

Parsons Heath Church of England Primary School



Spirituality at Parsons Heath



At Parsons Heath Church of England Primary School, we are inspired by the example of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, who cares for his sheep.

At Parsons Heath Primary School, our vision is embedded in the imagery of God/Jesus as the Good Shepherd. We view school as the shepherd, guiding all members through daily life. We follow the example that Jesus gave us using our Christian Values of Belonging, Kindness and Resilience. As the Good Shepherd tends his sheep, so we nurture our school community in a safe, secure environment to ensure that they thrive and fulfil their potential as good shepherds of the future.

Special parts of the bible that we use

The Good Shepherd (John 10)

‘My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.’ John 10:27

At Parsons Heath, we are passionate about building positive relationships throughout our community. We remind our children that they are known, safe and unconditionally loved. We also focus on how we can live together as a flock within our school and the wider world.

Psalm 23

‘The Lord is my Shepherd, I lack nothing’ – Psalm 23

We view school as the Shepherd, guiding all members through daily life, following the example of Jesus. The psalm talks about the journey of life, concluding with the lines: ‘Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life’. We feel that this reflects the way in which the nurture and guidance from Parsons Heath Primary School aims to equip our members for their life ahead.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

We use this parable to remind us how important every member of our school community is. If a sheep becomes separated from the flock, then it is the shepherd’s duty to search for the lost sheep until they are found. We teach the children to identify with the feeling of belonging and importance that comes with being part of our flock. We also ask them to identify with the Shepherd and appreciate how far each of us can be expected to go for the good of all.

What is Spirituality?

It is very difficult to put into words what 'spirituality' actually is, because it is a very personal experience, each experience will be different, and experience of spirituality often changes over the course of a lifetime. Spirituality is not the same as having faith or belonging to a particular religion; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith. However, as a Church of England School we make links between Spirituality and the Christian faith.

At Parsons Heath Primary School, we define Spirituality in the following way.

Spirituality is not something we can see; it is something we feel inside ourselves. It is about awe and wonder, asking questions, being aware of something 'bigger' outside of ourselves and making sense of ourselves and the world around us.

The language of Spirituality is not child-friendly in nature. Therefore, we draw on representations and concepts that our children find easier to understand. These are detailed below.

How does Parsons Heath nurture Spirituality?

At our school, we aim to support children as they make sense of themselves and the world around them. We do this through our Collective Worship, which gives children time to question and reflect. Our use of 'Ows, Wows and Nows', alongside the concept of 'Windows, Doors and Mirrors', (details below) encourages our children to look at the world in new ways, to reflect on their own actions and develop an understanding of how others feel.

We have planned opportunities throughout the curriculum that nurture spirituality as detailed below. This is particularly evident in lessons such as RE, PSHCE, Science and the arts. We also plan experiences for our children, both inside and outside school, that will enhance their feeling of awe and wonder.

It is important to note that Spirituality is also nurtured spontaneously through unplanned moments that can occur throughout the day. This could be through the appreciation of our beautiful surroundings, celebrating the wonder of weather or in acknowledging the achievements or qualities of our pupils and staff.

Spirituality Representations that we use with our children

Ows, Wows and Nows

Ows - These are the things that can go wrong. They can knock the breath out of you.

(Some examples we use with our children – finding work to be difficult, falling over in the playground, grief, loneliness, friendship issues)

Wows – These are the awe and wonder moments. The times when you want to breathe in and capture the feeling, holding onto it as long as you can

(Climbing a mountain, visiting somewhere you have always wanted, looking at nature, achievements)

Nows - These are the everyday, ordinary times: being able to be present in the moment, thinking of what we have now and how lucky we are to be here, now.

(Children are given time to reflect and practise mindfulness)

Windows. Mirrors and Doors

Windows 	Looking out into the world in new ways	Windows are for looking out into the world in new ways. They are for becoming aware of the 'ows, wows and nows' in life for both ourselves and others. Windows make us wonder and ask questions.
Mirrors 	Reflecting on ourselves	Mirrors are for reflecting on ourselves both alone and together. They are for seeing things more clearly, for thinking and for asking important questions. Mirrors encourage sharing of perspectives.
Doors 	Going through a door with new thinking, behaviour or attitude	Doors are for going through with new thinking, behaviours or attitudes. They allow children to respond to their questions and reflection. They could respond through action, giving or through creativity.

Opportunities for Spiritual Development

Spirituality can only be developed when:

- Children are given space to stop, look, think and reflect
- Children feel safe to share their thoughts and opinions
- Children are allowed to use their imagination
- Children are given time to be listened to
- Adults are respectful
- Children have opportunities to discuss ideas
- Children start to appreciate that there is more than one way of thinking or approaching ideas, problems and questions
- Children are given time to be still



