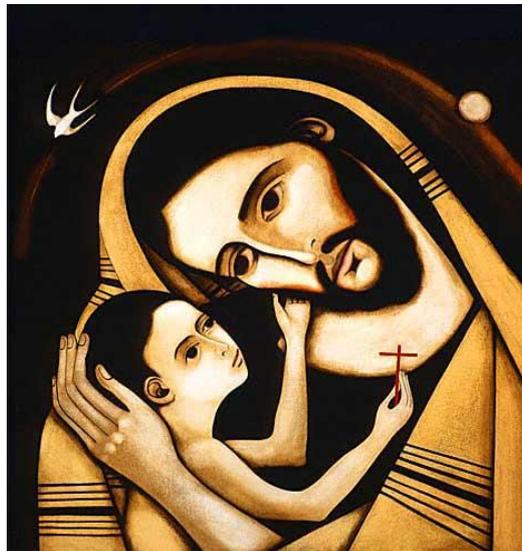




# St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School Clydach



## Spirituality Policy



## **Whole School Policy for Spiritual Development**

### **School Mission Statement**

Spiritual development at St. Joseph's School, contributes to being:  
"Together in Christ – Living, Learning and Growing.

### **Introduction**

*Spiritual Development relates to our way of being in the world; to our beliefs, values and relationships; to our own creativity, as this is linked with the creative work of God; to our use of the gifts we have; to our recognition and promotion of beauty, goodness, truth in our world, to our regard for all that is good in humankind and to our recognition of the glory and wonder of God's creation.*

***('The Spiritual Development of Pupils and the Role of the Catholic School' Diocese of Westminster 1993)***

### **The Spiritual Life**

The Spirit of God is alive in each person from the first moment of being. It is God's gift freely bestowed on every one of us.

Spiritual Development and growth occurs with the free response of each human heart to this gift. It is not confined by any religion, culture or creed, the Holy Spirit moves freely over the whole earth.

A response to God's spirit of the human heart and mind is the most significant of all human activity, bound up with growth towards full personhood and integrity.

*"The Word of God is spoken in the depths of my being at my conception, and spiritual growth is my learning to listen to that Word of God; it is having eyes and ears for God in all of my living; it is becoming familiar with the ways of God; it is becoming the one absolutely unique person that God wants me to be."* **(Rev. John Ball, Mill Hill Missionary Society)**

### **Human Journey**

We come from God and are destined for him. Our human journey is one shaped by God in love. Whatever the broken circumstances or destructive influences in our lives, we know that the God of absolute and unconditional love wants to meet us at the moment of choosing.

*"God does not lead us all by the same road and perhaps he/she who believes herself/himself to be going along the lowest road is the highest in God's eyes."*

***(St. Teresa of Avila)***

The pattern of Jesus' life on earth shows us that his friendship is for all. He deliberately chose to be with the despised, to touch the leper, to enjoy the company of outcasts. This was true friendship, assuring each person of his love and strength, given without reserve.

Here, in this friendship with Christ, our spiritual life begins to deepen as its true potential is released.

Our task at St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School in Clydach, is to recognise and proclaim that spiritual development is the work of God.

Taking on the responsibility for fostering and assisting such development, we must keep always in our understanding, that by doing so, we are facilitating the activity of the Spirit.

**The Role of the Teacher**

Whenever a teacher

- fills children with enthusiasm for learning
- creates interest in the serious pursuit of knowledge and truth
- encourages depth and range of discovery
- assists the linking of language and ideas and reflection on these

there is opportunity for spiritual growth.

Whenever the language of teaching is carefully chosen to

- convey belief in the learner
- encourage and praise the pursuit of truth
- convey the worth of the educational endeavour
- sustain the dignity and confidence of the individual

then personhood is respected and the inner life can grow.

Whenever teachers help children to

- be sensitive to the subtleties of colour, sound, movement, pattern and order, the complexity of systems and design
- appreciate the history and scope of human achievement and scientific development
- know the beauty of language and its potential
- foster knowledge and appreciation of music, drama, art and all areas of human excellence
- consider the complex and sustained working of the natural world

then they are pointing to possibilities beyond the day to day routine which challenge thinking and promote inner growth.

