



Altrincham CE
Aided Primary School

Grow Strong and Bear Fruit



Spirituality Policy

October 2024

Altrincham CE Primary School Mission

Our mission, as a primary school with a strong Christian foundation is to provide an education which is deeply rooted within love, friendliness and a strong tradition of the Christian faith which ensures the children and adults have a nurturing and aspirational environment to reach their full potential, living life in all its fullness. Loving God and each other is lived out in the everyday life of school.

Altrincham CE Primary School Vision

At Altrincham CE Primary, we are rooted in the love of Christ, nurturing each pupil's unique gifts and potential. Together, we grow strong in faith and character, bearing fruit in our community as we learn, support one another, and blossom into the best version of ourselves.

Grow Strong and Bear Fruit



Our vision is rooted in the Parable of the Sower:

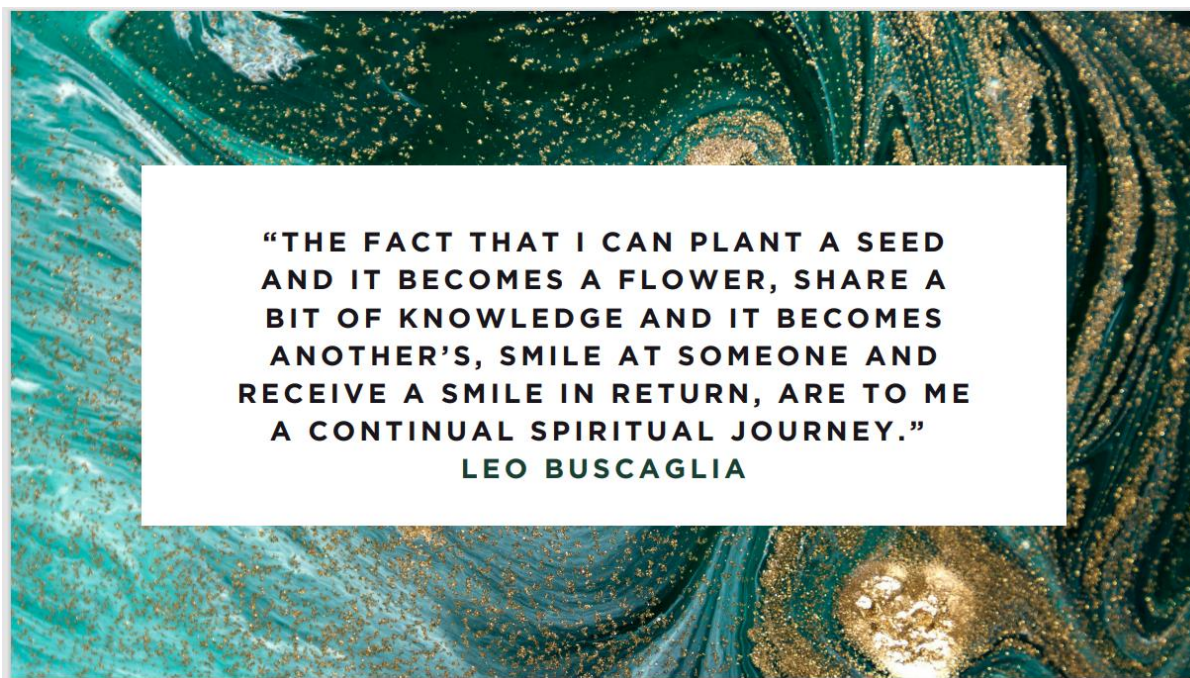
Matthew 13:8 The Message

“What do you make of this? A farmer planted seed. As he scattered the seed, some of it fell on the road, and birds ate it. Some fell in the gravel; it sprouted quickly but didn't put down roots, so when the sun came up it withered just as quickly. Some fell in the weeds; as it came up, it was strangled by the weeds. Some fell on good earth, and produced a harvest beyond his wildest dreams.”

Policy Aim

The aim of this policy is to outline how Altrincham CE Primary School provides opportunities for children to develop their spirituality.

It is our role in school to inspire, create and recognise that spirituality exists in everyone. As Jesus said, ***“If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit”*** and we want to ensure that we support our children to be happy and rounded in all respects, including spirituality, which cannot be taught or measured. Developing the spirituality of our pupils and adults is a fundamental aspect of enabling them to flourish.



Rationale

Spiritual development differs from person to person and is a very personal experience. For this reason, it is difficult to put into words. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be deeply spiritual without having a particular faith.

Ofsted say that ***‘spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone and is not dependant on a religious affiliation.’***

Spirituality is something fundamental to the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday words. In other words, it’s not something we can see but instead something we feel inside ourselves. It has to do with relationships with other people and for believers with ‘God’. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity, with our responses to challenging experiences such as death and suffering, beauty and encounters with others. It has to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values to live by.

