



## Policy: Spiritual Development Policy

Date Reviewed by Staff:

September 2020

Next Review Date: (3 years unless otherwise advised)

September 2023

## **Spiritual Development Policy**

### **Rationale**

Spirituality is a powerful force that determines what we are, and our self-understanding. It forms the basis for successful relationships, and shapes our behaviour and outlook on life, others and the world.

At Barrington Church of England Primary School the spiritual dimension is expressed through our Christian faith, and the recognition of the spiritual nature of mankind.

In line with “The Church of England Vision for Education” (2016) the vision for our school is deeply Christian and has a desire for educating for “life in all its fullness” at its heart. Our ethos enables and encourages all children to grow and flourish spiritually. It is our aim that the children’s individual spiritual development is fostered as an integral element of the range of learning opportunities and experiences they encounter as part of the curriculum, and that it permeates all strands of school life.

In line with the Church of England’s vision there are four basic elements which run through this approach, wisdom, hope, community and dignity: together they form an ‘ecology’ of the fullness of life, each in interplay with all the others.

**Wisdom;** The word “wisdom” is used here to denote not just a deeply rooted Christian concept but also a deep, broad and long term context which can include within it all other key educational concepts and practices such as knowledge, information, skills, excellence, academic rigour, critical thinking, measurement and assessment, appraisal, outcomes, ethos, values, and religious or other forms of literacy. Wisdom is about ethics as well as cognition, about values and purposes as well as facts.

We aim to foster confidence, delight and discipline in seeking wisdom, knowledge, truth, understanding, know-how, and the skills needed to shape life well. We nurture academic habits and skills, emotional intelligence and creativity across the whole range of school subjects, including areas such as music, drama and the arts, information and other technologies, sustainable development, sport, and what one needs to understand and practise in order to be a good person, citizen, parent, employee, team or group member, or leader.

**Hope;** Hope in God’s future, coupled with natural aspirations for students or schools, can also stimulate critical and constructive dialogue about society and education.

**Community;** We are inextricably involved with others. At Barrington, we have a core focus on relationships and commitments, participation in communities, and in helping our children to develop the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.

**Human dignity,** the ultimate worth of each person and the basic principle of respect for the value of each person involves continual discernment, deliberation and action, and we aim to be a place where the understanding and practices it requires are learned.

Our vision is for the common good of the whole human community and its environment, and we respect and welcome diversity, freedom of religion and belief, and encourage others to contribute from the depths of their own traditions and understandings. We invite collaboration, alliances, negotiation of differences in order to serve the flourishing of a healthily plural society and democracy.

## Aims

The aims for spiritual development at Barrington Church of England Primary School are:

- To provide a context of faith, security and loving relationships to support each child's spiritual search.
- To foster the spiritual development of each child, regardless of age, sex, ability or cultural background.
- To foster self-awareness and promote a feeling of self-worth.
- To develop a set of values, principles and beliefs.
- To develop positive human qualities.
- To develop an understanding of a range of world religions and their beliefs
- To develop respect and empathy for other people and their beliefs.
- To foster a respect for different people's feelings and values.
- To develop the children's enthusiasm to explore and learn through enquiry and first hand experiences.
- To enable the children to attribute meaning to experiences.
- To enable the children to value the non-material dimension of life.
- To foster reflection and stillness.
- To foster a sense of meaning, purpose and direction in life.
- To encourage imagination and creativity.
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder at the miracle of creation, life and the natural world.
- To enable the children to experience a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them, including the intangible.
- To share Christian stories and respond to Christian festivals, rituals and symbols, particularly those from the Anglican tradition.

Our Christian concept of the human person is not limited to wisdom, hope, dignity and community; to live "life in all its fullness" includes many other elements, such as the ones below chosen by the pupils, staff governors and parents to be our school values:

Our school values are central to our spiritual development and our school is a place where:

- ❖ There is an ethos of care and concern which embraces all members of the school community. (Key Christian value – Christian love)

- ❖ We aim to include everyone and be loyal and supportive friends.  
(Key Christian value - Friendship)
- ❖ Creativity – we value and celebrate new ideas and ways to express ourselves. (Key Christian value – Creativity)
- ❖ Truth – we endeavour to be truthful to ourselves and to others.  
(Key Christian value – Truth)
- ❖ We trust each other and believe in the honesty and reliability of others.  
(Key Christian value – Trust)
- ❖ We challenge ourselves to be the best we can be and to face our fears.  
(Key Christian value –Courage)
- ❖ Forgiveness – we forgive each other and do not bear a grudge, so that we can live together happily.  
(Key Christian value – Forgiveness)
- ❖ We aim for inner peace; learning how to be calm and contented, coping with anxieties and fears, and also for peace between each other in school; making and keeping friends, sorting out arguments, making compromises, letting go of hostile feelings and learning how to listen to each other.  
(Key Christian value – Peace)

## Implementation

Spiritual development is an important element of a child's education and fundamental to other areas of learning. Without curiosity, without the inclination to question and without the exercise of imagination, insight and intuition, young people would lack the motivation to learn and their intellectual development would be impaired.

