

St Mary's Catholic Primary School



*'With Jesus, we learn together
through faith and love'*

Spiritual Education Policy

Aims Of Our Mission Statement

What is Spirituality?

Spirituality can mean different things to different people and there have been many attempts to define it. The most explanatory definition relevant today comes from Thomas Groome

‘Our spirituality arises from the deepest core of our being. It permeates who we are. It is a longing that allures us, through the depths of our self, to experience gracious mystery and ultimate meaning as the backdrop of our lives and to enter into conscious relationship with the ground of our being – with God.’ (Thomas Groome)

We can also describe spirituality as a journey.

‘Spirituality may be described as a journey towards wholeness.’ (K Treston)

Spiritual Education and Children’s Development

The aim of Spiritual education in the school is to help children develop. Spiritual development progresses from one stage to another. We aim to help our children Grow spiritually strong through our faith and through Jesus’ example of love.

Living working and Growing in faith

As a school it is very important for all staff to work together with children and parents to help the children’s spiritual development.

‘Whoever our students may be, whatever subjects we teach, ultimately we teach who we are. When I hear teachers ask whether they can take their spirituality into the classroom, I wonder what the option is. As long as we take ourselves into the classroom, we take our spirituality with us’

(Parker, J Parker ‘Evoking The Spirit in public Education Educational Leadership Vol.56. no. 4, 1999, page 10)

Our Ethos

We believe it is important that we provide a caring, stable and loving family environment which encourages everyone to love, care for and respect each other. We teach children to respect other people’s property and the environment we live in. As our Mission Statement teaches us to grow and live together in faith and love.

This is necessary for children to begin to develop their spirituality. We want to develop the children’s spirituality in daily school life so the message of the Gospel is evident.

“Love one another as I have loved you.”

Spiritual Education across the curriculum

As a staff we can be aware and take opportunities for spiritual development in all subject areas. It is something we can try to develop daily in and outside the classroom.

Spiritual Development can be developed in our approaches to teaching through encouraging the children to:

Reflect on how things are made and created by Man / God.

Reflect on uniqueness, wonder and value of each individual person and living thing.

Reflect on the value and wonder of nature and wildlife

Reflect on the wonder and detail of creation, how God is part of and within everything around us.

Have confidence in...

- Who they are as a person as a unique creation from God
- Their gifts and talents given to them by God
- Their personal motivation and ‘inner drive’ (also called self-belief)
- Their spirit and personality – their own spirituality.

Spiritual Development can also take place through subject areas and curriculum coverage. Teachers can take opportunities to develop children’s spirituality at the appropriate age and pupil understanding. As teachers we need to capitalise on moments of experience and understanding which take pupils beyond themselves.

‘Spiritual development across the curriculum is concerned with the individual’s growth in faith through their deepening knowledge of creation and revelation.’

(Spiritual and Moral Development Across The Curriculum CES 1995)

Spiritual experiences can come in many forms through...

- Experiencing awe and wonder
- Curiosity and mystery
- Connection and a feeling of belonging
- Heightened self-awareness
- Prayer and Worship
- Feelings associated with self-worth
- A sense of security, well-being and purposefulness

In school the staff will :

- To create periods of silence within the whole curriculum.
- To create opportunities for prayer (both private and group based)
- To provide periods for collective worship
- To encourage the children to embrace and reflect on the big questions in their lives
- To enable children to have opportunities to reflect and question
- Develop the school environment and make use of visuals across the school
- Make use of school trips and outing to help the children with their spiritual development

Spiritual Development Throughout The School

Spiritual development is developed throughout the school from Early Years exploring their environment to year six researching a topic on space or reflecting on how a computer works. In early years the children are absorbing the most amazing amount of information about their world. Their brain is developing at such a rapid rate and there is so much for them to find out about the world around them: growing a plant from a tiny seed, contact with living things, watching wind blow leaves from the trees, looking at a worm or an insect. These are all moments where young children encounter God's creation and where we have opportunities to teach our children about the wonder of God and thank God for the world around us.

PSHCE and Religious Education

PSHCE, Citizenship and Religious education are closely linked subject areas which are central to spiritual development. They promote spiritual and ethical thinking.

PSHCE help to give the pupils the knowledge, skills and understanding they need to lead confident, independent lives and to become informed, active, responsible citizens contributing to the spiritual life of their school and communities.

The children reflect on experiences and understand how they are developing personally, socially, tackling many of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues that are part of growing up.

Literacy and Drama and spirituality

Books and poems are written from the personal experiences of the author. In relating and identifying with the author's experiences and conveying the characters experiences and feelings through drama, children can gain spiritual experience. They can develop a true feeling of empathy through identifying with the characters and story plot or poem.

They can identify and explore new situations they may not have experienced and thus gain empathy and understanding of the world and people around them.

Maths and Computing

Children can experience a sense of wonder at the interconnectedness of the universe, of its laws and principles and of their own skills to think logically and find patterns, to understand the concept of infinity of number, to see the beauty of shape and pattern and the continuity of a circle.

Science and Nature

Through science, children can search for meaning and understanding of: the world around them; the wonder of creation, pattern, beauty, power of the earth and its plants, animals, fish and insects; the beauty and uniqueness of different habitats created by God; appreciation of the environment and a sense of care and appreciation for the world they live in. They can develop a sense of wonder and respect for their bodies and modern medicine.

Art and Design and Music and Dance

The creative arts are an opportunity for children to explore their creativity and marvel at their creative ideas and the ideas of others and to appreciate people's individuality and expression and acknowledge the gift of creativity given by God.

'Good art puts us in touch with the transcendent'
(Str Wendy Beckett)

PE and Games

To appreciate the beauty of line and form; to marvel at their own skills and those of others; to appreciate the value of working as a team and the value of taking part / good sportsmanship.

History and Geography

To understand how the world and man has developed, and search for meaning and to think about creation and how we have shaped our world and how we can shape it in the future.

Planning and Recording Spiritual Development

Spiritual Development is very spontaneous and it is difficult to plan for spiritual experiences. Each child is unique and will gain spiritual meaning from different things. Natures child may find it in nature, a creative child may find it in art or music. Another

child may find spiritual development in poetry or exploring different cultures in geography.

- At St Mary's we look for opportunities for spiritual moments in our planning but there are also the unplanned moments of awe and wonder which are recorded as they arise.
- At St Mary's we embrace the idea that we learn as a 'whole person'. There is no separation of cognitive, social, physical emotional from the spiritual. St Mary's culture of unity gives strength to the children's spiritual development. We recognise the children for what they are and not what they can do. St Mary's believes in the need to go beyond a restricted curriculum and to provide one that is spiritually balanced and enriching.