

Spirituality Statement

In God's hands, we love, learn, grow and inspire

“What shall we say the kingdom of God is like, or what parable shall we use to describe it?
It is like the mustard seed, which is the smallest of all seeds on the earth. Yet, when
planted, it grows and becomes the largest of all garden plants, with such big branches
that the birds can perch in its shade.

Mark 4: 30-32

Effective period	July 2024 – July 2025
Reviewers	Liz Orton/Ellie Brown/Vic Goodman
Date of Review	July 24
Next Review Due	July 25

Pencombe C of E Primary School

Spirituality Statement

Rationale

Our vision statement states that "In God's hands, we love, learn, grow and inspire". This influences the ethos of our school and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is a core thread that runs through our school and we attach great importance to it for both children's development and for the growth and well-being of all within our school community.

Our children's achievements, attitudes and well-being are valuable to us, and we offer them the opportunity to discover their gifts and talents given to them by God because "in His hands, we love, learn, grow and inspire." This statement helps to ensure that this school ~~promotes~~ celebrates the individuality of all our children, irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

What is spirituality?

Spirituality enables us to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves. It is the nurturing of the inner life of the soul of a child, enabling and embracing their questions, doubts and wonder of existence.

For us at Pencombe CofE Primary, we feel it is about an awareness of ourselves as created by God in relationship with God, other people and the world around us. This does not mean we expect people to share our Christian faith or believe that this statement is not relevant to those of other faiths or none, but it is the foundation we build upon and therefore support others from. Spirituality then is about recognising our place in this world and our connection with it, with one another and with God and exploring how that reflected in our daily lives. For a Christian, it is about the understanding of being created in God's image and how that informs and leads us through life in this world.

How do we support Spirituality in the school?

Our spiritual foundation is built upon our Christian values, nature and school culture. We seek to raise spiritual awareness in the following ways:

- Teaching and learning – we create opportunities to reflect on how our learning impacts our place in the world, with a careful consideration of how we respond. Within the RE curriculum, we look to the teachings of Jesus and other religions to learn about the wider world, capturing opportunities for awe and wonder as they arise.
- Exemplification – the approach in how we model behaviour, discussion and appreciate one another should reflect love, compassion, respect and an understanding of the world around us.
- Collective Worship - in order to help our children love, learn, grow and inspire, we recognise the importance of collective worship. Such opportunities allow pupils and adults to grow spiritually through regular practice of reflection and enlightenment. Worship is led in a way that it is accessible to all. Our children are encouraged to develop their own spiritual leadership by leading collective worship.
- Links to the Church and community - our school has a good relationship with the local church and community, and together we seek to encourage all to engage with the word of God in relation to God as creator of the world and creator of us within his image.
- Space to reflect – our school recognises the importance of spirituality so classrooms, our outside learning environment, the Church and outdoor areas can be used for moments of reflection, where tranquillity can be offered and contemplation achieved.

The Building Blocks of Spiritual Development

It is our responsibility as a Church of England Primary School to provide our children with the following "building blocks" to the Christian faith:

Self-Awareness or Self Knowledge - All humans need to be aware of, and acknowledge, their own inner life of thoughts, feelings and emotions. What does it mean to be human? This is an important part of developing self-respect, a sense of identity and self-worth. In turn, this enables us to value and respect others. Pupils will be given a range of opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their beliefs, feelings and responses to personal experiences.

Forming Relationships - An important part of personal growth is being able to develop relationships with others, recognising them as people of worth and value. This includes developing a sense of community and building social relationships. Pupils will be given the opportunity to develop an understanding of both their individual and group identity and to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships.

Asking Ultimate Questions - This is the search for meaning and purpose in life. It involves asking questions such as "Why me?" in times of suffering, or "What happens when you die?" The youngest children often ask the most profound questions of this type and deserve to be taken seriously when they do so. We believe that it is important that this area of reflection and challenge is encouraged, not stifled. Ultimate questions are not limited only to RE and collective worship but can arise at any time.

Uncertainty, Awe and Wonder - In historical and spatial terms everyone is insignificant. An awareness of one's place in the world enables a person to live with natural doubt and uncertainty and encourages the search for meaning in life. When faced with eternity and infinity, or the wonders of the natural world and human achievements, feelings of awe and wonder are also a natural response. For some this may include experiencing feelings of transcendence which give rise to belief in the existence of God. It may also encourage a belief in ideals and possibilities of rising above one's present experience of the world (e.g., by adopting and supporting specific causes or issues). Pupils will be given opportunities to reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life and to experience moments of stillness and reflection, for example in Collective Worship.

Beliefs and Values - This is the search for, and development of, personal beliefs and values which may or may not be shared with other members of the community. This naturally may include the development of religious beliefs, and as a church school we seek to be a supportive environment in which people can explore and clarify their own beliefs.

Creativity - This is the exercising of the imagination or intuition and insight to express one's innermost thoughts and feelings, especially through the creative arts. Creative work can be an important tool for exploring some of the other areas of spiritual development, including the Creative Curriculum, Music, Art and opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting.

Feelings and Emotions - The sense of being moved by kindness or beauty, or being hurt by hatred and injustice. This should bring a growing awareness of when it is important to control feelings and emotions. Pupils will be able to foster their emotional life and express their feelings in the community of the church school, knowing themselves to be accepted and loved as unique individuals. We recognise that these areas of experience are common to most people - they are the "third dimension" of existence alongside the physical and the mental. All the above experiences may be explained and explored in both religious and nonreligious terms and demonstrates our commitment as a church school open to those with other faiths and beliefs.

How do we develop spirituality?

We prioritise time in the day for stillness and reflection. This might be listening to a story, lighting a candle in Collective Worship, going for a walk in our beautiful, rural surroundings. We aim to:

- Provide many opportunities for creativity and using the imagination.
- Create play opportunities.
- Ensuring regular time for song - we sing as a whole school twice a week in Church.
- Ensuring regular time for prayer - this can take many forms, but should include being thankful, saying sorry. Allow children the opportunity to open themselves to God.
- Provide frequent opportunities for children to explore, express and share feelings.
- Constantly reaffirm the importance of relationships. Emphasise the importance of how we talk to and relate with each other.
- Provide opportunities to express awe and wonder, appreciate beauty in all its forms, and appreciate the connections and unity in the world.
- Encourage each other to admit mistakes and to say sorry. Recognising and owning up to faults is an important healing and redemptive process.
- Encourage children to show kindness, caring and compassion, and to express these in practical ways. (e.g: how we treat each other every day; charitable works; looking after pets).
- Explore the 'Big Questions' – particularly through our Herefordshire syllabus and PSHE Jigsaw scheme of work.
- Read often to children, and give them opportunities to discuss and reflect. This includes both secular and religious texts, in particular the Bible.

How do we know this is being effective?

Spiritually developed children love and accept themselves and enjoy good relationships with each other. They take an interest and delight in the world around them; they are open to what lies beyond the material (this may manifest itself in faith/belief in God). They are able to express and understand feelings, they have a strong moral sense and a love of what is good. They are able to enjoy quiet and stillness, they possess an active imagination, and show joy in creativity and discovering new skills.