



Totnes St John's Church of England Primary School Spirituality Policy

Introduction

At this church school, all aspects of school life reflect a Christian ethos and this policy is based on Christian principles. We aim for all children to work together to **Achieve and Flourish**, and this includes their spiritual development.

What is it?

At Totnes St John's Primary School we believe that it is very important to provide all children with a range of opportunities to help them develop spiritually. We believe that spiritual development may not be synonymous with Religious Education and Collective Worship and can be explored through many different curriculum areas.

As a school we focus on the idea of 4 concepts of spirituality: self, others, world and beauty and beyond. Our starting point is our Curriculum Enquiry questions across a full range of subjects and we plan a series of encounters (Windows) that open up the possibility of reflection (Mirrors). Finally, the children are given an opportunity to put into action what they believe and value. (Doors) Although children might only be familiar with these terms through their reflection journals that they use for worships, teachers ensure such experiences are built into their teaching.

Why is it important?

Christians believe that God became human and therefore always strive to be the best human they can possibly be. As educators and in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010, we want to help every child to be the best that they can be and have a duty to support the children to achieve this; part of this responsibility is to help children develop spiritually. At Totnes St John's all aspects of school life reflect a Christian ethos and all policies are based on Christian principles.

What do we aim to achieve for the children?

- The children become increasingly aware of the concept of **self**- the inner person and the way that this shapes an individual's perception of themselves as a unique human being. The children reflect on the relationship they have with their sense of being a unique person.
- The children become increasingly aware of the concept of **others** – a growing empathy, concern & compassion of how to treat others. The children reflect on how their values & principles affect their relationships with others.
- The children become increasingly aware of the concept of a physical and creative **world** – a growing relationship with beauty through the ability to respond emotionally to experiences of the wonder of the natural world and the results of human creativity. The children explore their understanding beauty and the affect this has on their perception of and relationship with the world.

- The children become increasingly aware of the concept of the **beyond** – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday. The children search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.
- The children develop an understanding of the beliefs and values of Christianity and other world religions. The children are respectful of the beliefs and values of others.
- The children develop an understanding of the ethos of a Church school and the content, language and symbolism of the Christian faith as a way of understanding our meaning and purpose in life.
- The children develop the ability to question.
- The children develop their ability to express their thoughts, ideas, feelings and their beliefs.

How do we do it?

- Through our ACE curriculum there are frequent opportunities for children to understand themselves better as learners and as unique human beings. Our curriculum poses big questions for all our children and this provides frequent and multiple opportunities to respond to local and world issues. Over the course of their time at Totnes St John's children will be asked to consider their understanding of self, their relationships with others and to the world around them.
- As well as planned opportunities across all subjects we particularly make use of children's responses in R.E. The Devon and Torbay Agreed Syllabus outlines activities for Spiritual development in school. The syllabus reminds us that 'spiritual' should not be confused with 'religious'. Spiritual development refers to the aspects of the child's spirit which are enhanced by school life and learning, and may describe the 'spirit' of determination, sharing or open-mindedness. Spiritual development describes the ideal spirit of the school. RE can support this by promoting:
 - **self-awareness**: offering opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own views and how they have been formed, as well as the views of others
 - **curiosity**: encouraging pupils' capacity for critical questioning, such as by keeping big questions in a 'question box' or as part of a wall display, and allowing time and space where these questions can be addressed to show that they are important
 - **collaboration**: utilising lesson techniques which engender group collaboration and communication such as Community of Enquiry/P4C, circle time, debates, Socratic Circles or group investigations
 - **reflection**: providing a space to reflect on pupils' own values and views, as well as those of others, and to consider the impact of these values
 - **resilience**: promoting a spirit of open enquiry into emotive or complicated questions, in order to learn how to cope with difficult ideas when they arise in the future
 - **response**: exploring ways in which pupils can express their responses to demanding or controversial issues
 - **values**: promoting an ethos of fairness and mutual respect in the classroom and compassion and generosity in pupils through exploring inspiring examples of these qualities in others

- **appreciation**: encouraging pupils' ability to respond with wonder and excitement by exploring some of the marvels and mysteries of the natural world, of human ingenuity, and examples of the capacity of humans to love, create, organise and overcome adversity
- We provide and plan for a wide range of opportunities for children to develop spiritually through Worship including: whole school, whole community and class services and worships. Children use their **Roots and Fruits Collective worship journals** to reflect on values and dedicated time is provided throughout the week for all children to reflect following a period of focussed learning and reflection upon a particular value in school.
- We also promote spiritual development opportunities through our wider curriculum, for example: during our themed weeks such as 'cultural diversity week,' 'Say no to Bullying Week'; ', 'whole school community events such as the Big Lunch and through other extra-curricular activities such as the school drama productions.
- We provide areas for quiet reflection in school and in the outdoor environment.
- We provide opportunities for prayer, including silence and stillness.
- When planning for spiritual development we focus on 3 areas: Windows, Mirrors and Doors.

A) WINDOWS: Encounter - The Learning about life.

We give children to 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).

B) MIRRORS: Reflection - The learning from life.

We provide children with time for **REFLECTION**. We give children opportunities to reflect on their experiences, to look inward & consider the big questions of life. In this they are learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others. Give emotional, physical and auditory space.

C) DOORS: Transformation - The learning to live by putting into action what they believe.

We give 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.

- We use the Salisbury Spirituality guides with our class collective worship books to ensure children are regularly given opportunities to look at all aspects around spiritual development.

Policy written with Ethos group – May 2021

This policy should be read in conjunction with:

Collective Worship Policy

RE Policy

Equalities Policy