GREENS NORTON C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL – SPIRITUALITY POLICY

Approved by	Date	Due for Review
Miss Ruth Fox (Chair of Governors)	June 2025	June 2026
Barbara O'Brien (Head Teacher)		

INTRODUCTION

At Greens Norton CE Primary School, we aim to educate, inspire and nurture every child and adult member of our school community in a loving and inclusive Christian environment, so we have the confidence and skills to excel in our achievements and flourish as fair and kind children of God. ***Be fair, be kind and trust in God (Micah 6:8).***

The aim of this policy is to outline how Greens Norton CE Primary School provides opportunities for the whole school community to develop their spirituality, an important aspect of every human being.

As Albert Einstein said *"If you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself"* so we aim to encourage adults within our community to explore and understand it for themselves.

WHAT IS SPIRITUALITY?

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. However, in an effort to describe what we believe Spirituality entails at Greens Norton CE Primary School we use the following definition.

Spirituality is a deep sense of self; a recognition of our uniqueness, our strengths and weaknesses, and how we are part of the world. Spirituality recognises that there is something 'bigger' outside of ourselves; it inspires curiosity and encourages an uninhibited sense of awe and wonder in us.

We articulate this to children through this child friendly definition:

*Spirituality means thinking about big questions like: '**Why are we here?** ' or '**What makes people kind and loving?**'. It's about feeling connected to something bigger than ourselves – like nature, family or even the feeling of peace inside. It helps us understand our feelings, be kind to others and feel calm and happy in our hearts.*

Our definition is affirmed through these two quotes from highly respected theologians in the field of spirituality:

"We belong to a mystery far grander than our little selves and our little time" (Richard Rohr)
"In silence God ceases to be an object and becomes an experience" (Thomas Merton)

Promoting spirituality should not be confused with developing faith. Faith is a set of beliefs by which you live your life by and could be a response to a belief in God. Faith is something you choose whereas spirituality is an aspect of human development - it is not separate but integral to who we are and what makes us whole. Spirituality is for everybody regardless of faith. As reflected in these quotes from Rebecca Nye "In every child there is a spiritual potential no matter what the child's cultural or religious context may be" and "a growing body of research demonstrates that children's spirituality is not something esoteric, nor something exclusive to precocious children. Also, it is not limited to particular religious exercises"

HOW DO WE DEVELOP AND PROMOTE SPIRITUALITY?

To be spiritual means we all have an ability to develop a felt sense of connection to people and places, even ideas. This connection allows us to interact with the world and the contribute to it. Canadian scholar Joyce Bellous identified four pathways of spiritual expression, which then David Csinos, used as a framework for his research into the spiritual lives of children. Both researchers show that we come to know and experience God in different ways through four spiritual avenues:

- the path of the intellect (word centred)
- the way of the emotions (emotion centred)
- the journey of mystery (symbol centred)
- the road to justice (action centred)

Everyone has one or two preferred styles that shape the landscape of their lives. In understanding these different spiritual styles helps us understand ourselves and each other better. A healthy spirituality involves a degree of balance between every style, therefore across the spiritual encounters we offer in our school community we aim to provide a balance of opportunities in order for individuals to know their own preference and how to grow their own spiritual wellness.

Our school aims to support children and adults in making sense of themselves and the world around them. We aim to help them observe their own responses to different experiences, from within school and outside of school.

We provide opportunities for children to consider big concepts such as life, death, identity, faith, war, peace, environmental issues, etc. and ask big questions, many of which have no certain answers. We assist children to notice and reflect on life in that moment and ensure that time is offered to pause and reflect on the future impact of that encounter

These opportunities come through our ambitious and broad curriculum, for example, noticing a pattern in maths, seeing the detail on an insect's wings under a magnifier, feeling the joy or the pain from a piece of artwork, asking questions about God inspired by exploration of different faiths in RE, informal conversations on the playground or on trips out of school, and our Collective Worship.

Opportunities for spirituality development come when:

- we are given space to stop, look, listen, think and reflect
- we feel safe to share opinions and think differently from others
- we are encouraged to use our imagination
- we are encouraged to ask questions

Children and adults need:

- time to be listened to;
- time to feel and express sadness or grief
- to know that they are valued;
- space to explore, think and discuss;
- opportunities that encourage wonder and surprise;
- to know that there is not always a product or end result;
- to know there is another way.

Activities and opportunities will include:

- exposure to and appreciation of nature;
- following rituals and traditions;
- use of prayer or reflection time;
- time for silence and stillness;
- acts of service that benefit others;
- stories that promote thought and imagination (without the need to find a moral);

- sensory opportunities e.g our peace garden

SPIRITUALITY IN COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present which are often linked to invitations to reflect or to pray.

Through Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for exploring and thinking about stories from the Bible and values connected to the Christian faith. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or observe, Christian spiritual practices such as: prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible, liturgy, symbols and shared singing.

Opportunities to reflect on life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise with the moments of disappointment or pain.

Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time is given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark seasonal Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. Collective Worship in Greens Norton CE Primary School is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT OF SPIRITUALITY

Development of spirituality can be hindered when:

- adults trivialise something small to them but which is big to a child;
- the 'busyness' of life and the curriculum and not having the time to look and think;
- lack of space for stillness and listening.

By being aware of these potential barriers, ensuring that time is prioritised appropriately and opportunities taken when they arise, staff at Greens Norton CE Primary aim to allow all to develop their spirituality throughout their time in our school.

ASSESSMENT OF SPIRITUALITY

It is neither possible nor appropriate to assess children's spirituality. However, this does not make it any less valuable. In the words of Anthony Bryk, *"We need to find a way to measure what we value, or else we will end up valuing what we measure."*

So instead, we assess and monitor how well we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Teaching staff self-assess against the principles in this policy on an annual basis, and share and discuss ideas with each other. Pupil voice provides evidence of opportunities offered as well as children's growing understanding of spirituality so we seek to capture moments in our class Values Books. Ongoing monitoring of Collective Worship by governors, including evaluation records from staff and pupils, provide further evidence of opportunities offered for spiritual development. We also seek opportunities to make wider connections with the church community, providing prayer space and through Family Worship. We monitor these so that there is a similar approach and direction.