Spirituality in St Giles' CE Primary School

'Flourishing for All' through love, joy and the celebration of our humanity without exception or exclusion.

Our vision

'You must love one another as I have loved you.' John 13 v 34.

Working together with love we will provide a happy and nurturing environment where all will, ***'learn to love and love to learn'***, making outstanding progress through an enriched and creative curriculum. Through our strong Christian ethos we will celebrate and embrace the richness of our community.

Learn to Love - Love to Learn
'You must love one another as I have loved you.' John 13 v 34

Our vision influences the ethos of our school and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is a core thread that runs through our school, and we attach great importance to it for both children's development and for the growth and well-being of all within our school community.

We aim for children, and adults, to grow in their ability to:

- be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others
- be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life like friends and family, and show generosity towards others

(From David Smith's work on Spiritual Capacities)

Our working definition of 'spirituality'

To talk about spirituality is essentially to talk about something which is beyond words. As a staff and governor team, we have come to the consensus that spirituality is linked fundamentally to questions about the meaning and purpose of life; it includes ideas around relating to oneself, others, the natural world and the transcendent; it is not dependent upon religious belief or affiliation.

As a school we have agreed on the following definitions of spiritual development to support us as we talk about spirituality.

Spiritual development is the development of an awareness that there is "something more to life than meets the eye, something more than the material, something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to." (Terence Copley)

Spirituality is delighting in all things, being absorbed into the present moment, not too attached to self, and eager to explore boundaries of 'beyond' and 'other', searching for meaning, discovering purpose, open to more. (Rebecca Nye)

Spirituality is an awareness of mystery and its value to human flourishing.

"Spirituality was generally viewed as enriching individuals in their understanding of and ability to relate to, others and of society as a whole". Education for Adult Life (SCAA 1996)

"The term spiritual and moral development needs to be seen as applying something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and /or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships to other people and for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live." SCAA discussion paper

Spiritual development is not about becoming, more spiritual (in a measurable or expansive sense). It is about realising or becoming more and more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality. This is sometimes a slow and gradual process, at other times there might be significant stages of realisation, which are part of the ongoing 'developing' process. Unlike the development of a photograph, people don't reach a finished state of spiritual development, but participate in the ongoing process of spiritual realisation. If spirituality were something which developed or grew in a quantifiable sense, then surely adult would be more spiritual than children. Many would argue that children seem to be far more spiritually aware than adults, Perhaps as a part of growing older, the pressures of life can distract our distort our interests so that as adults, our spiritual awareness is dulled and we do not 'realise it' to the full.

The 'Wow's, 'Ows' and 'Nows'

The language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet in life

things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible.

Cracks may be caused when something so good and breathtaking that the pot expands and cracks- the **wows** of life.

Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday. The **ows** of life.

Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday- the **nows** of life. A moment of stillness, a pause, prayer can create a crack in the normal, physical everyday.

Legal requirements:
Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 states:
The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which: (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and (b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

We support pupils in their spiritual development by:

- providing opportunities for spiritual development in collective worship
- providing opportunities for spiritual development in RE
- providing opportunities for spiritual development in the wider curriculum
- capturing opportunities for awe and wonder as they arise
- providing 'Sacred Spaces' in classrooms, public spaces, outside, and by using the church building, and through the 'Prayer Spaces in School' website
- offering pupils opportunities to develop their own spiritual leadership, through leading collective worship and other opportunities

Prayer is a key element of Collective Worship and the children join in daily prayer with a candle prayer to open our worship and the Lord's Prayer and The Grace to close it. We encourage our children to reflect using the Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond framework developed by Andrew Ricketts.

Self
Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of self – the inner person and the way that this shapes an individual's perception of themselves as a unique human being. Spiritual learners reflect on the relationship that they have with their sense of being a unique person.

Others
Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of others – a growing empathy, concern and compassion for how to treat others. Spiritual learners reflect on how their values and principles affect their relationships with others.

Beauty
Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of a physical and creative world – a growing relationship with beauty through the ability to respond emotionally to experiences of the wonder of the natural world and the results of human creativity. Spiritual learners explore their understanding beauty and the affect this has on their perception of and relationship with the world.

Beyond

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of the beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday. Spiritual learners search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.



GENEROSITY

Acts 20:35: *Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, it is more blessed to give than to receive.*

2 Corinthians 9.7: *God loves a cheerful giver*

Spiritual Jesus lived a life devoted to serving God and others, sometimes at great cost to himself. He taught that if our money and possessions are held too tightly and used only for ourselves, they will prevent us knowing God's blessing. We teach that happiness does not necessarily increase with the number of material possessions that we acquire.

Moral Following the example of Jesus, together we explore the Christian understanding that all that we have comes from God as 'gift'. These gifts, whether they be money, possessions, time or abilities, are given in trust, that they will be used for the benefit of all in our school and in the wider community.

Social As a community, we seek to create relationships characterised by a generosity of spirit, believing that, given a nurturing environment, each individual can flourish, achieve their full potential and contribute positively to society.

Cultural As a Church of England school we seek to explore the lives of individuals such as Lord Shaftsbury and George Muller who exemplified a joy in giving and who shaped the politics, culture and values of modern Britain.

TRUTHFULNESS

James 3. 17: *The wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace---loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere.*

Ephesians 4. 15: *Speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the Head that is, Christ.*

Spiritual The apostle Paul urges the followers of Christ to speak the truth in love in order that they might become a more authentic expression of Christ's body on earth. We always try to combine truthfulness with kindness so that we encourage each other and build one another up.

