

Policy for Spiritual Development

*In God's likeness, we
shine our light in all
we say and do,
through love, respect,
courage and joy.*

curious, confident, caring

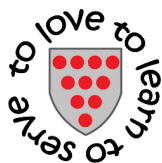


*"Spirituality is like a bird:
If you hold it too closely, it chokes,
And if you hold it too loosely, it escapes."*

Israel Salanter Lipkin

May 2021
Adopted by Astley C of E primary School

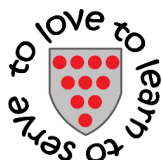
Author: Rev. Duncan Hutchison – Diocesan Education Adviser



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Introduction

What is spirituality?

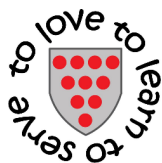
Spirituality is the way in which we combine our thoughts and emotions to reflect, respond to, and seek to give meaning and purpose to the experiences that we encounter in life. It has to do with human wholeness, to our responses to both the awe filled and awful moments of life, it is part of our capacity 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.

Name of School:
Astley C of E primary School
Vision:
<i>'Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven,'</i>
Matthew 5 V16
<i>At Astley CE Primary School, children and adults 'Let their light shine' in all that they say and do. Our vision is to enrich and develop the community in the truest likeness of God. We believe that everyone can shine and be curious, confident and caring and have an understanding and acceptance of all within the diverse world we live in. Love, respect, courage and joy drive our daily actions and thirst for living and learning.</i>



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School Statement on Spirituality and Spiritual Development

In Astley C of E Primary School, we recognise that developing the spirituality of our pupils and adults is a fundamental aspect of enabling pupils and adults to flourish morally, socially and culturally. Our school's distinctively Christian vision, *children and adults 'Let their light shine' in all that they say and do* supports this growth. *Our vision is to enrich and develop the community in the truest likeness of God. We believe that everyone can shine and be curious, confident and caring and have an understanding and acceptance of all within the diverse world we live in. Love, respect, courage and joy drive our daily actions and thirst for living and learning.* By giving children and adults a range of opportunities to reflect on the word of God, along with a calm and peaceful environment, enables all to take spiritual moments.

Spiritual development opportunities are well planned and of high quality so that the whole school community is engaged on a journey of discovery.

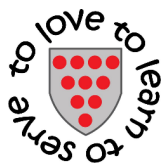
Spiritual development differs from person to person and is a very personal experience. For this reason, it is difficult to put into words. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith. For Christians in church, spirituality is about developing a deeper understanding of and connection with God. It is about God's way of being with us and our way of being with God. Through this we are able to respond to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a church, but it is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. Family backgrounds may be very different and spiritual development must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

Therefore, in light of this and in light of our school's distinctively Christian vision, at Astley we define spirituality as 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.

Aims and Guiding Principles

Through establishing the right learning environment in which spiritual development can be fostered, we aim to support pupils and adults to:

- develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God
- develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school, as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith
- develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them
- develop an awareness of, and respect for, other people's beliefs and faiths, and the ability to articulate their own



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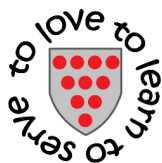
- develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others)
- develop strategies to build good mental health
- foster self-awareness and the ability to make informed decisions
- develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life
- begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life
- develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth
- understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others
- develop a love of curiosity, creativity and imagination
- develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc.
- develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation.

These objectives will enable pupils and adults to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

Guiding principles

Spiritual development contains many facets and it is concerned with a number of areas of an individual's life. Therefore, when developing spirituality in pupils and adults, we, in line with our distinctively Christian vision and our school's definition for spirituality, look at four key areas:

- **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.



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- Taking time for what really matters.
- Appreciating beauty in art, music, nature, etc.

Approaches to Spiritual Development

In Astley, we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to pupils' spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning by:

- seeking to foster spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy
- allowing pupils the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions and to celebrate diversity
- providing opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness
- sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement
- encouraging pupils to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values
- enabling pupils to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community and how these impact on their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today
- providing an environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder.

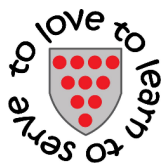
Reflect, Respond and Question is another way of looking at developing spiritually.

- *Reflect:* Children have the opportunity to reflect on what they have seen, heard or read. This may include a quiet reflection, or a discussion with a partner. Children have the opportunity to discuss what it might mean to them, what inspires them, what makes them go 'WOW'.
- *Respond:* Children respond to the activity, how they might change their own behaviour, or do something differently in light of what they have read or heard. This may be particularly useful for Collective Worship.
- *Question:* Children can raise big questions. What do they want to know next? What would help them to understand more?

In order to develop pupils' spirituality, it is important that we are able to spot when spiritual development and expressions of spirituality are occurring. We need to be alive to the opportunities for spiritual growth across all areas of the curriculum, but certainly, in areas of RE and Collective Worship. It has been argued that children are innately spiritual beings and have a high capacity for developing and engaging spiritually with the world.

