

## Spirituality at Elsecar Holy Trinity CE Primary

### What Is Spirituality?

It is very difficult to put into words what 'spirituality' is because it is a very personal experience. It differs from person to person, and often spirituality changes within people during their lifetime. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith.

Some definitions include:

*"Ones inner being. Our inner self where we can find resources within that come from a greater source I.E. God. Our soul."*

*"It is first of all the certainty to **turn one's life** into a more beautiful, harmonious and happy one."*

*"Spirituality may refer to almost any kind of activity through which a person seeks meaning, especially a "search for the sacred." It may also refer to personal growth, blissful experience, or an encounter with one's own 'inner dimension'."*

### As a school, we have defined spirituality as:

*"Spirituality is not something we can see; it is something we feel inside ourselves. It is about awe and wonder, asking questions, inspiration and being aware of something 'bigger' outside of ourselves."*

The language we use to define spirituality is not child-friendly, so when talking to children about it we will refer to:

- A sense of awe and wonder.
- Care for nature and living things.
- Wanting to love and to be loved by people.

### Awe and Wonder

Children are born inquisitive, and it is our duty to nurture this natural curiosity and guide them towards looking at the world and noticing, with awe and wonder, the natural and man-made delights all around us. We want to encourage them to ask 'big questions' about life, religion, nature, science and any other area of fascination.

### Caring for Nature and Living Things

We provide many opportunities for children to learn about nature and the role they play in protecting our world. As a Church School, this is especially important. We have a very active Eco Team and Gardening Club who look after the school grounds. We have provided bird feeders and owl boxes. Through science and topic work, children learn about the world and how they can care for living things. Our School has been awarded the Eco Schools Silver Award, thanks to the policies and approaches we have in school.

## Love

We are a very caring school and pride ourselves on our ethos of family. Through our Christian Values, we teach children to care for friends, family and the community. Indeed, our Curriculum for Life Skills and RE curriculums include learning about those we love and who love us. We hold annual Mother's Day and Father's Day events in school to celebrate the special people in our children's lives. We also offer other family events throughout the school year so children can learn with their family in school.

## How is Spirituality Nurtured?

Children's spiritual development is fostered through all aspects of our provision. It is about the relationships and the values that we consider to be important, as well as the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes. We give children opportunities to:

- Express personal beliefs and compare views with others, sharing feelings and opinions through discussions and stories.
- Begin to develop their own system of beliefs which may or may not include religious beliefs.
- Experience a love of learning through rewarding their enthusiasm and by encouraging exploratory play and learning.
- Reflect upon the world around them and show a sense of awe and wonder towards aspects of the natural world or human achievement.
- Reflect on the situations of others through role play, stories.
- Experience a range of stories, music, art, drama and dance.

## Teaching Opportunities and Strategies

Liz Mills from The Stapleford Centre, a Christian charity fostering Christian engagement in education, has identified 3 ways that schools can provide opportunities for spiritual development:

**WINDOWS:** giving children opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways; to *wonder* about life's 'Wow!' (things that are amazing) and 'Oh!' (things that bring us up short). In this children are learning *about* life in all its fullness.

**MIRRORS:** giving children opportunities to *reflect* on their experiences; to *meditate* on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. In this they are learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

**DOORS:** giving children opportunities to *respond* to all of this; to *do* something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to *live* by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value

We provide **WINDOWS** throughout our curriculum. We will be having specific lessons with an awe and wonder focus with a variety of stimuli, including photos, videos, music current events and real-life stories.

### **What is the Role of the School Community?**

All members of the school community have a responsibility for helping to nurture children's spiritual development.

#### **School staff can do this through:**

- Establishing and maintaining a partnership between pupils, parents and staff; recognising and respecting the faith background of the children and their families.
- Taking part in, and supporting, collective acts of worship.
- Being good role models in their conduct towards other members of the community.
- Promoting an attitude of respect for other people and for others' views.
- Nurturing consideration for and generosity towards others.
- Drawing on the experiences of pupils and their families during religious education lessons and beyond.
- Recognising and being constantly aware of the needs and backgrounds of each individual pupil.
- Being willing to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and the faiths of others.
- Having a positive attitude to the value of spiritual education.

#### **Pupils can do this through:**

- Taking an active part in acts of collective worship.
- Participating in activities which promote the skills allowing them to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice.
- Conducting themselves towards others considerately, in line with the code of conduct.
- Respecting the views and beliefs of others.

#### **Parents can help through:**

- Adopting a positive attitude to the value of spiritual education.
- Supporting the school's Christian ethos and acts of community worship such as assemblies and church services.
- Respecting the views and beliefs of others.