

Pray, Learn, Achieve and Celebrate Together



Spiritual Development Policy

Written: March 2020

Review Date: March 2024

Spiritual Development policy.

Mission Statement

St Gabriel's is a Roman Catholic Primary School. It is inspired by the example of Christ and the teachings of the Gospel and seeks to develop the spiritual growth of all members of the school.

As a Christian Community we aim to meet the needs of each individual and to promote an active partnership between school, home, parish and the wider community to provide an education which will prepare all children for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

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.

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

Thus at St Gabriel's we:

- help pupils to develop their desire to search for meaning through their experiences.
- encourage pupils to express their inner most thoughts and feelings.
- facilitate pupils with a desire to search for a meaning to 'their world'. recognise that their questions will be challenging and probing.
- consider those less fortunate than ourselves.
- give opportunity to reflect, rejoice and celebrate.

The structure of Spiritual development

Through our planned curriculum programme we are able to provide children with the opportunity to reflect on their presence in the world. We introduce children to the life, words and actions of Jesus and give them opportunities to resolve questions and to seek and explore. We recognise pupil's individual growth in faith through his or her deepening understanding of creation and revelation.

We recognise that children struggle to come to terms with the mysteries of life. They have fundamental and innocent questions regarding the context of events. It is the aim of our school to ensure that children are encouraged to understand uncertainties and to be reassured. We recognise that parents are the first educators of our pupils but acknowledge the key role that teachers have in helping pupils come to terms with the fundamental questions and mysteries of life. School provides a base through cross curricular work to address these queries but whether difficult or straightforward we recognise it is our role to be truthful, honest and supportive. We encourage pupils to question and we respond. The question may not be fully resolved but this enables us to explore more thoroughly. At all times and in all circumstances, it is known that individuals feel secure and reassured. We encourage the pupil's spiritual development through questioning, talk and exploration, reflection, self awareness, recognition and celebration.

How do we promote the pupil's spiritual development?

At St Gabriel'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 with increasing depth on what they have seen, done or read (both in Come and See and through cross curricular links).
- 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.
- Big questions at the beginning and end of every topic to allow the children to question and explore in more depth the theme of the topic being taught.

How do we share our understanding of spiritual development with our pupils?

- In Early Years 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.
- Through the exploration of the Come and See topics, our pupils are given insights into the spiritual dimensions of life.
- During work on other faiths, 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 all help children to respond to the presence of God in their lives.

How do we support the spiritual development of adults in our school?

- Staff come together for INSET/reflection days.
- Parents, families, Governors and other members of our school community are invited to take part/share in school celebrations, assemblies and social gatherings.
- By example (through the way adults interact with each other). Having a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion.

The Outcome

Through our spiritual development policy, adults take the responsibility to lead our pupils, as we recognise they have a variety of life experiences. If we touch their hearts and minds in some small way we have helped them. If we have supported them towards a feeling of security and reassurance, if we have helped them to understand some of their questions, then we have gone some way to securing the 'Life Journey' of our pupils.

"Who ever walks in darkness and has no light shining for him, let him trust in the name of Yahweh, let him lean on his God." (Isaiah 50:10)

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