

**Our Lady's Bishop Eton Catholic
Primary School**



**Spiritual Development Policy
September 2023**

Living, Loving, Learning in Jesus

Introduction:

Spiritual education helps pupils to acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality. "Spiritual" is not synonymous with "religious"; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

Spiritual development, then, is concerned with how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour questions which are "at the heart and root of existence".

The educational mission of the Church is rooted in Christ's mission "that all may have life and have it to the full" (John10:10). This involves the ongoing development of the entire potential of each individual made in the image and likeness of God and finding fulfilment in God alone.

Spiritual development involves:

- The development of insights, beliefs, attitudes and values which guide and motivate us.
- A developing understanding of feelings and emotions, which cause us to reflect and learn.
- For all pupils a developing recognition that their insights, principles, beliefs, attitude and values influence, inspire or guide them in life.
- At Our Lady's Bishop Eton (OLBE), the teaching of personal, social and health education, together with our 'Come and See' lessons, help our children in gaining profound understanding in their individual existence, which are of lasting value.

Aims:

Pupils who develop the following characteristics:

- A set of values, principles and beliefs, which inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour;
- an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs;
- a respect for themselves and for others;
- a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion;
- an increasing ability to reflect and learn from this reflection;

- an ability to show courage in defence of their aims, values, principles and beliefs;
- a commitment to challenge constraints on the human spirit, including poverty of aspiration, self-doubt, apathy, force, fanaticism, greed, injustice, and various forms of discrimination.
- an appreciation of the intangible – for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order, as well as for mystery, paradox and ambiguity;
- a respect for insight as well as knowledge and reason;
- an expressive and/or creative impulse;
- an ability to think in terms of the ‘whole’ – for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective;
- an understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact.

Objectives:

In Our Lady’s Bishop Eton we aim to encourage pupils’ spiritual development by:

- Giving pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way in which they impact on people’s lives.
- Where pupils already have religious beliefs, supporting and developing these beliefs in ways, which are personal and relevant to them.
- Encouraging pupils to explore and develop what animates themselves and others.
- Encouraging pupils to reflect and learn from reflection.
- Giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful.
- Developing a climate or ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
- Accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals.
- Promoting teaching styles which:
 - ✚ Value pupils and their questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.
 - ✚ Enable pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning.
 - ✚ Encourage pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference (e.g. asking why, how and where as well as what)
 - ✚ Monitoring in simple ways, the success of what is provided.

The role of Governors:

The Governing Body aids the Head Teacher in advancing and fostering:

- The unique ethos and character of the school, as exemplified in our mission statement, 'Living, Loving and Learning in Jesus.'
- Curriculum subjects, with a particular focus on Religious Education.
- Collective Worship, with the Governors actively participating and supporting all related activities.

The Role of the Headteacher:

The Headteacher encourages the development of pupils' spirituality by fostering the following qualities:

- A set of guiding values, principles, and beliefs, which may or may not be religious, shaping their outlook on life and behaviour.
- Awareness and comprehension of their own beliefs as well as those of others.
- Respect for themselves and their peers.
- Cultivation of empathy, care, and compassion for others.
- Advancement in reflective thinking and the ability to learn from reflection.
- Demonstrating courage in upholding their principles, values, and beliefs.
- A readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit, for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- Appreciation of the intangible aspects of life, including beauty, truth, love, goodness, order, as well as an openness to mystery, paradox, and ambiguity.
- Respect for insight in addition to knowledge and rational thinking.
- Nurturing of expressive and creative impulses.
- The ability to consider the 'whole,' including concepts like harmony, interdependence, and perspective.
- Understanding emotions and their potential impact.

The Role of the Teacher:

Teachers at Our Lady's Bishop Eton are dedicated to nurturing the development pupils' drive, sense of identity and self-worth. They will develop principles, beliefs and values, including those that have a religious basis, in our children. Through the 'Come and See' education programme, the wider curriculum and the relationships.

We have with the children and the community; the teachers' role includes promoting within the children:

- A sense of wonder, awe and fascination.
- An understanding of the impermanence and continual transformation in life.
- Awareness of the potential for order, purpose, and patterns in the world.
- Recognition that there is often more beneath the surface – a sense of transcendence.
- An appreciation of the significance of silence, reflection, and the art of listening.
- Cultivation of self-esteem and self-worth.
- Valuation of the worth and unique qualities of others.
- Fostering a sense of community and comprehension of its traditions, ceremonies, values and responsibilities.
- A sense of joy in life and the worth of play.
- Acknowledgement of limitations, occasional frustration, loss and the sombre aspects of life.
- An appreciation of the natural world and its rhythms as sources of meaning and symbols for our existence, encompassing seasons, light, bread, water, wind and the Earth.
- Understanding that freedom and the capacity to choose are fundamental to human dignity.

The Role of the teacher includes promoting the following skills in our children:

- An ability to listen.
- An ability to be still.
- An ability to feel for, and with others.
- A capacity to respond to experiences with imagination.
- The capacity to perceive pattern in experience.
- The strength to cope with contradiction and the sense of futility.
- The ability and opportunity to reflect.

The Role of the Parents:

- Parents bear the duty of endorsing the school's spiritual development policy and actively motivating their children to engage fully in school activities.
- Parents will receive invitations to take part in assemblies, class masses, services, and celebrations.
- Recognising that parents are their children's initial educators, they will continue in nurturing their children's sense of awe and wonder.

Pupil Participation

- At Our Lady's Bishop Eton all children are encouraged to take responsibility for themselves and to make their own decisions. Opportunities are given throughout the day during lessons, assemblies etc, for quiet reflection.
- The code of conduct helps children to fully participate in the awareness of self and the moral values we cultivate through personal and social behaviour.
- They are encouraged to make decisions and be pro-active in the development of attitude and values which influence them in school life.

Assessment of Spiritual Development

OFSTED have suggested that pupils may display evidence of having benefited from provision intended to promote spiritual development if, at a level of appropriate to their ages and ability, they demonstrate such qualities as:

- Knowledge of the central beliefs and ideas and practices of major world religions and philosophies.
- An understanding of how people have sought to explain the meaning of the universe through various myths and stories, including religious, historical and scientific interpretations.
- Beliefs, which are held personally and the ability to give some account of these and derive values from them.
- Behaviour and attitudes which derive from such knowledge and understanding and from personal conviction, and which show awareness of the relationship between belief and action.
- Personal response to question about the purpose of life and to the experience of beauty and love or pain and sadness.

The class teacher will monitor and evaluate the skills attained by children in his/her class according to these qualities demonstrated.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

At Our Lady's Bishop Eton we plan to provide for all pupils regardless of gender, ethnicity, socio- economic status, cultural background, academic ability, Special Educational Need/Disability or vulnerability to achieve their full potential.

Policy Links:

- RE Policy
- Collective Worship Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Moral Development Policy