



Inspire Learning, Ignite Curiosity

Marlow C of E Infant School Spirituality Policy 2021

***Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness"
Genesis 1:26***

Rationale

At Marlow Church of England Infant School our vision is to inspire learning and ignite curiosity, within a welcoming Christian and spiritual community. We embrace the uniqueness of everybody and are inclusive of all. Our values of respect, kindness, perseverance, forgiveness, thankfulness and service guide all that we do and our aim is for every child to feel nurtured, supported and safe.

Our belief is that every individual is created in God's image and therefore is precious and valuable. We believe in treating everybody with respect and dignity because we acknowledge everyone's God given value and unique identity.

We aim to achieve this by providing children with the opportunity to work towards achieving their full potential by:

- Embracing the uniqueness of everybody and be inclusive of all
- Empowering all to be enthusiastic learners
- Ensuring that every child feels nurtured, supported and safe
- Enriching learning through progressive teaching methods and technology
- Being responsible to and for society
- Being good citizens of the planet

As a school we support the rights of children and these rights are encompassed in UN Convention of the Rights of the Child. This policy focuses on helping to realise *Article 29 All children have the right to education which tries to develop your personality and abilities as much as possible and encourages you to respect other people's rights and values and to respect the environment.*

Aims

The aim of this policy is to outline how we at Marlow Church of England Infant School aim to give children the opportunity to develop their spirituality. It is our role in school to inspire, create and recognise that spirituality exists in everyone.

The Governors' strategic plan for the school includes their aims for spirituality in the school. The purpose being described as being 'underpinned by a Christian foundation, where everyone has confidence to develop and share their beliefs & values; respecting those of others and celebrating awe & wonder'. This policy allows us to some of the planned and unplanned ways in which we encourage spiritual development.

What is Spirituality?

At Marlow Church of England Infant School, we consider that Spirituality makes us who we are. It is our ability to reflect about our beliefs. It is being able to inform our perspective on life and our interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values.

In helping us to reflect about who we are, spiritual development allows us to think about how we can improve the lives of others and as a result improve our happiness through sharing, caring and being kind. It is about our relationship with ourselves and others.

Spirituality allows us to experience and appreciate the beauty of our world and all things great. It is that sense of enjoyment and being fascinated and curious to learn about ourselves, others and the world around us.

We aim to find effective ways of developing our pupils' aspirations, their sense of identity, self-worth and belonging, their principles, beliefs and values, appreciating the world around them, taking responsibility and becoming conscious of choices they make

In short, in developing spirituality, we are allowing our children to flourish, be happy and live life in its fullness*

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is encouraged through a range of activities. These include both planned and unplanned learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to ask questions and explore topics, discussing and responding to issues around them.

Whilst spiritual moments can just happen, we plan to provide high quality, thought provoking and purposeful opportunities for spiritual development.

The four elements of spiritual development form the basis of our work with children in developing a strong sense of spirituality. We also believe that it is vital that all of the adults in school also see the need to develop their own spirituality for their own wellbeing and so that they can effectively support and help our children help each other.

The four elements of spiritual development:

Element	What does this involve?
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Empathy and understanding; respect, tolerance • To love and be loved (loving your neighbour) • Making a difference; duty/service
World	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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
Beyond (transcendence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encountering/experiencing God (having a sense of what lies beyond the material/ physical) • Ability to formulate 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

* John 10:10. 'That they shall have life, life in all its fullness.' and the Church of England's Vision for Education

Teaching and learning

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 and values of Respect, Kindness, Perseverance, Forgiveness, Thankfulness and Service; Children will be taught and encouraged to express the values in practical ways so that they understand the impact of demonstrating these values in everyday life has on others.
- 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 children;
- Have regular times in the day for quiet and reflection. This might be listening to a story, lighting a candle in worship, engaging in reflection activities in spaces around school.
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this; Opportunities are provided within Collective Worship which allow children to reflect on different beliefs and the needs of others and how they can help those who are in need.
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer;
- That children's 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;
- That children will see positive relationships role modelled around school. The importance of relationships will be reaffirmed to them. This will include clear exploration of how we talk to and relate to each other and how this links to the school Christian Vision
- The provision of opportunities to listen attentively and observe carefully, listening with discernment, valuing what is good and worthwhile and making judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas;
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others – children are encouraged to develop resilience and support others in their learning
- That moral development is linked to spiritual development through strategies such as 'windows, mirrors and doors' (see Appendix 1);
- That children are encouraged to reflect on mistakes and say sorry, where appropriate. That the RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives;
- That children are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and have opportunities to express awe and wonder, appreciate beauty in all its forms and appreciate connections and unity in the world.;
- Promotion of strategies for positive mental health (Appendix II) through the MindUp curriculum, including daily brain breaks (3 times per day)

Monitoring and evaluation

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

- Observing and listening to children;
- 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. reflection books, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art;
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

Policy written: April 2021

Review date: April 2022 (and then every 3 years after)

Windows:

Opportunities to look out on the world to gaze and wonder:
The **Wow** and **Ows** moments. The things we find amazing and bring us up short.

Encounter: The learning about life



Mirrors:

Giving opportunities for children to reflect, to look inward to consider some of the big questions of life: To explore their own insights and those of others.

Reflection: The learning from.

Doors:

Giving opportunities to children to respond, to do something to go through the door of a creative expression of their own thoughts and convictions.

Transformation: The learning to live by putting into action what they believe.



Appendix II Extract form The Church of England Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach

Spirituality and mental health

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published some useful guidance on spirituality and mental health where they identify 'ways in which some aspects of spirituality can offer real benefits for mental health.'

They identify spirituality as being within and beyond formal religion and recognise that it 'often becomes more important to people in times of emotional stress physical and mental illness, loss, bereavement and the approach to death.'

They recommend that a person with a religious belief may need support which acknowledges and gives space to their faith as part of their support. Schools should therefore look to provide opportunities for inclusive spiritual development that supports good mental health as well as opportunities to learn from people of different faiths and beliefs about how their spirituality shapes them and supports their mental health and wellbeing. Religious Education which offers the opportunity for young people to engage with a diversity of people can support this. Schools would also benefit from building relationships with the religious leaders in their community.

Areas to explore might include:

- The value of prayer, worship and reflection.
- How different spiritualities can help us to find meaning and purpose in the things we value.
- How faith can bring hope and healing in times of suffering and loss.
- How a sense of the beyond can change a person's understanding of who they are, their relationship to others and the world.