

Matlock Bath Holy Trinity CofE Primary School - Spirituality Statement

Our vision statement states “Through God’s love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all”. A key part of that is to nurture children’s spiritual awareness and develop each child’s spiritual character.

Introduction

In our school we believe in supporting the growth and development of the whole person for all those for whom we have a responsibility. This therefore includes staff (at all levels), Children and where appropriate/possible their families. When we talk about the whole person, we are referring to the physical, mental, emotional and spiritual aspects of who they are. In this document we aim to set out how we will try and support the spiritual development of everyone in our care. We have deliberately avoided the term policy as we acknowledge that each person is different, especially when it comes to how we understand and relate to spirituality, this is therefore a statement to help guide us in our support of each other in this area.

What is our shared understanding of spirituality?

Spirituality in its widest sense speaks about something internal, the human spirit or soul as opposed to the external material or physical things.

Spirituality is about recognising our place in this world and our connection with it, with one another and with God (for those with a belief) and exploring how that is reflected in our daily lives.

For us as a C of E school it is about an awareness of ourselves as created by God in relationship with God, other people and the world around us. This does not mean we expect people to share the Christian faith or believe that this statement is not relevant to those of other faiths or none, but it is the foundation we build upon and therefore support others from.

Spirituality is not about indoctrination or learning facts but about understanding oneself in this world. For the Christian it is about understanding themselves as being created in God’s image and how that informs and leads them through life in this world.

Building blocks

It is an impossible task within a document such as this to describe and explain all that Spirituality means to us and how we support and encourage its exploration and development as a school. This document therefore does not set out to do that but instead to establish some building blocks that when placed upon our Christian foundation, enable us to begin a journey of spirituality for each of us.

How do we support spirituality at MBHT CofE Primary School?

As already expressed as a C of E school, our spiritual foundation is built upon the Christian nature and ethos. We therefore seek that all we do is done in the light of that spiritual foundation. Specifically, we seek to raise spiritual awareness in the following ways:

- Through example – The way we model behaviour, conversation and care for one another should reflect love, compassion, respect and an awareness of the world around us.
- Through teaching – Specifically in RE and PSHE but in all subjects where appropriate we will take opportunity to reflect on how our learning impacts our place in the world and how we should respond. More specifically within RE we will reflect on the teachings of various religions with a strong emphasis on Christianity and what we learn about our relationships with the wider world.
- Through Collective Worship – We place a strong emphasis in Collective worship, whether it be whole school, class or in any other form. Our collective worship should reflect our Christian foundation in all aspects and where appropriate allow space for personal reflection upon how the Christian faith and teaching impacts and leads in our daily lives. It should also offer space for prayer either individual or led and be inclusive to those of others faiths and those of none.
- Through our relationship with the church – As a school we have a good relationship with the local church and together we seek to encourage all to engage with what scripture has to say to us and about us in relation to God as creator of the world and creator of us within his image.

Some tools we use to develop a strong sense of spirituality at MBHT;

- Having regular times in the day for being quiet, calm, and allowing for reflection. This might include listening to a story, lighting a candle in collective worship, going for a walk or time during Forest School sessions.
- Providing many opportunities for creativity and using the imagination particularly during creative curriculum times e.g. Art, DT, Music, PE.
- During curriculum time for example when learning about the environment – asking, reflecting and answering big questions.
- Valuing play opportunities.
- Singing often, especially with others, particularly during Collective Worship
- Ensuring regular time for prayer. This can take many forms, but should include being thankful, saying sorry. Allow children the opportunity to open themselves to God.
- Provide frequent opportunities for children to explore, express and share feelings. This can occur during PHSE.
- Constantly reaffirm the importance of relationships. How we talk to and relate with each other is fundamental.
- Provide opportunities to express awe and wonder, appreciate beauty in all its forms, and appreciate the connections and unity in the world.
- Encourage each other to admit mistakes and to say sorry. Recognising and owning up to faults is an important healing and redemptive process.
- Encourage children to show kindness, caring and compassion, and to express these in practical ways. (eg: how we treat each other every day; charitable works; looking after pets (class and at home)).
- Explore the 'Big Questions' – particularly through our RE programme.
- Read often to children and give them opportunities to discuss and reflect. This includes both secular and religious texts, particularly the Bible.

Impact: how do we know this is being effective?

Spiritually developed children love and accept themselves and enjoy good relationships with each other. They take an interest and delight in the world around them; they are open to what lies beyond the material (this may manifest itself in faith/belief in God). They can express and understand feelings, they have a strong moral sense and a love of what is good. They are able to enjoy quiet and stillness, they possess an active imagination and show joy in creativity and discovering new skills.

We seek to develop children's and staff spirituality so that we have a community which enables all to "Imagine, Believe, Achieve."