- **Exploring who we are.** The process of how we construct our sense of identity and place in the world; including a reflection of what it is to be human.
- **Self-Knowledge.** An awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, our responsibilities and the way that we relate to others; the development of self-respect and self-worth and the value and respect of others.
- **Beliefs and Values.** The development of personal beliefs, including religious beliefs; a recognition that there are both personal and shared beliefs and that these shape personal identity; and an appreciation of other people's views.
- **A sense of awe, wonder and mystery.** This includes beings inspired by the natural world, mystery and human achievement as well as by any experience of God.
- **Experiencing feelings of transcendence.** An awareness of feelings which may give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being or the belief that one's inner resources provide the

ability to rise above everyday experience. Becoming responsive to God, the 'other' or the 'ultimate.'

- **The search for meaning and purpose.** This includes the process by which we make sense of experiences; encouraging the exploration of the challenging questions about life and suffering and death such as 'Why me?' 'Why is there suffering?' and 'Why am I here?'
- **The fostering of a sense of curiosity about self, the natural world and God.**
- **Developing relationships.** The development of relationships which value and respect each person; the propensity to foster attributes such as love, goodness, kindness etc; developing a sense of community.
- **Creativity.** Expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through, for example, art, music, literature, and crafts; exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight; letting vision develop.
- **Feelings and Emotions.** The sense of being moved by beauty or kindness, hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control feelings and emotions, and how to channel feelings to use them as a source of growth.

**Every aspect of the school has a bearing on the spiritual development of the pupils**

**The school fosters opportunities for spiritual development through...**

- **The school ethos** – by cultivating a supportive and caring atmosphere which reflects Christian Values; by fostering attributes such as empathy and kindness and by praising these alongside other academic achievements.; by giving pupils greater responsibility as they mature through which they gain insights into themselves and their relationships.
- **The way that we behave towards each other** – by being respectful and considerate towards each other and creating an atmosphere where all people are valued.
- **The environment of the school** - by providing a range of spaces and experiences which give them a tactile experience in their play, artistic displays of creativity on the walls of the common spaces in the school which inspire feelings of novelty and beauty, charity posters which provoke empathy and quiet space in the playground where pupils can go to reflect.
- **Assemblies and Collective Worship** - by giving pupils a variety of opportunities to explore awe, mystery and their own inner life and beliefs and by encouraging pupils to participate by presenting class work, writing prayers or reflections, playing musical instruments and joining in the singing.
- **The curriculum** - by creating opportunities for pupils to explore spiritual matters in each subject area, as well as to fulfil the national curriculum requirements. (See Appendix 1 for a summary of what each discipline offers)
- **The School Council** - by giving pupils the opportunity to reflect on the environment, of the school and its life; by giving them opportunities to develop the tools to articulate their own and others views; by helping them to negotiate with each other, work with practical and financial constraints and reshape vision to make things happen
- **Out of school activities** - by promoting activities after school which will complement the experience of the pupils during the day and which provide an interface with the wider community.

**The school assesses spiritual development by...**

- **Looking at the range of opportunities that the school is offering**

- **Observing the behaviour of pupils.** This shows whether they have internalised the values and ethos of the school by treating each other with respect.
- **Looking at how pupils use the special facilities of the school.** For example, observation of how, and how often pupils use the quiet space for thinking gives an indication of spiritual growth.
- **Reflecting on conversations during circle time.** The teacher uses circle time to explore issues, relationships and feelings with pupils. This not only helps pupils to explore spiritual matters but it gives the teacher an indication of how they are maturing.
- **Reflecting on what is happening at the school council.** Looking at the range of issues raised by pupils which reveal underlying attitudes to the environment and ethos of the school.
- **Reflecting on pupil participation in Collective Worship**
- **Gauging views of parents and pupils.** The conversation and correspondence between school and home, the annual survey of parent and pupil views, give indications of attitudes towards the ethos, environment and behavioural expectations of the school community.

### **Appendix 1 - The Curriculum**

Our aim is to embed spirituality across the curriculum; the whole of the curriculum has a part to play in pupil spiritual development. Here they find insights, beauty and mystery, unanswered questions which excite curiosity, and an exploration of what it is to be human.

