Aiding Spiritual Growth

Amberley Parochial Primary School

Spirituality is the quality of being concerned with the human spirit or soul, as opposed to material or physical things. It includes a sense of connection to something bigger than ourselves, though is not, for all people, centred around religious beliefs.

As a Church school, however, our spirituality is developed in the context of the Christian faith. Throughout our school day, term and year, we offer opportunities for children and adults to reflect on their experiences and interactions, and growing understanding and appreciation of the world around them.

Reflection on learning:

Our Vision Wheel incorporates the different elements we combine to empower the members of our school community to reach their potential. It includes the Christian Values which underpin our philosophy and link us beyond ourselves, to our community and the wider world; the Learning Powers which encourage independent learning, and our overarching Vision to help children to become reflective, independent, and aspirational learners for life. Staff refer back to the Vision Wheel regularly to help children identify the contributing factors to their growing independence.

Children may, for example, acknowledge the fact that they found a particular activity challenging, but by working cooperatively, they were able to persevere.

Reflection on Values:

As consolidation of their learning, children are asked to reflect on their experiences, understanding and actions related to the Christian Value which has been celebrated throughout the term during collective worship. They are asked reflect using the titles 'See, Think, Act', so as to reflect on what they have seen/heard, how it has made them feel, and what impact that it has had upon them.

An example of this was how a Year 2 child was moved by the story of children in our link school in Kenya, who have very limited resources. She explained what she had learned to her family, detailing the perseverance of the members of the Waunifor School community, and chose to donate her pocket money savings to buy books for the school.

Reflection on relationships and behaviour:

Our school behaviour policy was written by the school council, who felt that it should be underpinned by the Christian Values we celebrate in school. As a result, when discussing behaviour with children, we endeavour to draw parallels between the teachings of Christ on how we should treat one another and refer back to the Bible stories connected to relevant values. Children are reminded of the parable of The Sower, and how, if we listen to God's word and act upon it, we will be able to grow and prosper.

Reflections and Big Questions about the world around us:

Each class has a Spiritual Scrapbook in which children are invited to reflect and respond to images and questions which may move us in different ways. Children may, for example, be shown images that evoke awe and wonder, depictions of current events and topical issues from around the world, or asked to reflect on issues which make us ask 'Big Questions' about life.

By developing our ability to reflect, ask questions and offer responses, we allow our spirituality to grow, and strengthen our ability to cope with all that life may bring us. In a world where mental health issues are on the rise, it is important for all of us to pause, take stock and reflect, thus allowing space for spirituality to grow.