For Christians in church, spirituality is about developing a deeper understanding of and connection with God. Through this we are able to respond to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a church, but it is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. Family backgrounds may be

different and spiritual development must take account of the varied circumstances of our staff and pupils.

This is a useful analogy for understanding spirituality:



Therefore, in the light of this and in the light of our school's distinctively Christian vision, at Altrincham CE Primary School we define spirituality as:

“The belief and care of the human spirit or soul rather than material of physical things. It can include ideas about of a belief in God. Spirituality in children can include:

- ***A sensitivity to more than the physical world***
- ***A belief structure that helps children define right and wrong.”***

(The Children's Trust, 2023)

When, Where and How Does Spiritual Development Take Place?

It is our desire that the children's individual spiritual development is fostered as an integral element of the range of learning opportunities and experiences they encounter as part of the curriculum, and that it permeates all strands of school life.

Within school, our vision, values and ethos enables and encourages all children to grow and flourish spiritually.

Likening spiritual development to the growth of a plant and by making explicit links to our theological vision, helps us to answer the three questions: ***When, where*** and ***how*** does spiritual development take place.

Where? The Importance of Relationships

Where we are and who we mix with everybody affects not only how we see ourselves but also how we see others, our place in the world and our own sense of spiritual identity. It happens most powerfully and tangibly through our relationships as we experience the love of others. Through this,

we learn to love and care for ourselves and others and our world. Having healthy, loving relationships is vital for our whole/'hole' development in order that we as individuals and as a society can thrive. Altrincham CE Primary School is an integral part of the children's community and as such we provide the roots/context in which healthy, creative connections can be encouraged.

When? Growing Together -The Importance of Spiritual Styles

Research into 'spiritual styles', in particular that by David Csinos has sprung naturally from a desire to recognise and value individuality, to encourage spiritual expression in a range of different ways and to encourage a respectful understanding and an equal valuing of all these styles. According to Csinos, there are four key 'Spiritual Styles':

Words: Some find spiritual expression and understanding best through words.

Emotions: Others find the freedom of spontaneous emotional expression both empowering and enabling

Symbols: Others are captured by the simple but multi-layered depth and mystery of symbols

Actions: Others find themselves most naturally energised by the practical everyday expression of faith in actions.

At Altrincham CE Primary School, all of these styles are seen as equally valuable and potentially enriching. All of these styles will be encouraged at different times so that they complement each other and become appealing options for our diverse pupils to use at different stages throughout their lives. In this way, we are also avoiding spiritual narrowness and actively encouraging creativity, diversity and inclusivity so that there is a real sense of us 'growing together'.

Why? Fruit – The Importance of Intergenerational Spiritual Development

Research into spiritual 'fruit' has come from work done by such thinkers as Clive Beck on the 'Traits of a Spiritually Developing Person'. This demonstrates a sense that spiritual development is a life-long continuous process of discovery. In addition, Johnson and Walker found that creative links between different generations can promote constant 'fruitful' spiritual development. Therefore, as a school we also promote spiritual development through close links with our churches and local community.

At Altrincham CE, we embed opportunities for spiritual development throughout the curriculum, incorporating all the 'spiritual styles'. To develop our pupil's understanding and a common language of spirituality, we will be using the '**Windows, Mirrors and Doors**' analogy as the basis for our framework based on the following beliefs:

- The need to become aware of the world in all its wonder but also a sad realisation of its many problems. i.e. to realise that the world is both 'awe-full' but also sadly 'awful' at times too. To be aware of both life's 'ows' and 'wows'.
- The need to have a chance to reflect or think on this both alone and with others
- The need to apply what has been learnt from this process in some sort of expressive, active way.



Windows are for looking out onto the world and becoming aware of its wonders, both the 'wows' and 'ows'; things that are 'awe-full' and make us wonder and be grateful and things that are 'awful' and make us wonder and ask questions. The whole curriculum and life itself are full of opportunities to recognise this sensitively.



Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting, alone and together, to see things more clearly, for thinking and asking important questions learning from our own and each other's responses. In schools we must allow time for this for individual and group reflection and sharing of perspectives. Some subjects and times allow for this specifically, such as religious education and collective worship but in all subjects, there will be opportunities, unexpected or planned, when things just 'crop up'. Handled sensitively, it is possible to make the most of all these times



Doors are for looking through in order to then act or express this in some way in response; for moving on, making choices, and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving

How Will We Recognise Spiritual Development in Our Context?

Please note that this is not an exhaustive list and is not intended to be a checklist

Spiritual Capacities, which include children's abilities to:

- Be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- Be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in school and the wider community
- Love themselves, believe in themselves, believe in their ability to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- Exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- Be intrigued by mystery and be open to the transcendent in the whole of life
- Be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer
- Be ready to say sorry when mistakes have been made, to forgive themselves and forgive others
- Be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- Appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life like friends and family, and show generosity towards others.

