

Collective Worship and Spirituality in our Church School

The Church of England sees its church schools "as being at the centre of its mission to the nation". We have the support of the clergy and foundation governors in our local parish who work in partnership with the Headteacher, Deputy Head, RE and Collective Worship leader and other staff to develop and promote the school's Christian foundation.

Every school is different as is every church school. We are distinctive as a church school because we are linked to Whitfield St. James' Church and other clergy and the communities in the town of Glossop. However, our school welcomes children from all faiths and those of none.

Church schools with their distinctiveness were primarily founded to provide education for children in local communities, regardless of personal faith. They continue to be inclusive schools and their rationale lies in offering children and young people an opportunity to experience the meaning of Christian faith (Dearing 3.9). We aim to

- To provide an education of choice that allows learners to critically explore issues of faith, belief and God.
- To encourage those of Christian faith, of other faiths and of no faith to engage with what it is to be human.
- To provide an education of excellence rooted in Christian values.
- To give an understanding of the Christian faith and the customs and practice of the Anglican Church.

At our school we experience faith and spirituality through:

- Having a daily act of collective worship as opposed to assembly.

Often during worship we read stories. Sometimes these stories are from the Bible and sometimes they are from other faiths or they are simply stories that help us explore a value or a moral. In worship we sing songs and hymns many of which parents / carers sang when they were little and some of which are new or written more recently. During worship we also have the opportunity for prayer, reflection and quiet thought. We ensure our worship and prayer life is deeply engaging and provides children the opportunity to be close to God. Worship is led by a team of school staff, clergy and our Year 6 Collective Worship team.

- Christian Values.

We seek to promote shared values based on Christian teaching throughout the school life so that children come to make behavioural choices based on Christian values. We champion these in our half-termly collective worship themes using the Values for Life material as a starting point in planning, and celebrate them at every opportunity with our values tree display, our weekly celebration collective worship certificates and Class Dojo communications with parents. Each term we focus closely on one of our six values. We weave this value into all aspects of school life and share them in our daily language, seizing opportunity to raise its profile in class by awarding points of Class Dojo.

These values inform the school's policies, curriculum, ethos and vision:

'Working together to achieve our best to reach our God-given potential.'

- Prayer.

Prayer is very important to us and we listen to or say prayers together. We have no set school prayer as we know that prayer is an active personal response. We use the Lord's Prayer as our model and have explored it as part of our collective worship and are learning it as a song to help us remember it. We pray in collective worship, at the end of the school day and at lunchtimes before we thankfully eat our food. Some children choose not to say all of our prayers so that it fits in with their own faith or thoughts. In some ways this makes it more special as it is meaningful to everyone!

- Being part of our local church.

During the current interregnum at Whitfield St. James' Church, the children's worker Heather and the minister at the Parish Church of All Saints in Old Glossop are keeping our church links close. They worship with us on Wednesdays every two weeks. They also accommodate us on church visits and have been interviewed by LKS2 classes as part of our RE work. They are also going to be involved in trying to answer our 'Big Questions' about life, the universe and everything! We go to the church for concerts and events (Harvest, Christmas, Easter, and Leavers' Services) and as part of our RE work.

- Having a well-designed RE curriculum.

Our RE Curriculum has been carefully designed to teach about a range of faiths including Christianity over a two-year cycle. RE is taught in every year group and we have individual RE books and collaborate scrap books to record discussions and special occasions during the RE, Collective Worship and spirituality of our school. We ensure Religious Education and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very strong features of the school as they help children understand the faith of others and the importance of listening and reflection as key parts of the faith journey.

- Creating a time and place for spiritual reflection

We have a 'Quiet Area' for spiritual reflection in every classroom and outside in our 'Psalm 23 Garden'. These areas are interactive and personal to each room and provide opportunities for thought and prayer.

Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and, depending on our point of view; either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. It is about the development of a pupil's 'spirit'. Some people may call it the development of a pupil's 'soul'; others as the development of 'personality' or 'character'.

Inspiring and Growing for Fullness of Life

Our school policy for R.E. states that Whitfield St. James Church of England V.C. School has a living Christian foundation following the teaching of Jesus and claiming His promise of 'life in all its fullness' for everyone (John 10 v.10).

'Inspiring and Growing for Fullness of Life' is at the heart of Whitfield St James' C of E Primary School and is fundamental to our curriculum, teaching and learning and leadership of the school.

Our children are all individual and unique; they have all been and are going on a different journey but our mission is to ensure that we develop the whole child, so that they can live life to the fullest.

Our school behaviour motto is 'Treat others as you want to be treated' (Matthew 6 v.12). This is an intrinsic part of having fullness of life, living out our Christian values and developing our:

worship, curriculum, school environment, how we interact with ourselves, others and a divine being

through stillness, creativity, curiosity and 'Big Questions' we will enable our pupils to leave their Whitfield St James' family

with a greater sense of empathy, sense of identity and purpose, show wisdom, courageous advocacy and be able to take a challenge.

One way we try to treat others as we want to be treated is through our support of social action or charities. Sometimes we support them financially and sometimes by being involved with their work. In addition to our annual support of BBC Children in Need, Comic Relief and The Royal British Legion, we also support through our Courageous Advocacy and charity work, particularly:

Grace Kitchen food bank at Whitfield St. James Church.

Hope in Christ School in Bantama, Ghana.

Tanzania UK Trust - Wisdom School in Tanzania.

Compassion UK - support and correspondence with seven children around the world:

Kevin, Cielos Aurora, Jonathan, Jesus Daniel, Thuo, Awuku and Exsevia.



Our Psalm 23 Garden
quiet reflection space



Shipping of our reading books to
Hope in Christ School, Bantama, Ghana.