Spirituality Policy

Our Vision:

Everyone is Someone in our Church School community,
Becoming learners for life,
Ready to make a difference.

At Elsenham C. of E. Primary school, our vision for all, is to flourish in an inclusive community, where everyone's uniqueness is valued. We strive to provide a rich learning journey, focussed on achieving high standards, both personally and academically. Learners will be equipped with the skills to become resilient individuals, ready for an ambitious future.

Our values: Love, Hope, Faith, Wisdom and Kindness
'So, encourage each other and build each other up' 1 Thessalonians 5:11

At Elsenham C. of E. Primary School, spirituality is integral to our vision of nurturing an inclusive community where every individual is celebrated for their uniqueness. We believe that spirituality enriches our journey of learning and personal growth, enabling us to connect deeply with ourselves, others, the world around us, and the transcendent. Through a dynamic educational experience focused on achieving excellence, both academically and personally, we empower our learners to develop resilience and readiness for a bright future. Rooted in scripture, "So encourage each other and build each other up." 1 Thessalonians 5:11. This guiding principle underscores our commitment to fostering a supportive and uplifting community where individuals are empowered to grow spiritually, nurture one another and thrive together in the spirit of love.

Legal Framework:

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook states:
Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school's activities but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:
• ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
• knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
• sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
• use of imagination and creativity in their learning
• willingness to reflect on their experiences.

The SIAMS Framework:
Spirituality is referenced throughout the framework. It is central to the inspection questions and is referenced when evaluating evidence of vision, curriculum and worship.

Our definition of spirituality:

Spirituality is not something that we teach, but it is something we make space, time and opportunity to develop; it is woven into the fabric of our school. We see spirituality as embracing the idea that the world extends beyond our individual selves. It is a sense of awe and wonder, a feeling of connection in our community, the wider world, and beyond into the transcendent. Spirituality allows us to explore relationships with ourselves, others, the natural world and beyond.

Opportunities for spirituality in school:

Spiritual development occurs in many ways. We aim to ensure that children and staff:

• Have regular times in the day for quiet and reflection. This might be listening to a story, lighting a candle in worship, engaging in reflection or mindful activities in communal spaces and in classrooms.

• Will be provided with many opportunities for creativity and imagination. This could be through lesson content, themed days and events, competitions, interventions and extra-curricular activities.

• Will be provided with purposeful and regular opportunities for invitational prayer and reflection. This can take many forms, but should include being thankful and allow the children an opportunity to open themselves up to God. Prayer opportunities are given within class, collective worship and during break and lunch times.

• Will have regular opportunities to explore, express and share feelings. As we have raised the profile of wellbeing post-covid, children are encouraged to 'check-in' with themselves daily, learn techniques to express and regulate their emotions as well as discuss feeling relating to things beyond themselves. This is particularly evident in philosophy lessons as well as weekly Picture News discussions.

• Will see positive, respectful relationships around school. The importance of relationships will be reaffirmed to them. This will include clear exploration of how we talk to and relate to each other.

• Will have opportunities to express awe and wonder, appreciate beauty in all its forms and appreciate connections and unity in the world. With the growth of our Forest School provision, this awe and wonder extends beyond the classroom.

• Will be encouraged to reflect on mistakes with a restorative approach to build on connection rather than correction. As a TPP school, we believe in 'getting curious' around behaviour and facilitating Christian teachings of forgiveness and kindness.

• Will have opportunities to explore 'Big Questions', particularly through R.E. learning and collective worship.

• Will be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them, therefore encouraging courageous advocacy. This can be seen as our responses to Picture News, Eco council, Archbishop's Young Leaders Award, anti-bullying week and numerous fundraising events for charity throughout the year.

• Will love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges.

• Will be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life.

• Will be willing to take risks and to challenge themselves personally and academically. The idea of a growth mindset underpins our vision to ensure that everyone's uniqueness is valued and everyone feels able to flourish.

• Will have the opportunity to become spiritual through windows (I wonder if you have noticed…) mirrors (I wonder how you feel about…) and doors (I wonder what we could do about it…). This model gives children to chance to look beyond the classroom and feel a connection to local, national and global events.

• Will have opportunities to contribute to whole school life and develop a sense of community. This could be evident in positions of responsibility within the school (leaders in learning, school council, Eco council, Worship Crew, Sports ambassadors..etc), sharing learning with our school community, and religious services and collaborations with the church.

Rationale:

Spirituality is a fundamental aspect of human existence that goes beyond religious beliefs, encompassing a sense of connection to oneself, others, and the world at large. Our spirituality policy is deeply rooted in our school's vision, which prioritises the flourishing of every individual within an inclusive community. It is aligned with our core values of love, hope, faith, wisdom, and kindness; guiding us in creating an environment where spirituality is woven into the fabric of daily life.

Compliance with legal frameworks such as the OFSTED School Inspection Handbook and the SIAMS Framework underscores the importance of providing opportunities for spiritual development within the school setting. By adhering to these guidelines, we ensure that our students receive a comprehensive education that addresses their spiritual needs alongside academic achievement.

Our definition of spirituality acknowledges its universal significance, transcending individual beliefs to foster connections with oneself, others and the world. This definition serves as a guiding principle for integrating spirituality into all aspects of school life, enriching the educational experience for everyone involved.

Our spirituality policy outlines diverse opportunities for spiritual development, including regular times for reflection, creativity, invitational prayer, emotional expression, positive relationships, appreciation of beauty, restorative approaches, exploration of 'Big Questions', advocacy, self-care, resilience-building, awareness of the transcendent, and community involvement.

By embedding spirituality into our educational practices, we aim to support the holistic development of our students, nurturing their resilience, empathy, and social responsibility. This approach prepares them for the challenges of the future, empowering them to lead fulfilling lives and make positive contributions to society.

In conclusion, our spirituality policy reflects our commitment to providing a nurturing and enriching educational environment that fosters the spiritual growth and wellbeing of all members of our school community. It serves as a testament to our dedication to cultivating individuals, who are not only academically proficient, but also spiritually developed, foster curiosity and are open to the wonders of the world.