SPIRITUALITY AT ST LAURENCE

Seen – Known – Loved

WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SPIRITUALITY?

At St Laurence-in-Thanet CE Junior Academy, spirituality is a deeply personal experience through which we notice, explore and respond to what makes life meaningful. It may arise through awe and wonder, feelings and emotions, growing self-knowledge, relationships or experiences that take us beyond everyday life. As a Church of England school, our Christian vision, rooted in the parable of the Lost Sheep, shapes our commitment to ensuring that every person is seen, known and loved.

Spirituality is not confined to one lesson, subject or act of worship. It is woven through school life and may be recognised in a moment of wonder in science, a question in RE, stillness in worship, kindness towards a friend, the courage to seek forgiveness or a decision to act for the good of others. Children and adults may experience and express spirituality differently, including through faith, reflection and quiet thought.

ASPECTS OF SPIRITUALITY

Awe, wonder and mystery

Being inspired by the natural world, mystery or human achievement; noticing beauty and asking questions about what we do not yet understand.

Feelings and emotions

Being moved by beauty or kindness, hurt by injustice or aggression and learning to recognise, manage and grow through our feelings.

Self-knowledge

Developing awareness of our thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences, and a growing understanding and acceptance of our identity.

Relationships

Recognising and valuing the worth of each individual, developing community and building meaningful relationships with others.

Transcendence

Experiencing feelings that may lead to belief in a divine being or an awareness of inner resources that help us rise above everyday experiences.

WINDOWS, MIRRORS AND DOORS

We use the language of Windows, Mirrors and Doors to help pupils and adults recognise, explore and respond to spiritual moments. These are not three separate types of spirituality: they are a shared way of reflecting on experiences across all five aspects.

WINDOWS – LOOKING OUT AND DISCOVERING

Windows invite us to notice the world beyond ourselves: beauty, wonder, mystery, difference, suffering and injustice. Children are encouraged to be curious, ask questions and notice the needs and experiences of others.

MIRRORS – LOOKING IN AND REFLECTING

Mirrors invite us to consider our own thoughts, feelings, values, beliefs and experiences. Children reflect on how something has affected them, what they have learnt and how others might feel.

DOORS – STEPPING OUT AND MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Doors invite a thoughtful response to what we have noticed and reflected upon. This may involve a changed attitude, an apology, a repaired relationship, creativity, prayer, an act of service or courageous advocacy.

CHILD-FRIENDLY REFLECTION QUESTIONS

Windows

- What can I see happening around me?
- What makes me say “Wow”?
- What makes me wonder?
- Whose needs might I notice?

Mirrors

- How does this make me feel?
- What do I think about this?
- What have I learnt about myself?
- How might somebody else feel?

Doors

- What could I do next?
- Could I show kindness, love or forgiveness?
- Is there someone I need to say sorry to?
- How could I make a difference?

HOW WE NURTURE SPIRITUALITY

Spiritual development is both planned for and welcomed when it arises naturally. Staff notice opportunities, offer language for children to express their experiences and protect time for reflection and response.

Through collective worship

- Daily collective worship provides opportunities to gather, reflect, pray, sing and explore our Christian vision and values.
- Our worship draws on Scripture, including the parable of the Lost Sheep, and explores belonging, forgiveness, fresh starts and the worth of each person.
- Reverend Catherine contributes to worship and our links with St Laurence Church.

- Worship Shepherds help children take an active role in worship and reflection.
- Stillness, music, prayer spaces and "I wonder" questions allow personal responses without requiring every pupil to pray.

Through religious education

- RE provides opportunities to explore Christianity, other religions and worldviews, including through Understanding Christianity and the school's agreed syllabus.
- Pupils explore big questions, consider different perspectives and reflect respectfully on their own responses.
- Stories, artefacts, visitors, images, visits and discussion help pupils encounter lived faith and belief.

Through the wider curriculum

- English supports empathy, imagination and understanding of human experience.
- Science and mathematics encourage curiosity, pattern, questioning and wonder.
- History and geography explore identity, place, justice, responsibility and human impact.
- Art, music, drama and performance offer creative responses to beauty, emotion and meaning.
- PSHE develops self-knowledge, emotional literacy, relationships and responsible choices.
- Forest School, outdoor learning, trips and residential experiences offer opportunities for awe, challenge, resilience and connection with creation.

Through relationships, pastoral care and inclusion

- Our pastoral approach seeks to ensure every pupil is seen, known and loved.
- Thrive-informed practice, ELSA, mentoring, The Ark and nurture provision support emotional wellbeing and belonging.
- Restorative conversations encourage reflection, repair and fresh starts.
- Adaptations and inclusive practice help pupils with SEND and other vulnerabilities participate and flourish.

Through justice, responsibility and courageous advocacy

- School Council, Eco Warriors, Worship Shepherds, House Captains and librarians provide opportunities for pupil voice and responsibility.
- Charity activities, community action, environmental work and awareness events invite pupils to recognise need and respond with compassion.
- Through worship, RE, PSHE and current affairs, children explore injustice and consider how their actions can make a positive difference.

HOW WE RECOGNISE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual development is personal and cannot be reduced to a score or checklist. We look for opportunities and indications of growing awareness, reflection, connection and response rather than making judgements about an individual child's spirituality or faith.

- Curiosity, awe and wonder in learning and everyday experiences.
- Thoughtful questions and respectful exploration of different beliefs and perspectives.
- Reflection on personal thoughts, feelings, choices and values.

- Empathy, compassion, forgiveness and respect in relationships.
- Appreciation of beauty, creativity and the natural world.
- Openness to stillness, prayer or quiet thought.
- Hope, resilience and courage in response to challenge.
- Responsible choices, service and care for others.

We evaluate the opportunities we provide through pupil voice, worship reflections, RE and curriculum work, observations, monitoring, governor visits and feedback from staff, parents and carers. We consider whether these opportunities are inclusive, meaningful and consistent with our vision.

THE ROLE OF OUR SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Staff

Staff model curiosity, compassion, respect, reflection and hope. They make space for questions, emotions, wonder, difference and thoughtful responses, and show through restorative practice that mistakes can be repaired.

Pupils

Pupils contribute through worship, leadership, reflection, kindness, courageous advocacy and everyday choices. They are encouraged to notice when others need help, seek support when they need it and help build a community where everyone is seen, known and loved.

Parents, carers and governors

Parents and carers support reflection, kindness and service through home–school partnership. Governors support and challenge leaders to ensure spiritual development is visible in the school's vision, curriculum, worship, relationships and daily practice.

SPIRITUALITY ACROSS OUR CURRICULUM

Windows, Mirrors and Doors can be used within any of the five aspects of spirituality. The examples below illustrate how they support pupils across school life.

Approach	What it develops	Examples in school
Windows	Awe, wonder and mystery; awareness of others; curiosity and justice	Nature and Forest School; scientific discovery; history and geography; art and music; encounters with different faiths and worldviews; Bible stories; visitors; world events and "I wonder" questions.
Mirrors	Feelings and emotions; self-knowledge; empathy; relationships; reflection and transcendence	Class worship and stillness; PSHE and emotional check-ins; Thrive-informed support; RE reflection; art, poetry and music; prayer spaces; restorative conversations;

		responses to change, disappointment and loss.
Doors	Relationships; compassion; hope; resilience; service and courageous advocacy	Pupil leadership; environmental action; charity and community projects; supporting peers; apologising and repairing relationships; responding creatively or prayerfully; standing up for what is right.

Our five aspects of spirituality are interrelated. A single experience may involve wonder, emotion, self-understanding, relationships and transcendence, and children may move between looking out, looking in and stepping forward.