

## Worcester Diocesan Board of Education: Guidance notes for Model Spiritual Development Policies in Church Schools

### I Policy Guidance

#### I.1 Introduction

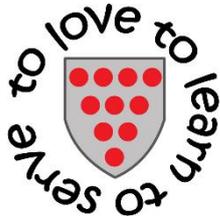
- I.1.1 It is important to note that a policy for Spiritual Development should take into consideration several key documents:
- *Church of England Vision for Education*
  - *Valuing All God's Children*
  - *Spiritual Development Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom*
  - *Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach*
  - *SIAMS Evaluation Schedule*.
- I.1.2 Schools who are part of MATs should also take into consideration any decisions that may have been made by the MAT.
- I.1.3 Throughout the document, schools / academies should note that where 'school' appears in the document it can be substituted for 'academy' as appropriate.
- I.1.4 Below are some notes and considerations when adapting the model policy to fit your school context, or when creating your own from scratch.

#### I.2 School Statement on Spirituality and Spiritual Development

- I.2.1 Your introduction should clearly indicate how spiritual development is driven by the school's vision and is an expression of this. The introduction may refer to the Biblical or theological basis of this. You should include your vision statement in the policy. SIAMS refers to the fact that spirituality in a church school should be development independently from moral, social and cultural development and your policy should make reference to how you will achieve this in your setting.
- I.2.2 Spirituality is a difficult word to define, and everyone has a different view on what it is. It is therefore important that your school's definition is clear and that a good amount of time has been spent discussing what it means and how we might see it lived out; there are several definitions as part of this guidance which may help to generate conversations. A school's understanding of spirituality may not be the personal understanding of spirituality of everyone working within the school; however, it is important that everyone in the school understands the school's definition and is working towards it and promoting it at all levels.
- I.2.3 It is also important to note that we must hold in balance the Christian distinctiveness of the school and the need to be inclusive with our development of spirituality in the school. The vision should enable all pupils and adults to flourish.

#### I.3 Aims and Guiding Principles

- I.3.1 At its core, spiritual development should enable all pupils and adults to grow and flourish. It should provide opportunities to stop, think and question the world, helping children to make sense of the world in which we live and to understand a little more



## Diocesan Education Team

of their place within the created order. Spiritual development is not about one specific religion, or indeed, a religious experience, as it is not the same as faith; however, some of these ideas may contribute to a pupil's spiritual development.

- 1.3.2 Through discussions in schools, you may wish to change the four elements of spiritual development. These are not meant as an exhaustive list, but as a starting point for further thought. You may wish to add to this to suit your particular context.

### 1.4 Approaches to Spiritual Development

- 1.4.1 There are many approaches to spiritual development which could be used in school. The *Windows, Mirrors and Doors* approach tends to be the most common; however, there are others which are detailed in section 2 of this guidance. As a school, you should decide on the approach that works best for your school, a combination of different approaches may be more suitable.

### 1.5 Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation

- 1.5.1 Planning, monitoring and evaluation are an important part of the development of spirituality. It is important that opportunities for developing spirituality are embedded across the curriculum. Each curriculum area should have the ability to develop awe and wonder, connection, creativity and imagination. You do not need to mention how each subject will do this, but you should demonstrate an understanding of this point. You should also make reference to the incidental aspects of developing spirituality, e.g. the questions asked while out in the Forest School area, or the spontaneous conversations that relate topics in different curriculum areas. Also the use of Collective Worship as a driver and stimulus for spiritual development.

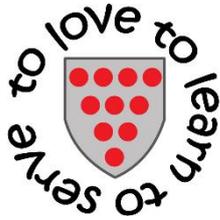
### 1.6 Roles and Responsibilities

- 1.6.1 Give details about how different groups of people are involved with the development of spirituality within the school. If there is a spiritual development lead, is this person different from the Collective Worship, or RE leader? What would their specific role be alongside Collective Worship and RE?

