



Spirituality Policy

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Signed by	Date
Headteacher:	
Trust:	

St Thomas' CofE Primary Academy

Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' John 10:10

Introduction:

At St Thomas' we recognise that, there is no universal definition of 'spirituality', because it is a very personal experience. It differs from person to person, and often spirituality changes within people during their lifetime. We aspire for everyone to achieve their God-given academic, personal and spiritual potential, so they flourish and make a positive impact in the world. Jesus came to offer life in all its fullness, and we aim to support this through providing a Christian education for the children of Kidsgrove and the surrounding areas through learning for life with Jesus.

Rationale:

Luke 2:52 states that Jesus, the example and inspiration for Christians, 'grew in wisdom and in stature and in favour with God and all the people', as he developed as a young man. This verse suggests he developed the academic wisdom of his mind, his physical body and also as a social and spiritual being. At St Thomas' we strive to develop the body, mind and spirit of our school community, to enable them to become fully rounded individuals. Within spirituality lies the heart of all religious expression and belief.

Aims:

At St Thomas' Spirituality manifests in the following aspects:

- Beliefs
- Prayer
- A sense of awe, wonder and mystery
- Natural beauty
- A search for meaning and purpose
- Self-knowledge
- Relationships
- Creativity – the arts
- Feelings and emotions

Developing opportunities for spiritual development at school:

WINDOWS: giving children opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways; to wonder about life's 'Wow's' (things that are amazing) and 'Ows' (when things are not going well). 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.

We provide **WINDOWS** throughout our curriculum. We will be having specific lessons and Worships with an awe and wonder focus with a variety of stimuli, including photos, videos, music current events and real-life stories.

MIRRORS: Through high-quality RE lessons, children are consistently challenged to reflect on their learning about religion to help them learn from religion, regardless of whether they have a specific faith.

Children at our school often identify **DOORS** for themselves. They may hear of a local issue or an international event and request to take action, through fund raising and raising awareness such as the work for children's rights, Ukraine and local food banks.

The spiritual development of our pupils is very paramount, therefore here at St Thomas' we intend to:

- Develop a sense of belonging to a church school community, with its distinctive Christian ethos
- Be challenged by exploring the beliefs and values of others, the school's identity, whilst deepening their knowledge and understanding of their own faith or beliefs
- Discuss religious and philosophical questions in a respectful way
- Understand why people reach certain decisions on religious and moral issues, and how those decisions affect their lives
- Understand how the school's Christian Distinctiveness determines its values and expectations
 - Experience silence and reflection
- Develop a reverence for God and the school's rituals and practices which honour God through Jesus Christ
- Ensure our church school links with St Thomas' Church in Kidsgrove remains strong and continues to flourish.

As spiritual development cannot be seen in isolation from personal development, time is spent on this so that it will also affect inter-personal relationships within the classroom and as a result contribute to the positive ethos of our school. For spirituality is not only about Christian prayer and worship; it is also about knowing and being ourselves, being aware of and caring for others, and about knowing the world around us. Thus, spiritual development at St Thomas' means being concerned with a child's inner growth, with emotional growth, understanding of and acceptance of oneself. Spiritual growth always results in the positive growth of the whole being.

As in any other area of the curriculum, children need to acquire skills, explore experiences and sensitivities and assimilate knowledge within the spiritual area. This will be integral to the learning process and delivered in a variety of methodologies:

- Cross-curricular
- Themed through our progressive curriculum and subject specific learning journeys.
- As the focus in some acts of collective worship either inside or outside the school and the church
- As a dimension in RE Skills

To gain access and respond to these experiences, children need to acquire certain skills:

- Reflection
- Stilling and silence
- Inner awareness
- Listening to oneself
- Questioning, searching for meaning
- Ability to communicate and express feelings and spiritual sensitivities
- Interpretation of feelings and behaviour
- Empathy for others as feeling, thinking people
- Awareness of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit

Skills take time to acquire and need to be practised. At St Thomas' we ensure most of these skills can be practised naturally throughout the whole curriculum.

What is the Role of the School Community?

All members of the school community have a responsibility for helping to nurture children's spiritual development. School staff can do this through:

- Establishing and maintaining a partnership between pupils, parents and staff; recognising and respecting the faith background of the children and their families.
- Taking part in, and supporting, collective acts of worship.
- Being good role models in their conduct towards other members of the community.
- Promoting an attitude of respect for other people and for others' views.
- Nurturing consideration for and generosity towards others.
- Drawing on the experiences of pupils and their families during religious education lessons and beyond.
- Recognising and being constantly aware of the needs and backgrounds of each individual pupil.
- Being willing to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and the faiths of others.
- Having a positive attitude to the value of spiritual education.

Pupils can do this through:

- Taking an active part in acts of collective worship.

- Participating in activities which promote the skills allowing them to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice;
- Conducting themselves towards others considerately, in line with the schools behaviour policy
- Respecting the views and beliefs of others.

Parents and Local Academy Committee can help through:

- Adopting a positive attitude to the value of spiritual education;
- Supporting the school's Christian ethos and acts of community worship such as Class Worship and church services;
- Respecting the views and beliefs of others.

Monitoring Spirituality

The staff and Local Academy Committee recognises the importance of monitoring the quality of provision to promote spirituality. We use the SIAMS framework to assess ourselves against and to identify areas where spirituality provision can be enhanced. The LAC reviews our school evaluation termly, this is reflected in our SEF.

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