

SPIRITUALITY AT ST. JOHN'S

OUR VISION

"I came that they may have life, life in all its fullness".

John 10:10

Our vision for our school is built on this quotation from the Gospel of John.

At St John's Church of England Primary School, Lemsford we are striving to be a community in which everyone is enabled to have a full life centred on God's love: a life of opportunity, fulfilment and service to others.

Our shared understanding of Spirituality as a school community

At St John's, we share the Christian belief that everyone is a valued creation; a Child of God. This belief inspires all that we do, helping us as a family to aspire to live life abundantly and to help each other to do so. It is also what underpins our ethos of inclusivity and nurture, seeking to know and develop the whole child in order to help them reach their full potential.

Through on-going discussion, everyday school life and reflection we are continually developing our understanding of spirituality.

As a community we believe spirituality is about.

- Relationships – to ourselves, to others, to the world and to God.
- The uniqueness of every one of us.
- Finding calm in the storm.
- Looking up to God, looking within ourselves and looking out to others.
- God's presence in our head, hands and our hearts,
- Asking questions.
- Feeling awe and wonder
- Moments of calm, leading to moments of wonder, leading to moments of happiness, leading to moments of belonging.
- Appreciating the beauty of the natural world

Ways in which our school helps our community to develop spiritually, enabling children and staff to spiritually flourish.

Enriching relationships

We foster a sense of each of us being unique and regularly highlight and celebrate the strengths we see. We want our children to grow into confident young people and to live life abundantly. We reach out to all our families to welcome and support where needed, we gather weekly in Church and at our Celebration Assemblies. At morning drop-off and afternoon pick-ups our Headteacher is always at the gate welcoming our children by name,

our Breakfast and After School Club is run by our own staff who remain with us all day, meaning we really know all our children. Safeguarding forms an intrinsic part of this care; knowing our children well and offering a truly open door to our families means we build strong, trusting relationships and are ready to offer support at the earliest opportunity. Care begins before pupils transition into our Reception Class in the Summer Term when at their Transition Day they meet the Y5 pupil who will become their Y6 Buddy. This becomes a very special relationship, often connecting the two families, the Y6 support their Buddies as they start school, but also through the whole year. Where a new Reception pupil may have additional needs, their Buddy will learn the best ways to help them at school, for example learning Makaton, or how to use visuals.

Appreciating the beauty of the natural world

Our relationship with the natural world is something we are able to explore through our beautiful grounds, whether it is in structured Forest School sessions, a quiet time in the Peaceful Pagoda, looking closely at nature around us or sitting back to take in the bigger picture, these all offer opportunities for spiritual moments. Our busy Eco-Council helps us be mindful of our impact on the world around us. We make opportunities for appreciation of the natural world through our curriculum, visits to the local nature reserve and beyond and our development of the school grounds such as the spinney.

Asking questions

Throughout our curriculum we offer opportunities for the children to question. They are encouraged to ask, 'What if....' 'So what....' Examples can include the moment when a child spots a numerical pattern in Maths and then asks 'What if....'



Jesus as the calm in the storm

We often use the image of Jesus calming the storm to help children in a moment of crisis. We teach them to develop resilience and confidence with them being able to calm themselves being a key element of our PSHE curriculum. These skills are taught and shared by our staff and children throughout the day – often in more casual discussions or at playtime.

Looking up to God, looking within ourselves and looking out to others.

We encourage the children to look to God through prayer and reflection using the image of **'looking up'** to help them visualise the experience. We encourage them to reflect on something that is bigger than themselves, something beyond them. By offering opportunities to the children to **look within themselves**, we encourage them to reflect on their feelings, experiences and thoughts and by doing so enable them to have a greater understanding of themselves. As a Christian community we view **looking out to others** as service to those in our school as well as to the wider community.

Time for reflection

We believe that giving time for reflection is an essential part of developing spirituality in all of us. We provide both structured and unstructured opportunities for children to reflect both formally and informally. A period of stillness is regularly part of collective worship and is the beginning to all PSHE lessons.

And finally....

Our development of spirituality is on-going, a journey we are taking together as a school community. We will continue to enrich our collective appreciation of spirituality both individually and as a Christian community.

January 2025