**Spiritual Life of the Community**

Promoting the spiritual development of our children is possible when our own spiritual growth is sustained; it is from our inner life and resources that we reach out to others.

Prayer and reflection form an important part of each term's preparation of R.E. themes and topics.

St. Teresa of Avila emphasised friendship within the whole community as a step on the way to Spiritual Development, as in friendship with all we learn to trust, to create together, to recognise the goodness of others and to share something of our inner lives. It is on this foundation at St. Joseph's, that we are able to encounter any conflicts that may arise through differences of opinion or attitude, in a spirit of trust and care. While struggle and pain are not of God, healing and renewal can bring a new depth to our self-knowledge and strengths.

Our school community seeks to ground its busy life in God, through our prayer and worship, our love for God and for each other, our relationship with God and our relationships with our children.

*"Prayer, essentially, is to become present to oneself, to God, to all reality  
...*

*We are so caught up  
With the events and people in our lives  
That we rarely take time  
To consider our own selves  
To be worth any time at all . . .*

*The closest reality to God  
That one will experience  
Is oneself.*

*Each of us is an existence of God,  
A presence of Christ,  
A sacrament of the Church,  
A gift to the world."*

### **Edward G. Farrell, Celtic meditations**

In 1988, writing about the vocation and mission of lay people, Pope John Paul II stressed how daily life and faith cannot be separated. He said:  
*"Only in the unfolding of the history of our lives, is the eternal plan of God revealed to each of us. It is a gradual process, one that happens day by day. There cannot be two parallel lives in our existence; on the one hand, the so-called spiritual life, with its values and demands; and on the other, the so-called secular life, that is, life in a family, at work, in social relationships, in the other responsibilities of public life and culture.*

*Every idea of our lives,  
As different as they are,*

*Enters into the plan of God,  
Who desires that these very areas  
Be the places, where the love of Christ is revealed  
And realised for both the glory of the Father  
And service of others.”*

## **Techniques**

### ***Open-ended questioning:***

The nature of the open-ended question is to challenge the children to explore a variety of possible answers e.g. ‘Who am I?’ ‘Who made me?’ ‘Why am I here?’ . The intention is a sharp thought-provoking exercise, **not** a classroom lesson.

### ***Thought:***

An opportunity for children to offer thanks for the gift of life, also the challenge to examine their own life stance, their attitudes, values and practices e.g. ‘Thank you for my family.’, ‘When you look in your life mirror, what do you see?’

### ***Meditation:***

Giving children the opportunity to think about events and people in their lives, that they rarely take time to consider. Giving time to think about self worth e.g. ‘For a few minutes think about your favourite room in your house,’ to experience personal feelings.

### ***Awe and Wonder:***

Using observational skills, preferably first hand, to experience the aesthetic appreciation of the beauty of God’s creation surrounding us e.g. the perfection of a flower, new life in springtime as the buds start to show on the trees in the school grounds and in the park and their own gardens at home.

### ***Display:***

To use display in all areas of the curriculum, to show the significance of God in our lives. This can be done successfully using Scripture references, phrases from hymns, psalms, prayers etc. E.g. Springtime display of new life; lambs, flowers etc. God made the sunshine. God made the rain. Prints of bicycle wheels. “God made us in his own likeness, each of us is unique.”

It is recognised that the above guidelines have many strengths and

- develop an awareness of God in our every day lives
- develop an awareness of a living God, in areas of the curriculum, other than R.E.
- develop staff and children’s spirituality
- enhance relationships- staff with staff, staff with children, children with children and beyond.

- provide a structure but not over prescriptive.

## **The Role of the Community**

At St. Joseph's, we seek to be a community of Faith.

The staff, governors Parish priest and parents, work to provide for the children, the assurance that in this school, they will come to know the meaning of the Christian life; that Jesus is the Way, the Truth and the Life, and that we hope to grow in his likeness.

