



Reviewed September 2023

ST BERTELINE'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPIRITUALITY POLICY

As St Berteline's is a Church of England school, we believe the opportunity and encouragement for the child to develop their spirituality to be a key part in the whole of a child's school experience and should be embedded into every aspect of our school life. It is important that this development is seen as only part of a lifetime experience of discovery and not something which can be measured by specific outcomes. It is connected to the search for meaning and purpose and relates to a dimension beyond the physical senses. It centres more on beliefs, feelings and emotions and should be evident in all acts of worship and areas of school life.

It is recognised that spirituality is a concept which is difficult to quantify, yet its evidence - or, conversely, lack of evidence - can be very apparent.

HMI define spirituality as follows:-

Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and, depending on our point of view, either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. It is about the development of a pupil's 'spirit'. Some people may call it the development of a pupil's 'soul'; others as the development of 'personality' or 'character'.

At St Berteline's we recognise that worship is the ideal vehicle for spiritual growth. However, we also recognise it is by no means the only method.

For worship to contribute to spiritual development it should:

- provide an opportunity to worship God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- celebrate all that is good and beautiful - expressing thanks for the joy of being alive.
- provide opportunities for sharing what is meaningful and significant - including the darker aspects of life.
- ensure that the experiences provided are relevant to age, aptitude and background.

- give time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space.
- illustrate forms of worship which others have found helpful in their spiritual development, eg. silent contemplation, singing, dance.
- provide a rich variety of forms of expression, eg. art, drama, music, story and allow an opportunity to experience these at their own level of interpretation.
- take place in an environment that is conducive to worship - professionally coordinated and properly equipped.
- acknowledge the different stages of development of all - inviting, never coercing, participation.

At St Berteline's we believe that pupils who are developing spiritually are likely to be developing all or some of the following characteristics. Consequently these give us an insight into the success of our teaching and learning outcomes for the children.

- A set of values, principles and beliefs, which inform perspectives on life and patterns of behaviour
- An awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs
- A respect for themselves and for others
- A sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion
- An increasing ability to reflect and learn from this reflection
- An ability to show courage and persistence in defence of their aims, values, principles and beliefs
- A readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit: for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination
- An appreciation of the intangible - for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order - as well as for mystery, paradox and ambiguity
- A respect for insight as well as for knowledge and reason
- An expressive and/or creative impulse
- An ability to think in terms of the 'whole' - for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective
- An understanding of feelings and emotions, and their likely impact.

As a school which encourages pupils' spiritual development, we endeavour to:

- give the opportunity to explore values and beliefs and the way in which they affect peoples' lives.
- support and develop beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant .
- give encouragement to explore and develop what animates themselves and others.
- encourage reflection and learning from reflection through interaction with the natural and school environment.
- give the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, to empathise with the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful.
- develop a climate or ethos within which all can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
- accommodate difference and respect the integrity of individuals.
- promote teaching styles which:
 - value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns
 - enable pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning.
 - encourage pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference - for example, asking 'why?', 'how?' and 'where?' as well as 'what?'

All of these things are achieved either via the planned curriculum or else through being a part of the St Bert's community, ie the 'hidden curriculum'. The school ethos, its approach to whole child education, the learning environment, displays, visits and visitors, experiences and residentials will all seek to compliment the spiritual development of the individual child.