Organisation

The spiritual growth of pupils is not only dependent on learning in Religious Education, opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners are developed in every aspect of school life. Spirituality in our supportive and nurturing school is inspired by our vision and lived out through our Christian values.

We support the whole community to share this responsibility and to develop a shared language of spirituality. Opportunities are available for all to develop spiritually.

Each classroom has a quiet, reflective area for quiet, contemplative thoughts and staff and children also have access to our extensive outdoor spaces as calm spaces for spiritual reflection.

Spirituality Through Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of Altrincham CE Primary School. It provides the opportunity for our school community to share experiences, ideas and understanding and can develop spirituality in both nature and content. Our school uses “The Gathering, The Worship, The Reflection and finally The Dismissal’ as four key elements to our whole school Collective Worship.

The school uses repeated words as our opening and closing that reflect the school’s vision and values. Collective Worship offers time for thought and reflection, and light is used as a symbol. Children are offered opportunities to reflect and respond within Collective Worship. Prayers offer further opportunities to consider the thoughts and concepts that have been introduced.

Activities and opportunities will include:

- Exposure and appreciation of nature
- Following rituals and traditions
- Use of prayer or reflection time
- Time for silence or stillness
- Acts of service that benefit others
- Stories that promote thought and imagination (without the need to find an immediate answer or moral)

Spirituality in Religious Education

The Church of England’s *Statement of Entitlement* outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides the school’s approach to RE and spirituality.

Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils’ ideas of spirituality and the language of **Windows, Mirrors** and **Doors** where appropriate.

Spirituality Within the Curriculum

Altrincham CE’s values and curriculum drivers inspire pupils’ spiritual growth.

Drawing on the language of **Windows, Mirrors** and **Doors**, conversations around spirituality will be included in classroom teaching from EYFS to Year 6.

Outlined below are some ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted as part of the curriculum:

In English

- Empathy with authors and the characters in stories, poetry and plays
- The appreciation of the beauty in language
- Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech

- Heroes and heroines in literature
- Imagining oneself as someone else
- Escaping into other worlds through literature
- The element of wonder and mystery in literature
- The values of great works

In Mathematics

- Infinity and nothing
- Pattern and order
- Shape and regularity
- Truth, certainty and likelihood
- The universality of mathematics over time and space
- The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations

In Science

- Wonder as the basis for science
- Questions of beginning, creation and evolution
- Birth, life, death and renewal
- The universe and beyond
- Discovering the limits of experimentation
- Regularity and order in science
- Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists
- The impact of scientific achievements

In Geography

- Wonder at the diversity of environments and people
- Land formation
- Questions about the care of the environment
- World (economic) development
- Empathy with people from other parts of the world
- The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns

In History

- Being part of History
- Handling artefacts
- Influential people and events
- The commitment of significant people in history
- The nature and importance of invention and exploration
- Empathy with people from other times in history

In the Creative Arts (Art, Design, Music, Drama and Dance)

- The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places
- Beauty, truth and goodness
- Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs
- Artistic creativity
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses

- Skills in creation and performance
- Personal response and preference

In Design and Technology

- Discovering how something works
- Appreciating genius
- Beauty in design
- Perseverance to solve problems
- Personal achievement
- Learning from others and nature

In Computing

- The wonder of worldwide instant communication
- The speed of the growth of knowledge
- The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide

In Physical Education

- Being a team member
- Pushing yourself to the limit
- Extreme of skill, endurance and achievements
- Emotion in sport
- Personal limitation and failure
- Appreciation of perfection
- Sportsmanship

In PSHE and RE

- Relationships with others, feelings and attitudes, keeping safe
- Ideas of honesty and sensitivity needed for gentle reflection

In addition

- Visit places of beauty, interest and challenge
- Admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts
- Work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations
- Experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level
- Engage in activities that promote courageous advocacy
- Participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches etc.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing Body review the policy in partnership with Senior Leaders and members of the clergy at St George's Altrincham.

Governors ensure that this policy is fully implemented and that practise is consistent with the school's Christian vision, in line with the school's monitoring and evaluation schedule.

Roles and Responsibilities

Recognising there are opportunities for enhancing the spiritual wellbeing of learners in every aspect of our school life, every member of our staff team is committed to support the spiritual growth wherever appropriate.

The Head Teacher is responsible for supporting and leading spiritual development in our school, including monitoring opportunities for spiritual growth in Collective Worship, the whole curriculum including RE and the general ethos of the school within daily life.

The role also includes:

- Ensuring personal knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by participating in CPD and shared good practice
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- Ensuring all staff are familiar with the shared language of spirituality
- Acquiring and organising appropriate resources
- Monitoring the opportunities for spiritual growth through regular observations and learning walks both formal and informal, discussions with colleagues and pupil voice.
- Creating a rigorous and robust SIAMS self-evaluation document

This policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner in light of any advice from Chester Diocese Board of Education.