## 2 General considerations

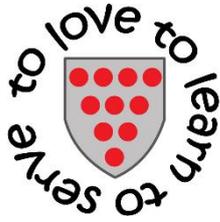
### 2.1 What is Spirituality? Definitions – finding common ground

- 2.1.1 Spirituality has many different connotations for different people. Spirituality is about more than just awe and wonder, more than just developing a moral compass. Christian spirituality is not something that we can see; it is something that is inside all of us. Spirituality is about how we, as humans, connect with God and how He connects with us. It is about how we experience Him and how we then live that connection out in the world. Spirituality is the space between the everyday and the extraordinary.
- 2.1.2 As a church school, it is important that your view of spirituality is grounded in your distinctive Christian vision. Your Christian distinctiveness is what makes you unique and therefore, your development of spirituality should reflect this.



### Diocesan Education Team

- 2.1.3 As spirituality is such a difficult concept to define, it is important that we have a common definition that we use when thinking about how we can support and develop pupils' spirituality within a church school context.
- 2.1.4 To support pupils' understanding of this challenging concept, it is important to use terminology that is easy for pupils to understand and relate to. With pupils, we can use terminology of:
- awe and wonder
  - being loved and valued
  - belonging.
- 2.1.5 To alleviate further confusion for pupils and adults, it is also important that we clarify the differences between other key terminology:
- Faith – *A complete confidence or trust in someone or something, even if you cannot see it.*
  - Religion – *A community of people, who share a common world view, set of rituals, rule of life and set of beliefs about a particular deity or individual.*
  - Belief – *A truth that is understood.*
- 2.1.6 It is important that we do not confuse or interchange these terms. When talking with pupils, we must ensure that we are using a common language that pupils can understand and so that they are not confused by what school are doing or what school are trying to achieve.
- 2.2 Examples of a variety of definitions of spirituality**
- 2.2.1 The examples below are intended to be a starting point for discussion as, 'the school community applies its own understanding of spiritual development so that teachers have the confidence and ability to move beyond planned opportunities to make the most of questions raised by the curiosity of pupils and opportunities that occur spontaneously across the curriculum' (SIAMS Schedule, April 2018).
- 2.2.2 Spirituality is:
- finding God in all things
  - being contemplative in action (or enabling reflective practice)
  - freedom and detachment, helping us not being tied down by unimportant things and keeping mindful of important things, such as God and other people, i.e. not 'things and accomplishments'
  - the inward journey, a move towards the depths of our being, where, according to the mystics, God is experienced
  - an enabler, for us to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves
  - the nurturing of the inner life of the soul of a child, enabling and embracing their questions, doubts and wonder of existence
  - a way of living in a relationship with God
  - a life nurtured on the example of Jesus Christ and his care for others (Christian spirituality)



## Diocesan Education Team

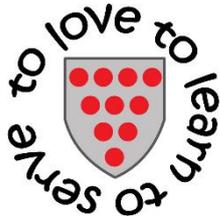
- our capacity for being – God’s ways of being with us and our ways of being with God
- related to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone – whilst these questions are not dependent on religious affiliation, or on the prerogative of religions, religion explains and addresses the fundamental questions which affect everyone
- God’s way of being with children and children’s way of being with God
- the universal search for individual identity, for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil
- having a higher and deeper awareness and a concern for others in the world around us
- an increasing awareness of the concept of others – a growing sense of empathy, concern and compassion and an ability to reflect on how their values and principles affect their relationships with others
- an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful, and, in relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving – the spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and praise, in endeavour and enquiry
- Ofsted highlight that ‘spiritual’ is not synonymous with ‘religious’. All areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils’ spiritual development. Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone and is not dependent on a religious affiliation.

### 2.3 Encountering pupils’ spirituality

- 2.3.1 In order to develop pupils’ spirituality, it is important that we are able to spot when spiritual development and expressions of spirituality are occurring. We need to be alive to the opportunities for spiritual growth across all areas of the curriculum, but certainly in areas of RE and Collective Worship. It has been argued that children are innately spiritual beings and have a high capacity for developing and engaging spiritually with the world.
- 2.3.2 Children have the ‘spiritual capacity’ to develop and grow. Some of those capacities which are indicative of spiritual development include:
- awe and wonder
  - connection and belonging
  - curiosity and mystery
  - self-awareness
  - prayer and worship<sup>1</sup>
- 2.3.3 Pupils’ expression of spirituality is not limited to these capacities but having the awareness of these may help in our understanding of how children develop spiritually.

