

Dyson Perrins CofE Academy: Spirituality Policy

A Christian school which enables all students, regardless of belief, ability, or background, to reach their potential and flourish. 'Life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

School Statement on Spirituality and Spiritual Development

We recognise that developing the spirituality of our pupils and adults is a fundamental aspect of enabling them to flourish, thus essential for our school to live out its vision of 'Life in all its fullness'.

Spirituality is a difficult concept to define, but as a school we define it as experiencing awe and wonder in the world around us in all its fullness, exploring the bigger questions in life, and embarking on a journey to understand ourselves, others and our place in the universe that is filled with moments of deep insight and discovery, which leads to transformational change.

The language we use to define spirituality is not student friendly, so when talking to students about it we will refer to:

Emotions: Moments that make you go wow and give you a sense of awe and wonder as well as the moments that make you feel shocked, saddened or surprised.

Being inquisitive- asking questions to develop deeper knowledge and understanding and to develop wisdom.

Being reflective- having opportunities to reflect on good, bad (or evil), and things bigger than ourselves, allowing us to think about the meaning and purpose of life.

Making connections- Connections between knowledge and our relationship with others, to give us deeper insight into the world.

Aims and Guiding Principles

Through establishing the right learning environment in which spiritual development can be fostered, we aim to support pupils and adults to:

- develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God
- develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school, as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith
- develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them
- develop an awareness of, and respect for, other people's beliefs and faiths, and the ability to articulate their own

- develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others)
- develop strategies to build good mental health
- foster self-awareness and the ability to make informed decisions
- develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life
- begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life
- develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth
- understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others
- develop a love of curiosity, creativity and imagination
- develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc.
- develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation.

These objectives will enable pupils and adults to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and to engage in relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

Approaches to Spiritual Development

At Dyson Perrins we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to pupils' spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning by:

- providing an environment that fosters spiritual capacities e.g. imagination, insight and empathy and promotes space to reflect, think and wonder.
- allowing pupils the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement, and to celebrate diversity
- providing opportunities for prayer, including silence and stillness
- enabling pupils to make the link between Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community, and to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values.

As part of our approach to spiritual development, we use the follow strategies in our school:

Opportunities to learn: Students have the opportunities to sense awe and wonder and also identify times where humans have fallen short through the delivery of a well-planned, balanced and sequenced curriculum.

Opportunities to reflect: Students are given opportunities to reflect on their experiences, to ponder life's big questions and consider some possible answers. In this way they are learning from life by exploring their own insights and perspective and those of others.

Through challenging RE lessons, pupils will also be able to reflect on their learning about religion to help them learn from religions, regardless of whether they have a specific faith.

Opportunities to respond: Students are given the opportunities to respond to stimuli, to do something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this way they are learning to live by putting into action what they believe and value.

At Dyson Perrins, students can also do this through school council campaign for changes, community weeks, our reflection area or our Dyson Perrins Devotional. It is a chance for students to be moved and motivated to take action and to raise issues and concerns independently, confident in the knowledge that they are listened to and respected by adults in the school.

Implementation

The school will deliver pursues the aims and objectives of this policy by ensuring:

- the curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values
- opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life
- unplanned and spontaneous spiritual opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and / or celebrated by staff and pupils
- Collective Worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for pupils to respond and reflect on this
- a solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed
- the school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer
- that pupils' spiritual capacities, such as imagination, empathy and insight, are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies, making use of the outdoor environment
- relevant educational visit opportunities are provided for pupils to listen attentively and observe carefully, to listen with discernment, to value what is good and worthwhile and to make judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas
- support is provided for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others
- that the outstanding RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives
- that pupils are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and to develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished and protected
- Strategies for positive mental health are promoted.

Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to pupils for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- observing and listening to pupils
- regular consideration at staff and governor meetings as to whether the school is living out its Christian vision and values.
- ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school by providing them with induction and development training
- evidence from pupils' work, e.g. Reflection area responses or RE books
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools

Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the Governing Board every 2 years. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- a change in the SIAMS Schedule for Inspections
- a change in the understanding of spiritual development.