

# **ST. ANNE'S CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **POLICY FOR SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

**“.... providing a warm and caring learning environment in which we work and live as Jesus taught us.”**

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# CONTENTS

## PAGE NO.

2.	Mission Statement
2+3.	Spiritual Development - Definition
3.	Characteristics of Spirituality
3+4.	Promoting Spiritual Development
4.	Resources
4.	Development

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

“In St Anne’s we strive to build good relationships throughout the school community, providing a warm and caring learning environment, in which we work and live as Jesus taught us.”

### **AIMS**

Leadership and management in the school are based upon mutual support and a shared vision. We are a self-evaluating school where everyone takes responsibility for leading the school forward.

Our commitment is within a strong interaction between home, school and parish. We give children in our care the fullest possible support in their learning and personal spiritual journey.

We have high expectations in all areas of school life and are dedicated to enabling all children to achieve their full potential.

As a school community we demonstrate and model behaviour and attitudes towards each other encouraging mutual respect. We promote enjoyment in learning, helping children to develop a sense of self worth and to feel secure and valued.

In our school, learning is central to teaching. We provide a broad and balanced curriculum and stimulating learning environment that gives children responsibility and opportunities to develop according to their individual talents and capabilities.

Health and safety is of the utmost importance within the school community. We maintain a safe and secure environment for all.

## **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

### **Definition**

Spiritual development helps pupils to acquire insights into their personal existence which are of everlasting value. It is characterised by reflection, the linking of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and ideas of an enduring reality. ‘Spiritual’ is not synonymous with ‘religious’; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils’ spiritual development.

Spiritual development, 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, also about what a school provides – through its curriculum, Collective Worship, through its ethos and climate – to help individuals to make sense of these questions, and about what it does to help form pupils’ responses to life and to various forms of experience, or even to questions about the universe.

Spiritual development is intertwined with the educational mission of the Church and is rooted in Christ’s mission “that all may have life and have it to the full”. (John 10:10). This involves the ongoing development of the entire potential of each individual made in the image and likeness of God and finding fulfilment in God alone.

A working definition of spiritual development has been provided by Ofsted and they identify three principal elements.

- the development of insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values which guide and motivate us. For many pupils these will have a significant religious belief
- a developing understanding of feelings and emotions which causes us to reflect and to learn;
- for all pupils, a developing recognition that their insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values influence, inspire or guide them in life.

The task faced by school is, then, to find effective ways of developing pupils' drive, sense of identity and self-worth; developing their principles beliefs and values; including those that have a religious basis. ***(Promoting and Evaluating Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development – Ofsted, March 2004.)***

The importance of spiritual development has been acknowledged by government legislation as being vital to the holistic development of pupils. ***(Education Reform Act 1988, Education (Schools) Act 1992, School Inspections Act 1996).***

### **CHARACTERISTICS OF SPIRITUALITY**

Pupils who are developing spiritually are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

- a set of values, principles and beliefs which may or may not be religious, which inform their perspective on life and their 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 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, 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 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

### **PROMOTING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

In order to encourage pupils' spiritual development at St Anne's:

- pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives
- where pupils already have religious beliefs, they are supported in developing these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them
- pupils are encouraged to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- by encouraging pupils to reflect and learn from reflection
- through giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful
- by developing a climate/ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected

- by accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals
- through promoting 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'
  - through monitoring in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Pupils' spirituality is promoted and developed through the entire educative process especially through:

### **The Distinctive Nature of Our School:**

The ethos at St Anne's encourages the development of positive relationships with all members of the school community. We work to encourage a mutual culture of care within our school family. When appropriate visits to Church are undertaken and the children are encouraged to actively participate, where appropriate, in the celebration of Mass. Preparation for the First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation also provide opportunities for the promotion of spiritual development on a personal basis.

### **Curriculum Subjects:**

The opportunity for promoting spiritual development arises in a wide range of curriculum areas. Religious Education is seen as the prime curriculum opportunity for promoting spiritual development. St Anne's recognises that spiritual development can also be encouraged through a variety of other curriculum areas such as PSHCE, Literacy and Science. It is highlighted that the Spiritual Development of learners filters into other curriculum areas and should not specifically be 'left to' Religious Education.

### **Collective Worship:**

Each Key Stage holds a weekly act of Collective Worship and this is led, on a rota basis, by staff. The theme of the Collective Worship each week relates closely to the current topic being covered in the Come and See Religious Education Scheme. Where appropriate, staff may use material from the Come and See Scheme to enhance and develop the children's' experience of Collective Worship. During the remainder of the week Collective Worship takes place in class and is facilitated in a variety of ways. Prayer is an important part of our day at St Anne's and our children are encouraged to be reverent and respectful.

### **Away Days:**

In the Autumn Term Year 6 children take part in an Away Day at Sandymount House of Prayer, Blundellsands. The day is primarily focussed on team building and self-esteem activities, however, the children also experience prayer session during the course of the day.

## **RESOURCES**

There are a wide variety of resources available to provide ideas and assistance with areas of Spiritual Development, such as Prayer Books, Bibles, Posters and Music. Each class teacher has a full catalogue of these resources which are kept in the curriculum storage area outside the Year 6 classroom.

## **DEVELOPMENT**

The Policy will be reviewed with the cycle of Policy reviews for the school and feedback will be invited from staff and governors. The impact of the policy will be evident in the way in which children participate in opportunities for spiritual development and the way in which links with other subjects are adopted.