---

<sup>1</sup> David Smith, *Making Sense of Spiritual Development* (London: Stapleford Centre, 1999), p. 5.



## Diocesan Education Team

It is important to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to explore and spend time engaged in these capacities in order to aid their development.

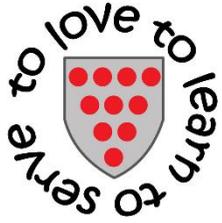
### 2.4 Processes for developing spirituality

2.4.1 In developing spirituality through reflection, we may encounter the process of *Windows, Mirrors and Doors*.

- *Windows*: Giving children opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways; to wonder about life's 'WOWs' (things that are amazing) and 'OWs' (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 think about 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.

2.4.2 *Reflect, Respond and Question* is another way of looking at developing spiritually.

- *Reflect*: Children have the opportunity to reflect on what they have seen, heard or read. This may include a quiet reflection, or a discussion with a partner. Children have the opportunity to discuss what it might mean to them, what inspires them, what makes them go 'WOW'.
- *Respond*: Children respond to the activity, how they might change their own behaviour, or do something differently in light of what they have read or heard. This may be particularly useful for Collective Worship.
- *Question*: Children can raise big questions. What do they want to know next? What would help them to understand more?



**Diocesan Education Team**

THE CHURCH  
OF ENGLAND  
DIOCESE OF  
WORCESTER

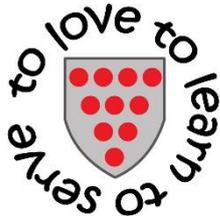
Response: (What will I do?)

Big Questions: (What do I want to know now?)

### Parable of the Talents – Matthew 25:14-30

Where is God asking you to be more responsible?

Reflection: (How has this made me feel? What has this made me think about?)



## Diocesan Education Team

### 2.5 SPIRITuality

2.5.1 The SPIRIT model is based on work by Rebecca Nye. It is not a process or method for using with pupils, but more of a process and set of questions to consider when starting conversations around spiritual development.

#### 2.5.2 'S' is for Space

- Key questions: How is the space curated effectively for spiritual development? Would we know that something special was about to happen?
- When developing spirituality, we may also think about the other spaces that we use within school; spaces where pupils have the opportunity to be quiet, to be still and to reflect, either on the things that they have heard within worship or other aspects that may be on their minds.
- Prayer spaces containing simple activities for reflection could provide this opportunity for space, particularly if this is always a quiet and accessible space. Spiritual gardens and other outdoor spaces, such as a reflection bench may also provide the environment needed to be still and reflective. The key is that the space provided is set up purposefully for reflection and creates an atmosphere of calm.

#### 2.5.3 'P' is for Process

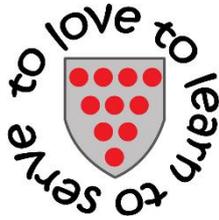
- Key questions: What makes what we are about to do different from an RE / Personal, Social Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) lesson? How do I deliver something that is different?
- A process is important for thinking through what opportunities there will be for spiritual development. A well thought out process also means that spiritual development is intentional within the school and is not something that is tagged on to the end. There are times when spiritual development will be spontaneous; however, we must also be prepared to intentionally make time for it.

#### 2.5.4 'I' is for Imagination

- Key question: How do children engage with the scripture and themes?
- Pupils need the opportunity to be able to use their imaginations. To ask big questions about what they have heard and to share their own ideas about what they have heard. Giving pupils the space to share and the opportunity to listen to the opinions of others is a key part of growing spiritually and developing our own personality. This may come into the discussion that you have corporately, or it may come into the time that they have to respond; but they need to be able to develop the skill of saying, "how do I fit in to this?"
- When using reflective spaces, it is important to allow pupils to use their imagination, to question and to explore. Activities which stimulate a response that require pupils to engage at a deep level can support their spiritual development, as these activities allow pupils to be curious and think carefully about how they might respond.

#### 2.5.5 'R' is for Relationships

- Key questions: Is there a sense that we are in this together? Are we developing together, or is this something we are doing to the children?