The spiritual journey with Christ does have visible signs and tangible experiences. **Particular efforts are recognised and rewarded at the Merit Award Assembly each Friday**

## **The Environment**

We aim to make St. Joseph's a place of welcome, where the children will experience a sense of familiarity with the things of God.

The Word, shared daily in class or school community, displayed and available for children's use in all in all areas of the school, usually as an integral part of the main R.E. areas in classrooms, where carefully chosen images and artefacts, reflect and symbolise the theme, and topic of focus at the time.

Aspects of the Liturgical Year, will also be reflected, often brought together in the School hall, to provide a focus for celebrations.

## **Prayer Life**

Bishop Vincent Nicholls writes; *"only in a safe place, will young people open themselves to the truth of their own experiences and feelings."*

It is fundamentally the class teacher, who will be able to offer some "safe places", in which to begin. Physical places may include areas like the class, Library, quiet area, a corner of the school grounds.

Emotionally, the times and places will vary, as relationships between staff/pupils, pupils/pupils grow. As we share our experiences and reflections, staff will know the 'right moments' for a particular child, group or class. These chosen moments will not necessarily be in specified R.E. lessons, but arise from the day to day sharing of joys, sadness, reconciliation and praise. These occasions may not always generate spontaneous prayer or silence. Formal prayer will certainly have an important place in our prayer life. The celebration of Sacraments will be approached in a spirit of community – whether shared with the parish on Holy Days and special feast days, or celebrated as a school community for the Eucharist, or as a group preparing for individual Sacrament of Reconciliation, during visits from the Parish Priest throughout the year.

The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself. The Eucharist is the sum and summary of our Faith. The Eucharist strengthens the spiritual life.

## Conclusion

*“Each member of the school community should take seriously the variety of ways and stages, along which God accompanies individuals, so that they may discover truths about God. Cultural background and faith differences within the wider community, but especially if found within the school, provide a rich source of learning material for this at every level, psychological, social, emotional and intuitive and therefore should be highly prized.”*

**Bishop Daniel Mullins**

**Bishops’ Working Party on ‘Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School’.**

At St. Joseph’s, we are walking the road to paradise – it is often a little bumpy and sometimes we take a wrong turning – but with the help of our friends, colleagues and children, we will continue to walk this road together – making our journey less tiresome and more enjoyable. We are all seeking to develop ourselves and our children in a Spiritual dimension, with the help of Jesus, our brother and friend.

## Literacy and Numeracy Framework

The Literacy and Numeracy Framework will enable literacy and numeracy skills to be embedded in all subjects across the curriculum rather than focused on English, Welsh and Maths lessons alone. The Foundation Phase places great importance on literacy and numeracy. In the Foundation Phase children are introduced to early literacy through real context learning in a print rich environment. The Framework will allow all teachers and early years practitioners to monitor pupils’ progress against year on year expectations for literacy and help schools and identify how best to challenge and support all of their learners. The Literacy and Numeracy Framework (LNF) establishes national expectations for pupils’ learning. Assessing Literacy and Numeracy is tracked through the introduction of National Reading and Numeracy Tests for all learners from Years 2 to 9. The LNF is a statutory requirement from September 2013, with formal assessment against the LNF becoming a requirement from September 2014.

### Structure of the Literacy and Numeracy Framework

Component	Strand	Element	Aspects
Literacy	Oracy across	Developing and	Speaking

	the curriculum	presenting information and ideas	Listening Collaboration and discussion
	Reading across the curriculum	Locating, selecting and using information. Responding to what has been read.	Reading strategies.  Comprehension Response and Analysis.
	Writing across the curriculum	Organising ideas and information.  Writing accurately.	Meaning, purpose, readers. Structure & organisation. Language Handwriting, grammar, punctuation, spelling.

### **Numeracy**

Component	Strand	Element
Numeracy	Developing numerical reasoning	Processes and Connections Represent & communicate Review
Numeracy	Using number skills	Use number facts Fractions, decimals, percentage and ratio. Calculate using written methods and mental methods
	Using reasoning skills	Length, weight, mass & capacity Time Temperature Area & volume Angle and position
	Using data skills	Collect and record data Present and analyse data Interpret results.