

In God's love we believe and achieve



St. Michael's

Catholic Primary School

Spiritual Development Policy

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Mission Statement

“In God's love we believe and achieve”

As a welcoming Catholic community we will;

- **Follow in the footsteps of Jesus**
- **Deliver the best possible education for all of our children**
- **Value and love each other in our school and our community**
- **Provide an inclusive environment where everybody reaches their full potential**

Rationale

In St Michael's we recognise that Spiritual Development is an intrinsic part of every child's education. It allies with a holistic view of child education.

We view spiritual education as:

"...something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity -with our responses to challenging experiences ... It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live."

(Spiritual and Moral Development, April 1993)

We therefore acknowledge that our approach to spiritual development, for all members of our community, must be a sensitive one which allows for enquiry and reflection. It will be a process which allows each to acquire insights into personal experience; into the awe and wonder of the world in which we live; into our own beliefs and values. We acknowledge the innate dignity and worth of each individual as children of God and recognise that opportunities will give rise to expressions of character and personal responses.

Within our Catholic setting, it is appropriate to recognise the activity of the Holy Spirit and identify a faith context for our experiences. The spiritual development of the members of St Michael's school community is concerned with:

'...the ongoing development of the entire potential of each individual made in the image and likeness of God and (involves) finding fulfilment in God alone.'

(Religious Education in Catholic Schools, Bishops of England and Wales, 2000)

It is essential to recognise the author of our spiritual development is not our own construction of meaning, but God himself.

"It is common among some sociologists and psychologists of religion, and even among contemporary theologians, to see Christianity and the Christian community as a resource for giving meaning to life and providing some sort of coherent narrative structure for personal existence. Of course, it does give meaning, but it is not one that is constructed from a series of concepts, stories and narratives, practices and traditions which the 'self' can take on or use to process and interpret experiences. If it were, then Christianity would be just one of many systems on offer. Such an approach fundamentally misunderstands the nature of meaning in Christian experience that discerns the dynamic grace within our experiences. Grace changes the agent of meaning from 'self' to God;

it is in this exchange encountered in the sacramental rhythm and life of the community that meaning is generated."
(*On the Way to Life, Heythrop 2005*)

Practice

Developing each person's spirituality is the responsibility of the whole school community. Spiritual Development is made through the planned and hidden curriculum. In other words, in St. Michael's we address spirituality both explicitly and implicitly.

We address spirituality explicitly through:

- the teaching of 'Come and See'
- Collective Worship
- PSHE
- Following the Code of Conduct
- Questioning and exploring the meaning of experience
- Cross-curricular approaches where appropriate
- Drama
- Music
- Reflections
- Assemblies
- Liturgical celebrations
- Regularly planned visits to church
- Residential visits
- the teaching of other Faiths

We address spirituality implicitly through:

- actions
- relationships and personal interactions, both individually and en masse
- unspoken expectations expressed in tone of voice, posture, facial expressions, etc
- the living-out of our school ethos led by our Mission Statement
- the degree of welcome we afford visitors
- interaction between all members of the school community
- the planned and maintained environment throughout the school

Evaluation

The evaluation of Spiritual Development within St. Michael's School must be of a qualitative nature which impacts upon the school ethos and the maturation of

the individual. It is measured by the extent to which the school provides opportunities for all to:

- acquire insights into their own personal existence
- make sense of their life experiences
- develop a sense of wonder, awe, reverence and imagination
- develop the human capacity to go beyond physical, tangible reality
- develop a sense of the presence of God in their lives
- reflect on and respond to this presence
- become familiar with the life, words and actions of Jesus, the Son of God
- become familiar with the life, words and actions of the saints as heroes of the Church and other significant Christians
- hear of how people with other belief systems respond to the spiritual dimension of life

We endeavour to provide children with the abilities to promote their spirituality by demonstrating qualities such as:

- knowledge of the central beliefs, ideas and practices of major world religions and philosophies
- an understanding of how people have sought to explain the universe through various myths and stories, including religious, historical and scientific interpretations
- beliefs which are held personally, and the ability to give some account of these and to derive values from them
- behaviour and attitudes which derive from such knowledge and understanding and from personal conviction, and which show awareness of the relationship between belief and action
- personal responses to questions about the purpose of life, and to the experience of the rich fabric of life itself

(Spiritual, Moral and Cultural Development, Feb 1994)

Policy Monitoring and Review

This policy will be reviewed on a 2 year cycle..

Reviewed by Mike Volynchook on behalf of the Governing body October 2023

Signed Copy available from the school office.