



## **Spiritual Development at Southwick**

**At Southwick, we believe that we play an important role in a child's journey of spiritual growth. In a nutshell, we see spirituality as being about relationships: a relationship with one's self, a relationship with others; a relationship with the beauty of God's world; and a relationship with the 'beyond'.**

**We see spiritual growth as a development of a child's relationships in these areas.**

**At Southwick, the lens through which we look at this development is through our Christian values. These values, chosen by the school community, allow us to focus on areas that we feel are most important in developing positive, active, happy children.**

### **Aims**

We aim to provide opportunities for every child to:

- develop a sense of self-worth;
- develop a growing understanding of what it means to belong to a Christian community;
- develop an appreciation of difference and diversity and their role as global citizens in the wider world;
- explore Christian beliefs through a knowledge of Bible stories and Christian values in order to build a firm foundation for adulthood;
- develop relationships based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and compassion to others;
- reflect on experiences which provide 'awe and wonder';
- begin to recognise that disappointment, failure and loss can also provide opportunities for spiritual growth and development;
- have opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness;
- learn to value the natural world and a develop a commitment to care for creation;
- explore big questions.

### **Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond**

#### **Self**

At Southwick, being spiritual is a belief that leading a happy and prosperous life begins with encouraging everyone in our school family to have an ongoing internal reflective dialogue, taking responsibility for their own spiritual growth. We use our Christian Values as a basis for this growth, using the teachings of the Bible to guide us.

We believe that spiritual development in a person occurs both actively and passively. For example, an experience such as working with younger children may teach a child about the importance of patience, but equally, as a school, we also believe that we can facilitate this spiritual development through our curriculum and through our general approach.

We do not 'formally' measure spiritual development, however, we do use the Ricketts Spiritual Development Progression from the Salisbury Diocese which you can find [here](#).

If a measure was needed of how our children develop: a conversation about their values; a look at behaviour in lessons; learning outcomes; their ability to discuss the 'big questions' - would all help paint a picture of how well our values have been established in each year group.

### **Others**

We also believe that there is a greater good that we can contribute to through our actions. Our actions are guided by the Christian Values that we have, therefore, we are contributing to the greater good through God's love and direction.

Our belief is based on the principle that personal happiness and the happiness of those around you is symbiotic relationship – it is difficult to have one without the other. Our staff and children put love at the heart of everything we do, understanding the importance of positive relationships and the impact we have on the lives of others. We consider this in the context of our school and families, but also wider communities, such as the village, the country and the world.

### **Beauty**

We wish our learners to naturally explore and to question the beauty in the world around them. As they grow older, they develop the ability to respond emotionally to the wonders of the natural world and the results of human creativity.

### **Beyond**

Spiritual growth comes with an increasing awareness of the non-physical world and of 'the beyond'. We wish our learners to search for greater meaning in life and to 'ask big questions'.

### **How do we help children develop spiritually?**

At Southwick, our overarching value – love - is at the heart of spirituality in our school. We believe in the importance of developing a positive relationship with the self, others, beauty and beyond.

It is neatly summed up in our school vision:

***“Through a loving Christian fellowship, our children learn all of the values, skills and knowledge they need so that they can grow into positive and active members of the community in which they live.”***

***“Do everything in love” 1 Corinthians 16:14***

Many life experiences naturally lead to spiritual development. However, we also purposefully plan opportunities to encourage spiritual development. Below are a few examples of things that we do help children develop:

### **Collective Worship**

Collective worship takes place 5 times a week. In collective worship we explore our values, linking them to the self, others, beauty and beyond. The content of collective worship is planned so that the children can explore our key values in more depth, over a longer period of time. Children also plan and lead acts of worship.

### **R.E.**

In R.E., the children explore spirituality in Christianity and other religions by studying 'big questions'. For example, in Year 2 the children study the question "*Does praying at regular intervals help Muslims in their everyday life?*" in which they are required to reflect on how prayer looks in their own life? Later in Year 4, they study "*What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?*" which then requires them to examine their on themselves further, but in a similar way.

### **Restorative Justice**

Our curriculum is more than just the traditional subjects. It is everything that happens from when the children step through the gate to when they go home. We have a restorative approach to behaviour, so that each incident is used a spiritual learning opportunity for the children involved. Restorative Justice Conferences encourage collaboration and reintegration rather than coercion and isolation; give attention to the unintended consequences of our actions and programs; show respect to all parties, including victims, offenders and justice colleagues. This means that the children are encouraged to practise our values, particularly: compassion, reflection, respect and forgiveness.

### **Pupil Voice and Courageous Advocacy**

By way of a working definition, when using the term 'courageous advocacy' we are referring to the act of speaking out against an issue of injustice, often on behalf of those whose voice is not heard. Speaking out, at whatever level this takes place, requires an element (and sometimes a great deal) of courage! Becoming a courageous advocate for change, therefore, must involve being informed about an issue and it must move beyond simply knowing, to saying and doing. At Southwick, we educate for courageous advocacy and this embodies an ethos of action-taking, challenging injustice and becoming agents of change in the transformation of ourselves, our relationships and our communities from the local level to the global.

We give the children many opportunities to have their voices heard, including: collective worship, Talking to God sessions, school council, sport council and Trowbridge Youth Parliament.

### **P.S.H.E. Education**

PSHE Education stands for Personal, Social, Health and Economic. PSHE topics include relationship and sex, health and wellbeing, drugs and alcohol, financial education, the importance of physical education and diet and other topics. The aim of PSHE Education, is to ensure the children have the knowledge and skills needed to ensure they make informed choices in their own lives.

### **The wider curriculum**

Our values underpin everything we do. Across the curriculum, on any given school day you will see examples of the children and staff referring to our values. A particularly good example of this is the emphasis we put on the importance of reflecting on our own learning. As the children grow, as does their ability to independently reflect on their learning experiences. For example, in writing, by Year 6, the children value editing and improving their writing as a natural part of the writing process. There are many examples of this across the curriculum.

### **Spirited Art Weeks and Journey Days**

Twice a year we plan a Journey Day for all our pupils. In life being able to think and reflect is really important for our mental well-being. Journey Days are where our children go off the traditional time table, gather into cross-year groups and focus on one area of personal/spiritual development. As we are a Church School we also choose significant days on the Christian calendar to delve deeper into the meaning.

Spirited Art Weeks are similar, but are based around religious artwork. The children look at the symbolism within the art and explore how it applies to modern times, their lives and their values.

They will then re-create the artwork in a variety of ways that help them express their own feelings and values.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Opportunities offered to children for Spiritual Development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- Audit of policies and schemes of work;
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings;
- Sharing of classroom work and practice;
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflection diaries;
- Pupil voice.

There is no requirement for a formal assessment of the children's spiritual growth.