor to, their academic development. The themes developed each week through our collective worship, our school vision, as well as opportunities woven throughout our curriculum underpin all we seek to develop in the lives of our children. Getting people to consider the world around them, reflecting and thinking for themselves, evoking positive emotional responses and pondering ultimate questions is the vital ingredient in our recipe for spiritual development. This will enable our children to take their place in society as fulfilled, responsible, spiritually aware and emotionally engaged individuals.

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.

Dave Smith: Making sense of spiritual development 1999

What opportunities are there for spiritual development in school?

Because spiritual development is a key feature of what makes us distinctive as a church school, the provision of opportunities for spiritual development is thoughtful and intentional.

Appendix 1 details some of the ways in which spiritual development is planned for and encouraged across the curriculum and life of the school. Equally important are the events that cannot be planned for and which rely on spiritually a-tuned teachers taking the opportunity, as the situation presents itself, to give a moment of spirituality the space and time in an otherwise busy day.

References and background reading:

New perspectives on spiritual development Tony Eaude 2003

Spiritual Development: The Doughnut and the Hole Liz Mills 2002

Spiritual development: Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom. Cof E 2019

Making sense of spiritual development Dave Smith 1999

Appendix 1: Opportunities for spiritual development

Vision and values:

This is a key contributor to effective spiritual development as the golden thread throughout the school. *'We will show everyone love and respect, living and learning with courage and joy.'*

- Everyone involved in the life of the school is valued and seen to be valued.
- Policies and practices reflect the values of love, respect, courage and joy.
- All adults recognise the need to model mutual respect and considerate behaviour.
- The quality of the learning environment and displays reflect the value placed on pupils and staff.
- Aesthetic awareness is encouraged.
- The ethos of the school welcomes differences in beliefs and values, and invites all to belong.
- The achievements, successes and efforts of everyone are recognised and celebrated.
- School provides a broad curriculum supported by a wide range of events, experiences and activities, including visits to places of beauty, interest and challenge that enable pupils to admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative endeavour.

Collective worship and RE are two key areas of school life that provide ideal vehicles for effective spiritual development.

Collective Worship provides opportunities for:

- Reflection and response
- Thinking deeply and drawing links between ideas
- Stillness and prayer
- The respect of personal and collective beliefs
- Sharing and celebrating common beliefs
- Celebrating success and talent
- Sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear, etc.
- Shared activities such as singing, listening, laughing, reflecting on a theme
- Remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance
- Emphasizing common purpose and values
- Experiencing emotions
- Taking part with sincerity and a sense of higher purpose
- Through pupil-led worship, children have opportunity to support the spiritual development of others, that in turn leads to a sense of fulfillment and is a spiritual experience for the leaders
- Creative responses to experience such as music, drama, poetry, story
- The use of visual stimulus such as religious symbols, candles, art, icons, photos, video

Religious Education is a subject that looks at the spiritual experiences of others and how these change and shape their lives. RE allows children to use what they find out about other people and their beliefs to reflect on their own experiences. Through this process, children can engage with ultimate questions of meaning and purpose and begin to shape their own beliefs. RE allows children to engage with the idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.

The wider curriculum also provides opportunities for spiritual development. The school's planning format indicates where the children's learning will provide opportunities for spiritual reflection.

In Physical Education:

- Being a team member.
- Pushing yourself to the limits.
- Extremes of skill, endurance and achievement.
- Emotion in sport such as those evoked through success and failure
- Personal limitation and acceptance that others may perform better
- Appreciation of perfection.
- Sportsmanship.

In Design and Technology:

- Discovering how something works.

- Appreciating ingenuity.
- Beauty in design.
- Perseverance to solve problems.
- Personal achievement.
- Learning from others and nature.

In Literacy:

- Empathy with authors and the characters in stories and plays.
- The appreciation of beauty in language.
- Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech.
- The values of great works.
- Heroes and heroines in literature.
- The reading and writing of poetry.
- Imagining oneself as someone else.
- Escaping into other worlds through literature.
- The element of wonder in literature.
- Pleasure derived from the creative process.

In Numeracy:

- Infinity and nothing.
- Pattern and order.
- Shape and regularity.
- Truth, certainty and likelihood.
- The universality of mathematics over time and space.
- The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations.

In Science:

- Wonder as the basis of science.
- Questions of beginning, creation and evolution.
- Discovering the limits of experimentation.
- Birth, life, death and renewal.
- The universe and beyond.
- Regularity and order in science.
- Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists.
- The impact of scientific achievements.

In ICT:

- The wonder of worldwide instant communication.
- The speed of the growth of knowledge.
- The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.

In the Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance):

- The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places.
- Beauty, truth and goodness.
- Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs.
- Artistic creativity.
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses.
- The arts as means of expressing mood.
- Skill in creation and performance, and particularly in personal reflection upon their own creativity using various art forms.
- Effects on the emotions and senses.
- Personal response and preference.
- Mood.
- Skill.
- Pattern.
- Formulae.
- The sense of fulfillment and transcendence through performance.

In Geography:

- Wonder at the diversity of environments and people.

- Questions about the care of the environment.
- The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns.
- World (economic) development.
- Land formation.
- Empathy with people from other parts of the world.

In History:

- Being in touch with past people, things and ideas.
- Being part of history.
- Handling artefacts.
- Influential events and people.
- The commitment of significant people in history.
- War and peace.
- Interpretation in history.
- The nature and importance of invention and exploration.
- Empathy with people from other times in history.