

Spiritual Development Policy

St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

*"I have come so that they may have life and have it to the full"
(John 10:10)*

What do we mean by Spiritual Development?

"Spiritual Development" is a difficult term to define. It is concerned with how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour questions which are "at the heart and root of existence". It is therefore about what our school provides through all areas of the curriculum, through Collective Worship and Liturgy, through our ethos and climate – to help our children make sense of these questions.

In the Catholic tradition, Spiritual Development is inseparable from growth in faith. Christ's mission is at the heart of our school mission statement "that all may have life and have it to the full" (John 10:10).

Thus in St Joseph's Spiritual Development is:

- about the development of the essence of a unique individual
- about helping our pupils, each in their unique way, to think, appreciate, question, struggle, wonder, love, reflect and indeed work!
- about helping our pupils to deepen their personal relationship with Christ

At St Joseph's our aim is to nurture the spiritual development of all our children through a rich and varied curriculum, through prayer and reflection, and by creating an ethos which reflects the values proclaimed by Christ in the Gospels.

How do we promote the Pupils' Spiritual Development?

At St Joseph's we provide:

- opportunities for our pupils to deepen their relationship with Christ in personal prayer, public liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments
- time to give our pupils space to explore for themselves, to question and to reflect
- a climate (ethos) within which all our pupils can grow and flourish, respect each other and be respected
- opportunities for our pupils to reflect, in increasing depth, on what they have seen, done or read (both in RE and through the Learning Challenge Approach)
- opportunities to experience awe and wonder – to be moved by nature and by excellence in human achievement
- opportunities for our pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference and so enable them to make connections between aspects of their learning

How do we encourage the Pupils' Spiritual Development?

Through questioning:

- leading the pupils in the direction of open ended enquiry in RE and other subjects

Through "talk" and "exploration":

- expressing their innermost thoughts and feelings through, for example, dance, drama, art and writing

"Wherever there is beauty and truth, there is God; not under His rightful name but anonymously.

(Sister Wendy Beckett, 1994)

Through reflection:

- opening our hearts and minds in a way that allows us to look at Christ, to gaze on Him, to contemplate Him
- stepping aside to give the pupils space to explore for themselves, to reflect meaningfully and to question

Through self awareness:

- creating an environment of trust and openness in which there is a growing awareness of God's presence and action in our lives and our readiness to respond to Him

Through recognition and celebration:

- recognising and celebrating the achievements of all in our school family at assemblies, in newsletters, on our website and at end of term/year award days
- in the headteacher's report to governors and in the governors' report to parents

How do we share our understanding of Spiritual Development with our pupils?

- In Foundation Stage we endeavour to create and maintain an environment where our very youngest pupils can grow and flourish. "A safe place" where acceptance, mutual trust and love abound.
- We encourage our children's sense of wonder, awe, reverence and imagination through the delivery of a rich and carefully planned curriculum. Awe and Wonder week takes place on a two year cycle.
- Through the exploration of the Come and See topics, our pupils are given insights into the spiritual dimensions of life.
- During work on Judaism and other Religions, our pupils become aware of how people of other faiths respond to the spiritual dimension in life.
- Our pupils are encouraged to develop the range, depth and quality of their prayer life. The lighting of candles and incense, the playing of quiet music help children to respond to the presence of God in their lives.

How do we support the Spiritual Development of adults in our school community?

- Staff and Governors take part in 'Come and See for Yourself' sessions.
- Staff and Governors come together for joint INSET/Reflection days.
- Parents, families, Governors, Fr Colin, all staff and other members of our school community are invited to take part/share in school celebrations, assemblies and social gatherings.
- Through Catholic Social Teaching
- Messy Church after school club held for children and their families during Advent.
- Open door Advent – parents and families invited to attend Worship in each class during Advent.
- Travelling Cribs shared with children and families during Advent.
- By example (through the way adults interact with each other). Having a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion.
- Promoting the value of the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies to teachers who have not obtained this qualification.