

Walsh Infant and Junior C of E Schools

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development encompasses our children's personal growth, values, and understanding of themselves and their place in the world, it can be difficult to define as it varies from each person and is a personal experience and often changes over a person's lifetime. We believe spirituality is our relationship with ourselves; our mind, body and soul (spirit), our relationship with each other, with God (transcendence) and with our world, nature and the environment .



Spiritual development is about awe and wonder regarding the big questions of about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. Spirituality is different from being religious or having faith, a person can be spiritual without being religious.

In keeping with our Christian Vision and recognising that we are all God's children and are spiritual beings. We believe that spiritual development should influence all areas of education and life and we aim to integrate this in all aspects of our curriculum and life at school enabling all of our children and adults to flourish.

At Walsh we have reflected on the meaning of spirituality:

'Spirituality is reflecting on the big questions of life'

Spirituality is an individual's view of the world, making connections and being reflective.'

'Spirituality is an individual's view of the world and is linked to personal experiences'

It is important that we use age appropriate language to define spirituality, so when talking to our children we will refer to:

- Having a sense of awe and wonder
- Caring for nature and living things
- Wanting to love and to be loved by people
- Our four school values: Community, Peace, Love and Resilience

Click on the image to watch a video about developing spirituality



Through our curriculum we will focus on the spiritual development of our pupils through the four elements:

Self

- Awareness of feelings; ability to reflect and express
- Awareness of our uniqueness; happiness with who we are
 - Gratitude for the things we have and the person we are
- Exploration of personal faith
- Development of imagination and creativity

Others

- Empathy and understanding; respect
 - To love and be loved (loving your neighbour)
- Making a difference; duty

Transcendence (Beyond)

- Encountering/experiencing God (having a sense of what lies beyond the material/physical)
- Ability to ask and discuss the 'Big Questions' (e.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God)
- Opportunities for prayer, connecting with God
- Making sense of the world

Nature

- Developing a sense of awe and wonder
- Enjoying the miracles of everyday life
- Taking time for what really matters
 - Appreciating beauty in art, music, nature

We use the '**Windows, Mirrors and Doors**' approach (developed by Liz Mills) which has helped us to develop our thinking about spiritual development across our whole curriculum.

Windows



Giving children opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways. Learning about life in it's fullness, this includes both the things that amaze us and challenge us. To **wonder** about life's wows and ows. **Through our curriculum we have lessons with awe and wonder through a variety of stimuli photos, videos, music, artefacts, current events and real life stories etc**

Mirrors

To meditate on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers.

Learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

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



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. Learning to *live* by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value. **They may hear of a local issue (ie road safety) or an international event and request an action ie raising money, writing to ... This can be done through school council, faith team, safeguarding ambassadors, but all children know they have the opportunity to share their ideas and know they will be listened to.**

How is spirituality nurtured?

We offer opportunities through all aspects of our provision for children to explore and develop spirituality. Children's spirituality is nurtured through our strong relationships and the values that are important to us as well as the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

We give children opportunities to:

- Reflect upon the world around them and show a sense of awe and wonder towards aspects of the natural world and appreciate the connections and unity in the world
- Have regular time in the day for quiet reflection, listening to a story, listening to music, using the peaceful places or prayer spaces.
- Have opportunities to develop creativity using their imagination through a diverse range of artists and music
- Celebrate individuality and children knowing they are all special, unique and loved
- Experience sense of enjoyment and fascination through a love of learning and reflect on the situations of others through role play or stories.
- Explore, express, share and compare feelings and opinions, this is planned into all subjects across our curriculum
- Have reflection and prayer writing opportunities in our Peaceful and Prayer places
- Explore and learn about emotions and feelings through our zones of regulation and reset and reflection sheets
- Sing in lessons and as part of our weekly worship
- Explore, express, share and compare feelings and opinions. This is planned into all subjects across our curriculum but it more focused within our PSHE using the Jigsaw scheme, worship and RE lessons. Other structures such as Metacognition, Mindfulness, big questions and 'I wonder' questions, are used to support this further.
- Constantly reaffirm the importance of positive and nurturing relationships, how we talk to and relate with each other is fundamental.
- Encourage each other to admit mistakes and to say sorry and forgive, recognising and owning up to mistakes is an important process that allows us to heal and grow from our experiences.
- Encourage everyone to show kindness, caring and compassion, and to express these in practical ways. (e.g.: how we treat each other every day; charitable works; through prayer spaces)
- Explore the 'Big Questions' – particularly through our RE curriculum, topics, worship, theme weeks and news events.
- Read often, giving them opportunities to discuss and reflect through a wide variety of books, this includes both secular and religious texts, in particular the Bible.
- Begin to develop their own system of beliefs, which may or may not include religious beliefs.

Ways we develop Spirituality

- Opportunities are planned across our curriculum
- We have a planned programme of Collective worship across the school, based on Guildford Diocese planning, Picture News (including British Values and world events) singing and celebration based on our values.
- There is a daily act of Collective worship involving our Faith team, other children and visitors.
- Displays and pictures around the school continually celebrate our learning and encourage spirituality through reflection.
- Visits out of school and visitors into school enhance our learning, connections with others and opportunities to ask questions

Impact – how do we know this is being effective?

We know our learning is effective as the children love and accept themselves and have happy, healthy relationships with each other. They take an interest and delight in the world around them and are open to ideas beyond, which may manifest in faith or belief in God. They are able to express and understand their feelings as well as respecting others. They have strong moral sense and love what is good, they are able to enjoy quietness and stillness, possess an active imagination and show enthusiasm and joy in creativity and discovering new skills.

What is the role of our School Community?

In our school we give opportunities for reflection, in lessons and collective worship. Children develop an understanding of looking back and reflecting on what they have experienced, this may take the form of looking back and taking from the past, from a Bible story, from a picture/icon/view/learning experience. The focus is to help us in our lives today and tomorrow.

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
- Recognising, understanding and being constantly aware of the needs and backgrounds of each individual pupil
- Using our school vision and values to be a positive role model within the community therefore promoting respect for other people and their views, showing consideration and support towards others
- Promoting an attitude of respect for other people and for others' views
- Taking part in, and supporting, collective acts of worship;
- Nurturing consideration for and generosity towards others.
- Drawing on the experiences of pupils and their families during religious education lessons and beyond;
- 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.

Children can do this through:

- Respecting the views and beliefs of others.
- Using our School Vision and Values to help themselves and others learn
- Taking an active part in acts of collective worship
- Being active learners and participating in learning and activities that 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 our values and golden promises

Parents 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 assemblies and church services
- Respecting the views and beliefs of others and demonstrating this to others

Spiritual development at The Walsh Schools is about more than religious education, it is about fostering a nurturing, exciting environment where children can explore their inner lives, develop empathy and values, both their own and our school values, and find a sense of purpose and meaning. By integrating these elements into the curriculum and school culture, we can support the holistic and spiritual development of every child.

Ofsted define the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development (November 19) is shown by their:

The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

The moral development of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

The social development of pupils is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; they develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

The cultural development of pupils is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures in the school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept and respect diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.