

# SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

The Spiritual Development Statement is designed as a guide to show an understanding of Spiritual Development and approaches to aid the teaching and learning of the children.

The statement is for teachers, supply and student teachers, classroom assistants, governors and parents or guardians. Visiting L.E.A. advisors, church representatives and other outside agencies may also request a copy.

## MISSION STATEMENT

Uley School provides a safe, inclusive learning environment that realises and values the full potential and talents of every child.

We encourage a caring community in which children and adults are treated with mutual respect.

This is fostered within a Christian ethos where quality teaching promotes high standards of behaviour and achievement and inspires pride in our society.

## 1. AIMS

- Outline meaning of spiritual development
- Raise awareness of how to promote spiritual development
- Recognise elements already current in and around school.
- Achieve a spiritual development statement to use as a guide for school.

## 2. TOWARDS A DEFINITION

Spiritual Development is emphatically not another name for Religious Education, but there are close connections.

**Religious Education** seeks to increase pupils' awareness and scrutiny of ultimate questions surrounding existence.

**Spiritual Development** is the responsibility of the whole school and of the whole curriculum, as well as activities outside the curriculum.

Spiritual Development draws attention to what is personal and unique to each individual, seeks answers to life's great questions, encourages individual responsibility and promotes intellectual curiosity.

**What do we mean when we use the term: *Spiritual Development*?**

Since the 1996 Education Act it has been a legal requirement for schools to make provision for the spiritual development of all its pupils.

It applies to all pupils and cuts across every aspect of school life. As educators we should be able to recognise and apply it in our teaching.

It is to do with:

- relationships with other people and for developing a belief in God;
- a search for identity – our responses to challenging experiences, e.g. death, beauty, suffering, good and evil;
- the search for the meaning and purpose in life and values for living;
- The process of becoming fully human.

### 3. EIGHT ASPECTS OF SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The NCC (now QCA) identifies eight aspects of spiritual development. These do not relate to specific subject areas, but rather to an understanding of the meaning of spiritual development and a willingness to identify and develop those opportunities across the curriculum. In this way spiritual development becomes an integral part of each child's learning experience.

- ♦ **Beliefs** – The development of personal beliefs, including religious beliefs, an appreciation that people have individual and shared beliefs on which they base their lives; a developing understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity.
- ♦ **A sense of awe, wonder and mystery** – Being inspired by the natural world, mystery, or human achievement.
- ♦ **Experiencing feelings of transcendence** – Feelings which may give rise to the belief in the existence of a divine being, or the belief that one's inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experiences.
- ♦ **Search for meaning and purpose** – Asking “why me?” at times of hardship or suffering; reflecting on the origins and purposes of life; responding to challenging experiences of life such as beauty, suffering and death.
- ♦ **Self-knowledge** – An awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences; a growing understanding and acceptance of individual identity; the development of self-respect.
- ♦ **Relationships** – Recognising and valuing the worth of each individual; developing a sense of community; the ability to build up relationships with others.
- ♦ **Creativity** – Expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through, for example, art, music, literature and crafts; exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight.

- ♦ **Feelings and emotions** – The sense of being moved by beauty or kindness; hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions and feelings, and how to learn to use such feelings as a source of growth.

#### **4. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

The school recognises the potential contribution of collective worship to pupils' spiritual development and has adopted the following checklist as a means of monitoring the opportunities which the school provides for spiritual development through worship.

- ♦ Celebrating all that is good and lovely and expressing thankfulness for the joy of being alive.
- ♦ Providing opportunities for pupils to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the 'darker' side of life.
- ♦ Ensuring that the experiences provided are relevant to age, aptitude and family background of the pupils.
- ♦ Giving time for silent reflection and exploration of inner space; illustrating forms of worship that others have found helpful in their spiritual development e.g. silent contemplation, dance, singing, poetry, art and investigation.
- ♦ Providing a rich variety of forms of expression, e.g. art, drama, music, story and giving pupils the opportunity to experience these at their 'own level' looking to teachers to provide guidance rather than to impose their own interpretation.
- ♦ Taking place in an environment that is conducive to worship, where the worship is properly resourced and presented.
- ♦ Always inviting, never coercing, remembering that pupils will be at different stages of spiritual development and that they should feel able to respond and participate at their own level.

#### **5. ETHOS OF THE SCHOOL**

*“The ethos reflects the values and attitudes which characterise the community, the atmosphere of the school, the quality of relationships and the way in which the school helps pupils to deal with conflict, loss, grief or difficulties.” (NCC 1993).*

- ♦ Spiritual Development relates to a whole school commitment, which encourages children to reflect on the meaning of their experiences.
- ♦ It requires a need for a variety of learning experiences and a recognition that individual teachers and other adults transmit values to pupils.
- ♦ It is important that these values are consistent with school ethos.

#### **6. HOW DOES RELIGIOUS EDUCATION CONTRIBUTE TO SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT?**

Simply the identification of concepts, skills and attitudes addressed in the outline of the Gloucestershire guidelines for Religious Education.

The Gloucestershire Religious curriculum on which the teaching of R.E. in this school is based identifies the concepts, skills and attitudes, which if addressed in the teaching of R.E. will promote spiritual development.

Teachers will, in planning their teaching of R.E., seek, through the teaching styles, which they adopt, and the learning experiences which they plan for their pupils, to provide opportunities for spiritual development within their teaching of R.E. In this way pupils will not only learn about religion, but also from religion.

## **7. DISPLAYS**

What do your displays actually say? Are they merely pretty pictures with a vague heading? Or do they:

- have a message?
- challenge the children?
- provide feelings/thoughts?
- encourage opinion?

Are they *interactive*?

## **8. SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT**

Spiritual Development can be experienced in three main areas:

- ♦ A Christian framework - designed for children to explore their emerging inner spiritualism.
- ♦ Devotional Spirituality – with the use of artefacts and icons used in everyday worship.
- ♦ Social Spirituality – work on raising awareness of the plight of others e.g. charities, organisations who help the poor, daily news events, etc

Overall we must foster spiritual tradition in children. Do this also through collective worship, which is a way of seeing the world, relating to God and celebrating his existence. It can be developed in the following ways:

- ♦ Curriculum – challenges, experiences we provide;
- ♦ Worship – still reflection, celebration and symbolism;
- ♦ Ethos – way we respond to each other, respect, values we adhere to.

Curriculum examples:

- |         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| English | – | poetry, use of imagination, exploring issues, drama.               |
| Maths   | - | exploration of number, raising questions – both to ask and answer. |
| Science | - | view of the universe, investigations, the raising of questions.    |
| P.E.    | - | movement, achievement, overcoming obstacles to success.            |

Encourage pupils to consider: values, questioning, taking responsibility.

## 9. SUMMARY

The government have identified eight aspects of spiritual development. It is wrapped up in the whole curriculum not just worship and religious education.

- ♦ We find it in the school ethos and how we give children the opportunity to reflect, how they relate to each other.
- ♦ It is about values transmitted from adults to pupils:

Setting good examples  
Taking to them with respect  
Valuing work  
Being positive.

- ♦ Spiritual Development through collective worship – using a variety of forms of expression, children being able to respond at their level.
- ♦ In religious education – identifying concepts, skills and attitudes outlined in Gloucestershire Scheme of Work and QCA.

In the classroom and around the school we see spiritual development through display. They enable children to question and reflect, e.g. the charity display, the photograph display, 'Take Action' display, the Creation display in the corridor and the 'Product Design' display. All good examples and all ask questions of the children.

We need to be aware of these aspects as teachers, support staff and as a church school.

Written: 2004  
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