

Great Gaddesden Church of England (VA) Primary School



Spirituality

"We touch on spirituality when we encounter an experience on life's journey that causes us to reflect on the deeper things in life, its meaning, and our purpose within it, and as a consequence our lives are transformed. "

Jon Westwood

'Treat others exactly as you would like to be treated' (Luke 6:31)

Our definition

At Great Gaddesden CE (VA) Primary School, we define spirituality as a holistic journey, offering a space to develop, reflect and explore the depths of our being.

It involves the realisation and revealing of something innately within, a profound understanding that goes beyond the material world.

It encourages individuals to become aware of the world in all its wonder, embracing the interconnectedness of the world and our place within it.

Central to spirituality is empathising with others and cultivating inclusivity, recognising the shared humanity that binds us all together.

We provide opportunities for spiritual, moral and cultural development across the curriculum, through our collective worship and also providing space and time to reflect spiritually throughout school life as well as ask and answer 'big' questions.

Our spiritual journey

Using the popular 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors' strategy designed by Liz Mills to broaden and deepen understanding about spiritual learning, we will encourage children to think about inspirational experiences, challenge them to ask searching questions and prompt them to consider some possible opportunities for response.

Effective learning in itself is a spiritual experience. This is because learning involves engagement with and exploration of a new concept (windows), thinking deeply about it, trying to connect it to what we already know (mirrors). If we can successfully fit this new concept to our pre-existing web of understanding, this evokes a positive emotional response (we often describe this as: the penny drops!) With each new concept acquired, we transform ourselves (doors), moving forward in life a little altered, intrinsically motivated, fulfilled and inspired by the experience.

Why is spiritual development important?

As a church school we believe that our role is to educate the whole child and that the spiritual growth of our children is as important as, and indeed is a vital contributor to, their academic development. The themes developed each week through our collective worship, our school vision, as well as opportunities woven throughout our curriculum underpin all we seek to develop in the lives of our children. Enabling the children to consider the world around them, reflecting and thinking for themselves, evoking positive emotional responses and pondering ultimate questions is the vital ingredient in our recipe for spiritual development. This will enable our children to take their place in society as fulfilled, responsible, spiritually aware and emotionally engaged individuals. Spiritual growth will involve reflecting on the significance of an experience for our lives.

We provide regular opportunities for our children to reflect spirituality and morally through exploring 'Big Questions'. Our RE curriculum provides lots of opportunities for meaningful reflection and providing planned opportunities for awe and wonder. In line with our vision, we aim to prepare our children for life

as global citizens. Therefore, we strive to provide opportunities to learn about and from a diverse range of cultures, beliefs, practices and identities as part of the children's spiritual, moral and cultural development.

As part of our collective worship programme, we have a weekly 'Big Question'. This links to the worship theme/value and the children are invited to share a reflection in the whole school reflection area throughout the week. These are then collated by our reflection ambassadors and shared at Church during the Friday service.

Collective worship is a powerhouse for spiritual development and encourages children and adults to 'be', think, reflect and respond in our unique and individual ways.

Our Reflection Ambassadors support all children with their spiritual journey through leading acts of worship, supporting pupils to evaluate the impact of collective worship on them spiritually at an individual level. They also facilitate meaningful opportunities to use our Garden of Reflection and reflection spaces throughout the school.

We recognise the importance of providing time and space within our curriculum for our learners to reflect spiritually. In a recent survey, we were pleased to hear that:

100% of pupils feel there are enough opportunities at our school to be still and reflect.

As a rural school, a significant part of our provision to develop spirituality comes from growing a sense of awe and wonder for the natural world around us and providing the children opportunities each half term for every class to connect with nature at Forest School.

The table below (adapted from Hay and Nye (2006) by Pawson (2018 p152) gives some details of these different aspects of spirituality and some suggested activities for use by teachers.

Aspects of Spirituality	School opportunities	School Development
<p>Here and Now</p> <p>The ability to be 'in the moment'</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Noise level in classrooms – Opportunities for quiet working • Reflection spaces throughout school • Planning and preparation time for teachers • Music to enter Collective Worship • Collective Worship is a time for stillness and reflection about oneself, Jesus and others • Worship time daily • Thinking time for children and staff • Calm school • Professional development time for all staff to reflect on practice and providing time for professional curiosity 	<p>Worship Times Work / life balance Staff room improvements</p>
<p>Tuning</p> <p>An intense feeling of connection or belonging</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effort and achievement celebrated in displays High academic standards • Circle time - discussion • Global days/themed weeks • Self/Peer marking • Mission statement unites us as one • All children discussed regularly in staff meetings • Every child's self portrait in the entrance hall • Every child's photo on the Christmas tree • Teaching about Jesus and Christian Values • Celebration Collective Worship • Staff knowing all children well (Class Context sheets) 	<p>Ethos/Christian Values of acceptance, respect continue to embed</p>
<p>Flow</p> <p>Getting caught up in an activity, where the experience transcends the physical</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Science/Music/Spanish/Sport/Dance • The Arts • Behaviour policy • Creative curriculum • Christian Year Collective Worship • A school week - timetables • Visual timetables • Rolling snack in EYs to ensure CIL is not interrupted • Forest School 	<p>Flexible timetables</p>
<p>Focusing</p> <p>Getting in touch with the felt-sense of reality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circle time • Philosophy • Creative curriculum • Leading Collective Worship • Values of perseverance, hope 	
<p>Wonder and Awe</p> <p>Sensing our smallness in the vastness of the universe; a profound feeling of amazement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visits • Curriculum • Weekly Church visits and termly services for key liturgical events • Small schools week • Awareness of world • Visitors to school • Worship times • Resources • Real life experiences 	<p>Further visits to a range of religious places of worship Link School</p>

'Treat others exactly as you would like to be treated' (Luke 6:31)

Imagination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Creative curriculum ● Literacy – Poetry/Stories 	Embed the use of the reflection garden
Transcending the ordinary through thoughts that go beyond the obvious	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Relationships education ● Challenges in maths ● 'Big' questions – RE/Philosophy ● Reflection corners ● Sacred spaces - visits 	Further multicultural visits
Delight and Despair Sensing the emotional impact of experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Celebration Collective Worship ● Genuine achievement – high standards ● EYFS special moments ● Celebrations ● Inspirational speakers ● Fun curriculum ● Humour in lessons ● Children supporting planning and leading Collective Worship ● Circle time ● Supporting charities ● In lessons – failing is positive – you are learning 	Achievements out of school published in newsletter
Ultimate Goodness Trusting in goodness and love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Social stories ● Social skills groups ● Anger management ● Stories ● Role play ● Supporting charities ● Sportsmanship ● Emotional intelligence ● Provision mapping 	Global Hub
Meaning Awareness of a deeper, transcendent meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reflection ● 'Big questions' ● Stories Worship times ● Relationships ● Christian Symbols ● The Arts ● Philosophy/RE lessons 	Symbols

'Treat others exactly as you would like to be treated' (Luke 6:31)