



All Saints Benhilton C of E School

Spirituality Policy

Mission Statement

Together, within God's love, we nurture and inspire today's minds for tomorrow's challenges.



Reviewed by
The Governing
Body

Date: October 2020

Last reviewed on:

Next review due
by: October 2023

Introduction

At All Saints Benhilton, all aspects of school life reflect our Christian ethos. We aim for all children to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10) and this includes their spiritual development.

What is Spirituality?

Whilst the concept of spirituality is difficult to define, here at All Saints Benhilton, our shared definition sees the concept as central to what makes us truly human. There is an understanding that there is much awe and wonder in the world, along with a sense that we are all part of something greater. Like breathing is essential to living, spirituality is viewed as the breath within our school, giving life and inspiration to all that we do. In essence, it refers to a connectedness to and appreciation of the wider world and our place within it. Spirituality is felt within ourselves by individuals and hence cannot be taught or measured - instead being something that needs to be nurtured and given the right conditions and space to grow. Therefore we acknowledge that spirituality is deeply personal and so we afford every individual with the space and opportunity to develop along their own spiritual journey.

Our shared understanding of opportunities to encourage spiritual development draws upon the work of David Smith who suggested four windows into spiritual development:

- **Spiritual Capacities:** this is the recognition that all human beings are capable of spiritual growth through capacities such as self-awareness, reflection, empathy, imagination and creativity.
- **Spiritual Experiences:** describes the ways in which pupils can encounter the spiritual dimension of life
- **Spiritual Understanding:** acknowledges the need to have developed an understanding to make sense of the spiritual experiences encountered and capacities exercised
- **Spiritual responses:** demonstrates how this experience and understanding impacts on our lives and shapes the way in which we live our lives.

Here at All Saints Benhilton we use the concept of a ring doughnut to explain Spirituality. This idea is taken from the work of Liz Mills.



The Doughnut represents the Whole Child. The outer ring is the tangible (Mind and Body), the hole represents the intangible (Spirit) but if there was no hole it wouldn't be a doughnut. This, for us, remains perhaps the best definition of spiritual development; it is the exploration and development of that hole in our centre that makes us whole.

Wherever possible, we encourage staff to think of the 'Windows Mirrors Doors' approach when planning sequences of learning. These are three ways of opening and encouraging spiritual development that can be easily mapped across the curriculum.



Windows - *Encounter* - Learning about life

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.



Mirrors - *Reflection* - Learning from life

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.



Doors - *Transformation* - learning to live by putting into action what they believe

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

Promoting spirituality should not be confused with developing faith. Faith is a set of beliefs by which you live your life by and could be a response to a belief in God. Faith is something you choose whereas spirituality is an aspect of human development - it is not separate but integral to who we are and what makes us whole. Spirituality is for everybody regardless of faith. For this same reason, we believe that spiritual development is not synonymous with Religious Education and Collective Worship.

How is spirituality promoted at All Saints Benhilton?

To encourage spiritual growth within our children, we set aside a short period of time each week for children to reflect in their spiritual journals. Here, children are presented with a piece of scripture from the Bible, writings from other world religions or inspirational quotes

or poems related to one of our school values. Upon hearing this, children are invited to write a reflection, draw a picture or do both in response to what they have heard and how this has affected them. This exercise is carried out throughout the school and the spiritual journals progress with our children as they move up the school.

Across topics and subject areas, we provide children with big questions that may not have a definite answer. Throughout a learning sequence or journey, the children are encouraged to reflect upon these questions. In this sense, awe and wonder is created, allowing time and space for spiritual growth and understanding of one's place within the world.

Opportunities for the development of spirituality come when:

- children are given space to stop, look, listen, think and reflect
- children feel safe to share opinions and think differently from others
- children use their imagination

Children need:

- Time to be listened to
- Adults that are respectful
- Space to explore, discuss and think
- Opportunities that encourage wonder and surprise
- To know that there is not always a product or end result
- To know that there is another way

Activities and opportunities will include:

- Exposure to and appreciation of nature
- Use of prayer and reflection time
- Time for silence and stillness
- Acts of service that benefit others
- Stories that promote thought and imagination (without the need to find a moral)

Barriers to the Development of Spirituality

Development of spirituality can be hindered when:

- adults trivialise something small to them but which is big to a child;
- the 'busyness' of life and not having the time to look and think;
- lack of space for stillness and listening.

By being aware of these potential barriers, staff at All Saints Benhilton are able to allow children to develop their spirituality throughout their daily lives whilst in the school environment.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the:

Collective Worship Policy

RE Policy

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years as a minimum. It is next due for review in September 2023.