

## Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education

### **Religious, Spiritual, Moral and Ethical Education: Introduction**

Spirituality is about seeing the higher potential of humanity, of the other and of oneself. It involves relationship, and can also be described as connectedness – to ourselves, each other and the world around us. Religious or spiritual experiences are those that can bring a sense of transformation and of awe and wonder. Spirituality fosters aspects of social and ecological responsibility, humanity, values, empathy, acceptance, curiosity and interest. To bring a sense of spirituality in all that we provide as learning opportunities for the children, we can ask the question: How does this theme / story / object / festival etc connect with a sense of self, of each other and of the world around us, both seen and unseen? This connectedness deepens learning and gives lasting impact to the curriculum content. Some examples might include:

- In a science or history topic, hearing the biography of famous scientists that include challenges they had to overcome, their personal values and beliefs with links to philosophy, ethics, religion, art and nature.
- Linking chemical reactions to natural wondrous events such as the Northern Lights.
- Experiencing the ongoing evolution of ideas – for example time in maths, where minutes and hours are what we have now as part of a whole continuum of past, present and future.
- Observing in maths, the laws of geometry within an un-curling fern.
- Bringing real people and real lives into human-based study – from experiencing festivals around the world to meeting religious leaders in person.

As well as a cross-curricular thread, religion, spirituality, moral and ethical education may be brought as a specific subject. The name of this lesson varies by school and may be called Religion, Ethics and Philosophy, Learning for Life etc.

Specific main lessons have a particular focus on particular spiritual or religious traditions, or on moral or ethical questions; for example stories from the Ramayana, the Mahabharata and Buddhist traditions are often used extensively in class 5 (Y6). In class 4 the morality of the many Norse gods might be explored.

Steiner-Waldorf schools are not faith schools or religious schools. They do not have active worship. What they do have is time for reflection and spiritual connection. Most or all of the Waldorf schools will begin the day / main lesson with a verse and reflective moment. Schools will also have assemblies and a calendar of festivals that foster the spiritual and moral well-being of the children through a strong sense of belonging regardless of faith or background.

## Long Term Curriculum Intent