The Building Blocks to Spirituality

Self-Awareness or Self-Knowledge	Children are given the opportunity to recognise their own inner thoughts, feelings and emotions. This in essence shows children what it means to be human. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon and discuss their own beliefs with others, giving them a heightened respect and understanding of other people's viewpoint.
Forming Relationships	An important part of personal development is the ability to form relationships. Pupils are encouraged to develop an openness and awareness to differences and to be empathetic towards others. In doing so, the children gain a greater understanding of their place within the school, wider community and the world.
Asking Questions	This is the search for the purpose and meaning of life. It is the exploration of questions such as 'why me?' in times of suffering. Children are encouraged to reflect on these through Collective Worship and RE. However, these questions are not limited to those times. Children often ask profound questions and these questions should be taken seriously and children should be given the time to reflect and explore these further.
Uncertainty, Awe and Wonder	Our children are encouraged to develop a sense of awe and wonder when considering the beauty of nature, human achievements and exploring other cultures. For some children, this may prompt them to have feelings of transcendence, which give rise to the belief in the existence of God. This also gives children an appreciation of their place in the world and should encourage them to search for meaning in life.
Beliefs and Values	This is the search for, and development of, personal beliefs and values which may or may not be shared with other members of the community. This naturally may include the development of religious beliefs, and as a church school we seek to be a supportive environment in which people can explore and clarify their own beliefs.
Creativity	Our children are given the opportunities to exercise their imagination and express their emotions and feelings through the creative arts. Creative work is an important way of allowing children to explore other areas of spiritual development.
Feelings and Emotions	Children are encouraged to identify their emotions and to explore how these impact on others. This should bring a growing awareness of when it is important to control feelings and emotions. Pupils will be able to foster their emotional life and express their feelings in the community of the church school, knowing themselves to be accepted and loved as unique individuals. All the above experiences may be explained and explored in both religious and non-religious terms and demonstrates our commitment as a church school open to those with other faiths and beliefs.

Spirituality across our Curriculum

Spiritual development

- 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

Subject	Opportunities
RE	Children are encouraged to reflect on and respond to big questions throughout the RE curriculum. For example, 'Is being happy the most important thing in life?'. These questions allow children to explore the meaning behind life, whilst using differing beliefs and faiths as a way of establishing similar and opposing viewpoints. Through RE, children also have the opportunity to explore spiritual practices such as worship and prayer. In addition, the children get to explore questions about God in relation to meaning and purpose.
Art	Children are given time to respond to a variety of artwork, reflecting upon and discussing their opinions and perspectives. They are exposed to a range of art and taught about the motivations and experiences of the artists behind them, thus enhancing their respect for people's different faiths, feelings and values. Art encourages a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about the world around them. Children are encouraged to appreciate the art of others, but also to appreciate the inspiration that is behind such pieces. Pupils are then given the opportunities to find their own inspiration from the world around them.

	Art also allows children to use their imagination and creativity in the work that they produce. They can use art as an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences.
Music	Children are encouraged to use imagination and creativity in their learning. They can share music expressively and listen carefully to others. A joy in performing together can be found and this in turn emphasises the importance of having responsibility for your own role within a group and also gives a sense of being part of something bigger.
History	In learning about the past, children can reflect on their own beliefs and perspective on life. They are encouraged to consider how their lives would have been different if the course of events in the past had taken a different turn. In increasing understanding of the past, children may come to a greater respect for other people's values and beliefs. Some children will also experience a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about the world around them.
Geography	A sense of awe and wonder is created when learning about the natural world. Children begin to have an increasing appreciation of their place in the world and in learning about other cultures, have an improved understanding of other beliefs and faiths.
Maths	We encourage spirituality through a range of mathematical opportunities. Children are introduced to the wonder of numbers, including numerical patterns, order, shape and space. Investigations and problem solving provide moments of awe and wonder, where children are encouraged to deepen their understanding. There are opportunities to make connections between numeracy skills and real life throughout our curriculum.
English	Writing – children are inspired by texts and authors and learn how we can be creative through the use of language. Children are able to use their imagination and explore their feelings and emotions through the written word. Reading – the books that we have chosen for our reading spine allow children to explore and reflect on other cultures, beliefs, perspectives, values and emotions. Children learn to infer how characters are feeling and empathise with them. Pupils are also encouraged to make connections with their own lives and the world around them.

	Oracy – children are given time to discuss different matters that have arisen from the reading with an open mind. They are also taught how to become communicators and in turn discuss with creativity and purpose. Phonics – we believe that in delivering a robust phonics curriculum, our children learn to unlock the awe and wonder of reading.
Science	Throughout our Science curriculum, we provide many opportunities for pupils to learn about nature, explore the role they play in protecting our world and how they can contribute to their wider environment. Through the skills children learn as scientists, children are encouraged to ask ‘big questions’ about the world around us, take risks, demonstrate curiosity and open mindfulness. Staff model openness to the fact that not all answers can be provided by Science.
French	Children are taught about French culture but also about the beauty of languages across the world.
PSHE	Through PSHE, we encompass spirituality by developing an awareness of others’ needs and wants and explore ways of responding to this. We recognise people’s worth and values. We have a strong sense of community, which inspires children to grow into confident and resilient individuals.
DT	We inspire creativity and imagination, where children can design, make and evaluate products that solve relevant and real problems within a variety of contexts, looking not only at their own needs, wants and values, but also the considerations of others. We celebrate personal creativity by exploring extraordinary design, inspiring awe and wonder through beauty, functionality and the magnitude of some designs.
Computing	Children are given a variety of exciting opportunities to express themselves through coding & programming, creating media and collecting data. They develop ideas and present these in a range of formats using information technology. Children are encouraged to be responsible and safe while using the internet, being mindful of themselves and others.

PE	Through P.E., we enable spiritual development by allowing our children the freedom to move and express themselves. We build wonder in their achievements as they learn a new skill and share this with others.
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