**Art and Music.** These offer opportunities for pupils to encounter beauty, to express their creativity and imagination, and to develop their inner world of thoughts and feelings. Pupils learn how to make sense of experiences of sound, touch and sight. They learn to overcome problems and reshape after mistakes.

**RE.** The curriculum provides opportunities to look at a range of different beliefs and faiths, to listen to other people's perspectives, and to look at the ultimate questions. Sometimes RE takes place in Church offering a different context in which to explore the kinds of experiences that give rise to belief in God.

**PSHE.** Many of the aspects of being a good citizen arise out of a developed approach to spirituality. There are links between people's religious beliefs and their cultural identity and aspirations.

**Geography.** Pupils are excited when a beautiful place they have visited is under exploration in class. They are also keen observers of the landscape. Geography not only investigates the natural physical landscape but also the impact of human intervention on it. Questions about human society and culture and our responsibility for the geographical environment emerge.

**History.** Pupils come to see their own lives in the bigger perspective of a historical context. They reflect on the consequences of the behaviour and relationships in the past. They learn how people's beliefs shaped them. History looks at the great achievements and the inspirational characters behind them. It opens up the tragedies and suffering of the past and can initiate thoughts and questions as a result and enable pupils to empathise with people in the past.

**Science.** The study of science opens up feelings of curiosity, awe, mystery and wonder at the natural world. It highlights ways in which science and technology benefit human lives. It provides an opportunity to celebrate human endeavour. It also raises questions about the environment and how we take responsibility for it.

**Maths.** Even simple maths has an elegance and there is beauty in the strings of coloured beads on the abacus, shapes, and graphs. The stimulation of intuition and creativity is something that is beneficial to learning maths and it is also relevant to spiritual development. The study of maths

supports the development of the use of logic and insight to reason, the curiosity and drive to solve problems and the personal strength to become resilient learners.

**English.** Reading and listening to stories introduces pupils to language through which they can explore their own thoughts, feelings and relationships. There are opportunities to look at issues of equality and prejudice, life and death, and other topics being explored in PSHE. Teachers can deliberately choose books to explore particular issues in an age-appropriate way. Likewise written work helps pupils to give names to experiences and to articulate their feelings.

**PE.** Physical movement enables children to explore space and their body; pupils gain experience in self-control whilst having fun; PE provides a forum for channelling emotions and for exploring relationships.

In addition, as part of the curriculum, the children have opportunities:

- 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 charity based activities.
- To participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches, etc.

## **Appendix 2 Collective Worship**

Collective Worship, which takes place in accordance with the Christian faith, forms an important part of the life of Barrington School. It provides a vehicle to develop our experiences of a sense of awe and wonder, of transcendence, of self-knowledge within the setting of Christian worship.

### **Aims:**

- To give children the opportunity to experience the wonder and mystery of God.
- To help children discover their place in the world.
- To highlight and nurture the spiritual dimension through experiencing worship.
- To provide children with a vocabulary of worship and an experience of a wide variety of worship forms, including symbols and imagery..
- To provide an opportunity to celebrate major, and some minor, Christian festivals.
- To heighten awareness of the ultimate questions / realities of life and to provide the opportunity to reflect upon these. To support the search for meaning.
- To enable children to appreciate their worth and value to God, and to the community, and to respect the integrity of all individuals as a child of God
- To enable pupils to make effective use of silence in opportunities for reflection, contemplation, meditation and prayer.
- To celebrate gifts, talents and achievements.
- To establish, explore, and reinforce the common Christian values of the school community such as love, peace, kindness, compassion.
- To foster a feeling of community and belonging in the school through a sharing of experiences and feelings.
- To be aware that Collective Worship can be led by a variety of people or groups, such as pupils, school staff, local clergy, members of local communities etc.
- To develop personal relationships and to encourage social development.
- To provide an opportunity to empathise with the needs of others.
- To provide an opportunity for children to become acquainted with people from the local and wider community, particularly the local church.
- To encourage respect and care for God's creation by a positive attitude to both local and global environmental issues.
- To foster feelings such as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy.
- To give memorable and enjoyable experiences.
- To provide an opportunity to bring before God in prayer personal needs and those of others.
- To share with participants some of the central teachings of the Christian faith at an appropriate level, and thereby give them the encouragement to explore their own beliefs and understanding of God within a Christian framework.
- To provide the opportunity for stillness and reflection

### **Implementation**

A plan for collective worship for the term is written by the collective worship planning team (the headteacher, school music lead and local vicar) this gives an overview of the areas to be discussed over the term.

Collective worship is planned and led by different members of the school community during the week, these include, the headteacher, the pupils, the local vicar, class teachers, visiting church groups (Gener8) and speakers.

### Monitoring

Evaluations of collective worship are completed by both members of staff (on a rota) and the pupils (led by the schools council)