



Spirituality at SPA: What is it and how do we nurture it?

The Building Blocks of Spirituality:

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. 6

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.

Spirituality at SPA: Windows, mirrors, doors.



Experience

Windows are for looking out onto the world and becoming aware of its wonders, both the 'wows' and 'ows'; things that are 'awe-full' and make us wonder and be grateful and things that are 'awful' and make us wonder and ask questions. The whole curriculum and life itself are full of opportunities to recognise this sensitively.



Reflect

Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting, alone and together, to see things more clearly, for thinking and asking important questions learning from our own and each other's responses. In schools we must allow time for this for individual and group reflection and sharing of perspectives.



Some subjects and times allow for this specifically such as religious education and collective worship but in all subjects, there will be opportunities, unexpected or planned, when things just 'crop up'. Handled sensitively, it is possible to make the most of all these times, if there is ongoing deliberate and corporate staff and pupil support.



Growth

Doors are for looking through in order to then act or express this in some way in response; for moving on, making choices, and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving.

Spirituality Capacities, from the work of Shahne Vickery, 'Recognising Spiritual Development in a Primary School Context 2018':

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