### Diocesan Education Team

- Everyone, including adults, should be able to participate, regardless of faith background. During the discussion time, it is always good to share your own ideas and connections even if they are different from others. Being able to say “I think this”, or “I understand it this way...”, or “I was really struck by ...”, is a powerful model to pupils about how we engage and develop with scripture and real life topics.
- Furthermore, we know that pupils thrive in environments where they have a sense of belonging. Relationships that are built between staff and pupils help pupils to feel that they belong to the school community. Those relationships within school are built on trust, acceptance, and a drive to see pupils be the best that they can be. These relationships are vital if pupils are going to develop as a whole individual, including spiritually.

#### 2.5.6 'I' is for Intimacy

- Key question: Is there time carved out for stillness / silence?
- Part of developing spirituality is about developing a connection with the self, others and God. Sometimes in the busyness, it is hard to develop, recognise and sustain that connection. Ensuring that there are times of silence and stillness, as well as times to sing, help to develop a deeper connection with who we are, and what we are doing.

#### 2.5.7 'T' is for Trust

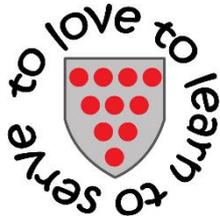
- Key question: Are pupils' ideas respected by all?
- Children and young people are innately spiritual beings. In order for them to develop further there needs to be an element of trust. They need to be able to trust the adults and the other pupils in their class. We need to foster an atmosphere which is built on mutual respect so that all pupils and adults have the opportunity to express their views and develop spiritually.

#### 2.5.8 'T' is also for Time

- Key questions: How much time are we giving to pupils' spiritual development? Do pupils have enough time to reflect and respond?
- For pupils to grow spiritually, time needs to be given over to the process. We must ensure that pupils are given opportunities to sit and reflect. Where possible, this process should not be rushed but allowed to develop organically. Time should also be given on a regular basis for pupils to engage with concepts, ideas and material that help to grow them spiritually.

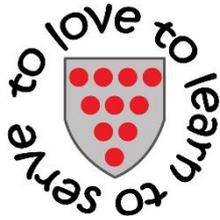
### 3 Spirituality in the Curriculum

- 3.1 It is important that spirituality is developed and promoted in all aspects of the curriculum both incidentally and deliberately. Pupils should be given opportunities to see awe and wonder in all subjects and also to ask deep and engaging questions.
- 3.2 Outlined below are some of the ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted as part of the curriculum:



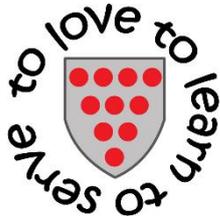
### Diocesan Education Team

- In Religious Education (RE):
  - People, places, things, books, actions and ideas held by religious believers to be holy.
  - Ultimate questions of meaning and purpose.
  - Ideas of the divine / questions of God.
  - Forms of worship.
  - Use of music, art and drama to express beliefs.
  - Varieties of beliefs, celebrations and rituals.
  - Ideas of commitment and belonging to groups and institutions.
  - The idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.
- In Literacy:
  - Empathy with authors and the characters in stories and plays.
  - The appreciation of beauty in language.
  - Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech.
  - The values of great works.
  - Heroes and heroines in literature.
  - Imagining oneself as someone else.
  - Escaping into other worlds through literature.
  - The element of wonder in literature.
- In Numeracy:
  - Infinity and nothing.
  - Pattern and order.
  - Shape and regularity.
  - Truth, certainty and likelihood.
  - The universality of mathematics over time and space.
  - The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations.
- In Science:
  - Wonder as the basis of science.
  - Questions of beginning, creation and evolution.
  - Discovering the limits of experimentation.
  - Birth, life, death and renewal.
  - The universe and beyond.
  - Regularity and order in science.
  - Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists.
  - The impact of scientific achievements.
- In Physical Education (PE):
  - Being a team member.
  - Pushing yourself to the limits.
  - Extremes of skill, endurance and achievements.
  - Emotion in sport.
  - Personal limitation and failure.
  - Appreciation of perfection.
  - Sportsmanship.



