

DIOCESE OF
ST ALBANS
MULTI-ACADEMY TRUST



Trust Approach
Understanding Spirituality

Understanding spirituality

The Trust is committed to supporting all in our family of schools in their spiritual development,

‘Enabling all to flourish, rooted in God’s Love’

This document is intended to provide a foundation on which a shared understanding of spiritual development across our schools.

What is spirituality?

Quotes: Spirituality is...

‘Ones inner being, our inner self where we find resources within that come from a greater source.’

‘It is a very personal experience; differs from person to person, spirituality may change within people during their lifetime.’

School quotes:

‘Spirituality is not something we can see; it is something we feel inside ourselves. It is about awe and wonder, asking questions, inspiration and being aware of something ‘bigger’ outside ourselves.’

‘An ongoing, reflective journey. It is something that teaches us about questioning, understanding and relationships; relationships with ourselves, others, the world beyond.’

Spirituality is about seeking a meaningful connection with something bigger than yourself.’

Aims for Spiritual Development

Taken from the project work of David Smith- Imaginor- linked with Roots and Fruits- spiritual capacities-

Spiritual Capacities include children’s ability to:

- ❖ Be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- ❖ Be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- ❖ Love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- ❖ Exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- ❖ Be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- ❖ Be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer
- ❖ Be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others
- ❖ Be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- ❖ Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life’s big questions
- ❖ Appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life and show generosity towards others

To enable spiritual development to flourish in our school, we hope all members of our family will be able to grow in their ability to:	 be guided by their beliefs and values as principles to guide their thinking and behaviour	 be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others	 love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve
 find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges	 exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder,	 be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent*	 be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in invitational reflection, meditation, prayer
 be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others	 be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success	 demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions	 appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life like friends and family, and show generosity towards others

*belief in the existence of a divine being, or the belief that one's inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experience

How is spirituality nurtured?

Children's spiritual development is nurtured through all aspects of school life. It is about the relationships and the values we as schools consider to be important. David Smith in his work, referred to above, makes the point that spiritual capacities do not exist in a vacuum. The spiritual context will govern, to a great extent, the way in which they are understood and exercised. Spiritual growth will involve reflecting on the significance of an experience for our lives. Without the reflection a feeling may just remain a feeling.

Approaches

Liz Mills from The Stapleford Centre, a Christian charity fostering Christian engagement in education, has identified three ways schools can provide opportunities for spiritual development:

WINDOWS: giving children opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways; to wonder about life's 'Wows (things that are amazing) and 'ohs,' (that bring us up short). In this children are learning about life in 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 curriculums. We will have specific lessons with an awe and wonder focus with a variety of stimuli, including photos, videos, music, current events and real-life stories.

Placing value on thinking skills offer a variety of **MIRRORS** for the children to reflect on the world in different, deeper ways. It allows them to ask and discuss bigger questions and consider their own ideas and beliefs.

Through high-quality RE lessons, children are consistently challenged to reflect on their learning about religion to help them learn from religion. Children at 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.

Working with the local community, local fundraising and other activities may all contribute towards this.



Windows are for
looking at the world.



Mirrors are for
looking into.



Doors are going out
through.

Role of the school community

All members of the school communities have a responsibility for helping to nurture children's spiritual development. This can be achieved 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 together people and others' views
- ❖ Nurturing consideration for and generosity towards others
- ❖ Drawing on the experiences of pupils and their families during religious lessons and beyond
- ❖ Recognising and being consistently aware of the needs and backgrounds of each individual pupil
- ❖ Be willing to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and the faith of others
- ❖ Having a positive attitude to the value of spiritual development

Spiritual development across the curriculum

Spiritual development happens across school life; worship, trips, visitors, Forest School, at play. There are also specific opportunities where spirituality can be nurtured in curriculum subjects:

Art	❖ Exploration and appreciation of the natural world as its own masterpiece ❖ Exploration of artistic interpretation ❖ Effects of the arts on emotions and senses ❖ Self-expression of big ideas through art mediums ❖ Review and appreciation of creations
Computing	❖ Wonder and awe at the power of the digital age ❖ Understanding advantages and limitations of technology ❖ A gateway to overcoming challenges and issues ❖ Opportunity to consider the irreplaceability of human connection
Design and Technology	❖ Enjoying and celebrating personal creativity ❖ Review and appreciation of creations and ingenuity ❖ Beauty in design ❖ Learning from others and nature
Drama	❖ Delight and opportunity in self-expression ❖ Development of sympathy and empathy ❖ Seeing the world through the eyes of another ❖ Transcendence through performance
English	❖ Appreciation of the beauty of the written word ❖ Wonder ❖ Laughter ❖ Development of knowledge ❖ Richness of vocabulary
Geography	❖ Understanding and awe of the size, diversity and beauty of our world ❖ Developing sympathy, empathy, admiration and understanding of the world's population, cultures, wonders and nature ❖ Caring for the environment ❖ Understanding of self and others ❖ Understanding of our place in the world ❖ Hope for the future
History	❖ Learning from the past to create a better tomorrow ❖ Establishing connections to the past ❖ Understanding 'our part,' in the world's history ❖ Developing sympathy and empathy ❖ Critical thinking ❖ Development of hope

	❖ Contribution to wisdom- there is on such thing as a good war or a bad peace ❖ Experiencing, respecting and appreciating the need for periods of reflection or remembrance
Maths	❖ Patterns in nature ❖ A sense of the endlessness of infinity ❖ An understanding of truth, certainty and likelihood ❖ The magic of number ❖ The beauty of shape and space
PSHE and RSE	❖ Developing awareness of and responding to others needs, opinions and desires ❖ Explore meaning and purpose for self and others ❖ Development of resilience and inner strength ❖ Valuing self as unique (in the image of God) ❖ Cherishment and maintenance of relationships
Physical Education	❖ Delight in movement ❖ Spontaneity ❖ Dance, games and gymnastics- becoming focused, connected and creative ❖ Being aware of one's own strengths and limitations ❖ The power of human connection ❖ Joy in winning ❖ Resilience in defeat ❖ Appreciation of championship
Religious Education	❖ Wonder and joy, learning about and from stories, celebrations, rituals and different expressions of religion and worldviews ❖ Asking and responding to questions of meaning and purpose ❖ Considering questions about God ❖ Exploration of prayer and worship ❖ Opportunity for personal consideration
Science	❖ Asking questions ❖ Exploring answers ❖ Admiration of living things ❖ Questioning the world around them