Spirituality Policy

Date Approved by the school: 20th February 2023
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Signed (Executive Head Teacher): Date: 20th February 2023
Chair Governing Body: Date: 20th February 2023

Growing as a learning community through Joshua 1:9, we endeavour to seek what is good, treasure what is true, do what is right. Rooted in our Christian understanding of who we are before God, we strive to be fearless advocates of this, dedicated to service and the flourishing of peace.

Context

At Monken Hadley we view the development of spirituality as crucial for all pupils:

- *'Spirituality enables us to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves.'*

(London Diocese of Schools)

Opportunities for spiritual encounter and spiritual development are key aspects in worship and across the curriculum. Having a clear understanding of what spirituality means is an important part in ensuring the distinctiveness of this church school.

Rebecca Nye (author of 'Children's Spirituality') defines spirituality as "relational awareness". This is a personal awareness of the following:

- **Self** (being a unique person and understanding self-perception)
- **Others** (how empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships)
- **World and Beauty** (perceiving and relating to the physical and creative world through responses to nature and art)
- **Beyond** – (relating to the transcendental and understanding experiences and meaning outside the 'everyday')

We believe strongly that all staff and governors have a responsibility for the spiritual development of the pupils. Every school day present opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners through the general ethos of the school, the daily act of collective worship and the whole curriculum, including Religious Education.

As a school, we have defined spirituality as: *"Spirituality is not something we can see; it is something we feel inside ourselves. It is about awe and wonder, asking questions, inspiration and being aware of something 'bigger' outside of ourselves."*

Our aim therefore is to establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual development of all pupils through the following objectives:

Develop an awareness of self by:

- *Developing an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;*
- *Developing strategies to build good mental health (see mental health policy);*
- *Fostering self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions;*
- *Developing the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;*
- *Beginning to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life;*
- *Developing an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;*

Develop an awareness of others

- *Developing an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;*
- *Developing an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others);*
- *Understanding the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others;*

Awareness of the world and beauty

- *Developing the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc*
- *Developing a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation.*

Awareness of beyond

- *Developing an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;*
- *Developing knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;*
- *Encouraging curiosity, creativity and imagination.*

These objectives will enable the pupils to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

Teaching and Learning

The Curriculum, and all areas of school life, are driven by the school's Christian vision statement and the seven school values. Monken Hadley School has adopted the LDBS R.E. syllabus. This syllabus enables staff to deliver a curriculum that gives the children knowledge and understanding of Spirituality not only within Christianity, but also from a number of world faiths and world-view perspectives. Opportunities for spiritual development are carefully planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life. There is also an acknowledgment that there is potential for spiritual development from spontaneous, unplanned activity or event, and these should be acknowledged and celebrated by all.

The rich and varied content of both the R.E. syllabus and the school's Curiosity Curriculum allow staff to adopt a variety of teaching styles, and to take the opportunity to capture pupil's interests and imaginations through creative arts and multi sensory teaching. Staff are encouraged to use a range of resources such as artefacts, video clips and technology, as well as inviting in visitors or making educational visits. In this way, staff aim to foster the children's spiritual capabilities such as imagination, empathy and insight. Children at Monken Hadley enjoy lessons where partner talk, talking squares and other discussion models are utilised. Such lessons give the children opportunity to listen attentively to each other, to observe carefully, to listen with discernment, valuing what is good and worthwhile and making judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas. During lessons, and at other times throughout the school day, staff aim to support the children as they learn to live with success, failure - both for themselves and others, and times when life is difficult for them. Positive mental wellbeing is viewed as crucial for all, for the children and all those that work at Monken Hadley.

The daily act of collective worship is seen as a special and important time in the school day and is attended by all children and staff. The times of worship are carefully planned and present children and staff with opportunities to learn, to respond and to reflect on what they have heard. A variety of people lead collective worship, for example the Executive Head, the Head of School, the Clergy, Teachers and visitors to the school. There are also Key stage collective worships and a celebration collective worship each week. During the time when the school was closed (due to the pandemic) collective worship continued remotely. The continuation of this daily act of collective worship allowed the children to acknowledge the importance that the staff give to these times of listening, learning and reflection. The times of collective worship help the children to gain an understanding of God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, the importance and power of prayer and a good knowledge of the Big Story of the Bible and the core concepts.

Use of the LDBS RE syllabus, the Curiosity Curriculum, the classroom reflection areas and involvement in whole school events (such as the UNICEF Rights Respecting School Outright campaigns) ensures that the children are presented with as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and our spiritual part within it. Together we develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished and protected. Although a small site, the school building, the classrooms and the grounds can offer space for silence, stillness and prayer.

Approaches

Monken Hadley is very aware that although R.E. plays an important role in nurturing the development of spirituality, in reality many areas of the curriculum have a part to play. The curiosity curriculum (history, geography and science), seeks to foster curiosity, imagination, insight and empathy, whilst the PSHE scheme and UNICEF linked activities, give the children further opportunities to explore and express feelings and emotions and to celebrate diversity. Careful planning of the whole curriculum reflects the aims set out in the school vision statement, whilst also fostering feelings of hope, reassurance and encouragement:

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Monken Hadley has had a long tradition of creating reflection areas in the classrooms and in other areas of the school. These areas provide the children 'space' to reflect, think and wonder. These areas, and times of collective worship, give the children opportunities for prayer as well as times of silence and stillness.

Reflection areas are carefully positioned in each classroom allowing the children to approach the area with ease and take the opportunity to pause and reflect within a busy school day. A teacher may choose a theme that stems from a recent class discussion, the current R.E. unit of study, the class topic, a P.S.H.E. unit or in response to a particular need for the class. Guidance is given regarding the elements that are needed to make a good reflection area such as, a clear title, pictures and photos, a task that encourages reflection, an age appropriate text from the Bible, thought provoking questions and so on. There is a yearly schedule setting out the dates by which a new reflection areas need to be in place.

By nurturing the children's spiritual development, we hope to encourage the children to develop positive relationships based on the school's Christian vision and the associated school values which are; Christian Service, respect, curiosity, communication, encouragement, creativity and adaptability.

The curriculum allows children to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community and how these impact their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today.

Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to children for spiritual development will be monitored by the staff.

Monken Hadley prides itself that all staff are aware of the importance of observing and listening to children and adults in the school. By listening and observing children it is possible to take advantage of opportunities for encouraging and promoting spiritual development as well as allowing regular monitoring and evaluation of all pupils.

To ensure that all staff and governors have a good knowledge and understanding of the school's Spirituality policy, and how this policy links with the school's Christian vision and values, regular discussions take place at CPD and governors meetings. These meetings are viewed as essential if all staff are to have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school. CPD time is allocated to sharing good classroom

work and practice, from within our school and from other schools. New members of staff will be required to read the policy and then be given the opportunity to discuss the policy in order to ensure good comprehension of the knowledge and principles involved.

Opportunities for spiritual development during collective worship, and during time spent within and outside the school building will be shared and promoted. Evidence of spiritual development will also be gathered and evaluated, for example by looking at children's work in R.E. books, books for other curriculum areas, discussions with children and observing the children during PSHE Jigsaw activities, drama lessons and performances and so on.