### Diocesan Education Team

- In Design and Technology (D&T):
  - Discovering how something works.
  - Appreciating genius.
  - Beauty in design.
  - Perseverance to solve problems.
  - Personal achievement.
  - Learning from others and nature.
- In ICT:
  - The wonder of worldwide instant communication.
  - The speed of the growth of knowledge.
  - The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.
- In the Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance):
  - The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places.
  - Beauty, truth and goodness.
  - Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs.
  - Artistic creativity.
  - The effects of the arts on emotions and senses.
  - The arts as means of expressing mood.
  - Skill in creation and performance, and particularly in personal reflection upon their own creativity using various art forms.
  - Effects on the emotions and senses.
  - Personal response and preference.
  - Mood.
  - Skill.
  - Pattern.
  - Formulae.
- In Geography:
  - Wonder at the diversity of environments and people.
  - Questions about the care of the environment.
  - The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns.
  - World (economic) development.
  - Land formation.
  - Empathy with people from other parts of the world.
- In History:
  - Being in touch with past people, things and ideas.
  - Being part of history.
  - Handling artefacts.
  - Influential events and people.
  - The commitment of significant people in history.
  - War and peace – interpretation in history.
  - The nature and importance of invention and exploration.
  - Empathy with people from other times in history.



## Diocesan Education Team

- In Collective Worship:
  - Opportunities for reflection and response are planned into worship.
  - Stillness.
  - Personal and collective beliefs are respected.
  - Sharing and celebrating common beliefs.
  - Celebrating success.
  - Sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear, etc.
  - Common activities such as singing, listening, laughing, praying, reflecting on a theme.
  - Remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance.
  - Emphasising common purpose and values.
  - Experiencing emotions.
- In addition, as part of the curriculum, pupils have opportunities to:
  - visit places of beauty, interest and challenge
  - admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts
  - work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations
  - experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level
  - engage in activities that promote courageous advocacy
  - participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches, etc.

## 4 Further resources, reading and support

### 4.1 Diocesan resources

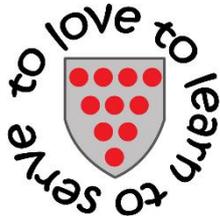
4.1.1 The Diocese of Worcester Education Team have produced several resources to support the development of spirituality within school.

- Wellbeing & Spirituality Compendium
  - A collection of activities which can be used with pupils and adults to support mental health and wellbeing within the school whilst also developing spirituality.
  - Activities include a script and a list of resources needed for the activity.
  - Activities have been designed for all ages and have a range of extensions or alterations to suit the needs of all pupils and adults.
  - Training is provided with the resource; the resource is only available to schools who have attended the training.
- Prayer Area resources
  - A number of simple prayer activities that can be used as part of prayer tables or reflection areas.
  - Activities give a simple thought and reflection, rooted in biblical scripture.
  - Activities are based around a value or theme.
  - Resource pack is available to download from our website.

### 4.2 Further reading

4.2.1 Grove Education booklets

- eD27, *Spirituality in a Church School within a Performance-Driven Culture*



### Diocesan Education Team

#### 4.2.2 Other reading:

- Church of England, *Spiritual Development - Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom*
- Farnell, A., Stapleford Centre, *Opening Windows: Spiritual development in the Primary School through Religious Observance and the Wider Curriculum*, ISBN: 978-1-902234-60-1
- Farnell, A. and Smith, D., Stapleford Centre, *Making Sense of Spiritual Development in Religious Observance and the Wider Curriculum*, ISBN: 978-1-90223447-2
- Nye, R. (2009), London: Church House Publishing, *Children's Spirituality: What it is and why it matters*
- Ortberg, J. (2010), Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, *The Me I want to be: becoming God's best version of you*
- Thomas, G. (1996), Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan, *Sacred Pathways: Discover Your Souls Path to God*

4.3 For further support and guidance on Spiritual Development policy please contact Rev. Duncan Hutchison, Diocesan Education Adviser on [dhutchison@cofe-worcester.org.uk](mailto:dhutchison@cofe-worcester.org.uk) or 07960 977847.

DRAFT