Children have the 'spiritual capacity' to develop and grow. Some of those capacities which are indicative of spiritual development include:

- awe and wonder
- connection and belonging
- curiosity and mystery
- self-awareness
- prayer and worship



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Pupils' expression of spirituality is not limited to these capacities but having the awareness of these may help in our understanding of how children develop spiritually. It is important to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to explore and spend time engaged in these capacities in order to aid their development.

As part of our approach to spiritual development, children in Key Stage 2 have access to Philosophy 4 Children sessions where they have opportunities to explore and reflect on life's big questions.

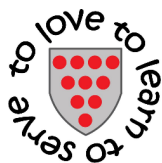
Planning, Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues the aims and objectives by ensuring:

- the curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values
- opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life
- unplanned and spontaneous spiritual opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and / or celebrated by staff and pupils
- Collective Worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for pupils to respond and reflect on this
- a solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed
- the school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer
- that pupils' spiritual capacities, such as imagination, empathy and insight, are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies making use of the outdoor environment and relevant educational visits
- opportunities are provided for pupils to listen attentively and observe carefully, to listen with discernment, to value what is good and worthwhile and to make judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas
- support is provided for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others
- that the outstanding RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives
- that pupils are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and to develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished and protected
- strategies for positive mental health are promoted.

Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to pupils for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:



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- observing and listening to pupils
- regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values
- sharing of classroom work and practice
- ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school by providing them with induction and development training
- evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflective diary, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art
- regular inclusion in the SEF
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools
- regular diocesan Spirituality review.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

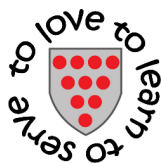
- provide a statement within the school prospectus which makes clear that the aims of spiritual development within the school are based on its Christian foundation, but are inclusive in practice
- in conjunction with the Headteacher, monitor the effectiveness of spirituality within the school and make recommendations for its development in accordance with the SIAMS Schedule.

The Headteacher will:

- co-ordinate timetabling / themes across the year(s) into long, medium and short-term planning, in conjunction with the school and church community, so that spirituality can be embedded throughout the curriculum
- ensure that the school welcome / induction pack and website have clear statements about the school's ethos for developing spirituality and its distinction from moral, social and cultural development
- be a part of the SIAMS inspection process
- support other members of staff
- know where to access good resources to support spiritual development
- lead staff meetings or provide quality CPD other sources that have a focus on development of spirituality.

Staff will:

- support the crucial role that spiritual development plays within the school
- plan and lead activities for the development of spirituality when required
- provide opportunities for pupils to reflect, question and be inspired
- understand the school's definition of spirituality and promote it where possible.



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Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. This support is provided by Diocese of Worcester Education Team. Training needs for staff may be identified through regular subject leader audits as well as performance management cycles.

Resources

A number of resources are available to support the development of spiritual development within school including:

- Roots and Fruits
- Diocesan Wellbeing and Spirituality Compendium
- Diocesan Prayer Area resources
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Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the Governing Board every 3 years. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- a change in the SIAMS Schedule for Inspections
- a change in the understanding of spiritual development.

Approval / review by Governing Board: March 2025

Headteacher signed:

Chair of Governors signed:

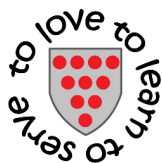
Date of next review: February 2028

Appendix I: Opportunities for spiritual development

Vision and values:

This is a key contributor to effective spiritual development as the golden thread throughout the school. *In God's likeness we shine our light in all we say and do, through love, respect, 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 and the school



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vision.

- 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.

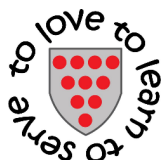
Collective Worship provides opportunities for:

- 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
- Emphasising 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

In addition, as part of the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to:

- To visit places of beauty, interest and challenge
- To admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts
- To work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations
- To experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level
- To engage in activities that promote courageous advocacy
- To participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies and coaches etc.

Religious Education is a subject that looks at the spiritual experiences of others and how



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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:

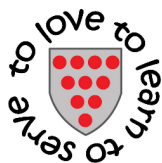
- Discovering how something works.
- Appreciating ingenuity.
- Beauty in design.
- Perseverance to solve problems.
- Personal achievement.
- Learning from others and nature.

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.



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- 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 IT:

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

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

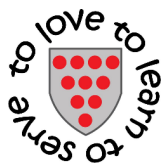
- The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places.
- Beauty, truth and goodness.
- Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs.
- Artistic creativity.
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses.
- The arts as means of expressing mood.
- Skill in creation 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.
- Questions about human impact on the Earth

In History:

- Being in touch with past people, things and ideas.



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- 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.

In Forest School:

- Being *in* nature.
- Appreciating the changing seasons
- Appreciating God's creation