Moral As members of a community seeking to live out our Christian values, we believe that *knowing* the difference between right and wrong will be of only partial use if we do not have the courage to *speak* the truth and *do* what is right.

Social Fundamental to the relationships is an expectation of truthfulness. We explore with the children the consequences of lying or lack of integrity, not only in our school community, but in the wider world as well as in the political arena.

Cultural As a Church of England school we understand that a person's understanding of the truth and truthfulness will sometimes be influenced by their religious and cultural experiences. We promote curiosity and respect as we learn about the diversity of beliefs and social backgrounds that make up modern Britain's society.

COURAGE

Deuteronomy 31. 6: *Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go.*

2 Timothy 1. 7: *For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid but gives us power, love and self---discipline.*

Spiritual Jesus lived in the assurance that his Father God would provide all that he needed. This gave him the courage to face even the cross. At our school, the words from the book to Timothy (see above) guide the way we approach any challenges that face us.

Moral Learning from Jesus, we recognise that taking a moral stand or tackling a challenge will require courage but we also know that we can pray for God's strength and his help.

Social As a community, we explore the Christian belief that almost anything is possible because God is *for* us. We therefore encourage one another to reach our God---given potential and participate in artistic, sporting and cultural activities that take us outside of our comfort zone.

Cultural As a Church of England school we take inspiration from those who have been uncompromising in standing for justice and have been true to their Christian faith in the face of persecution. We celebrate individuals such as William Wilberforce and Elizabeth Fry who through courage and perseverance have influenced the political and social life of Britain, and those such as Martin Luther King, Mahatma Gandhi and Nelson Mandela who have also powerfully informed our values and culture.



PERSEVERANCE

Hebrews 12.1: *Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us that is before us.*

Deuteronomy 13.6: *The Lord your God goes with you; he will never leave you of forsake you.*

Spiritual Despite opposition and adversity, Jesus did not compromise or lose heart in his determination to accomplish his mission. We recognise that sometimes we will face difficulties and personal challenges in life but we know that we can pray for God's help because he has promised never to leave us.



Moral As the life of Jesus exemplifies, standing for justice and doing what we believe to be right, may not always result in change immediately. Sometimes we may feel discouraged. At our school, weteach that perseverance and endurance are important qualities in developing character.

Social As a community, we value and celebrate perseverance, encouraging one another consistently to take one step at a time to achieve our goals. We offer a wide range of opportunities for children to volunteer in social enterprises and to work with others from a range of ages and backgrounds to foster co---operation and collaboration in problem solving.

Cultural We aim to foster a culture that recognises that 'quick wins' are not always possible and are often not sustainable. We believe that the principle of 'training well' is usually more fruitful in building character than 'trying harder'. We actively seek out contemporary as well as historical role models who have achieved their goals through persevering, even in the toughest of circumstances.



COMPASSION

2 Colossians 3.12: *Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience.*

Luke 10.25---37: (*The story of the Good Samaritan*)

Matthew 7.12: *Treat others as you want them to treat you.*

Spiritual Jesus' works of healing were always rooted in his compassion for others. In the story he told which is known as the Good Samaritan, the compassion shown is directed toward someone totally unexpected. Jesus was making the point that we are called to care for those outside our own cultural or social circle as well as our friends and family.

The literal meaning of the word 'compassion' suggests suffering with or alongside someone else. In developing character, we encourage an attitude of empathy and understanding of others, trying to imagine what it is like to stand in the shoes of another.

Moral We try to explore what it means to live out Jesus' teaching, exemplified in the command to do to others as you would have them do to you. (Matthew 7. 12)This is sometimes known as The Golden Rule and underpins all our relationships and our Behaviour Policy

Social As a community, we try to share one another's burdens and to help everyone to know that struggling and failure are not signs of weakness but opportunities to learn more about ourselves and others, and to grow as an interdependent family.
We actively look out for opportunities to support charities and good causes that improve the quality of life for people in our own country and the wider world.

Cultural We recognise that our nation has, throughout its history, offered a safe place for those fleeing persecution and disaster. We celebrate the rich diversity that this has brought to our culture and seek to play our part in offering a welcome to all those joining our school community especially anyone in any kind of need.



TRUST

John 14. 1: *Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me.*

1 Corinthians 13. 6---7: *Love does not delight in evil, but rejoices in the truth, it always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.*

Spiritual Jesus demonstrated his trust in God throughout his life. He also entrusted his ongoing work in the world to his special friends--- the disciples, and ultimately to us. We explore together the Christian understanding of being the Body of Christ on earth.

Moral We try to follow the example of Jesus and trust each person in our school will live by our core Christian values including truthfulness, respect and justice. We encourage children to reflect on *why* trust is so crucial in our relationships and what the consequences might be when it is broken.
Our experience in school has been that this trust is rarely betrayed but we know that when it breaks down, forgiveness is needed and the capacity to offer a new start.

Social As a community, trust is the glue that holds our relationships together. To develop character we give each individual important responsibilities (with appropriate support) and, in so doing, seek to encourage trustworthiness from the youngest age.

Cultural We recognise that in the wider culture of our nation, citizens are trusted to live by the laws of our country. We trust that our leaders (children and grown---ups), in school and in the wider nation, will have the highest moral and ethical standards and will lead with integrity. We teach the skills required to respectfully hold to account those in authority.

FRIENDSHIP

John 15.15: *'I no longer call you servants', said Jesus..... 'Instead I have called you friends.'*

Spiritual Jesus called his disciples friends. He trusted them, encouraged them and ultimately gave his life for them. Jesus extends the hand of friendship to everyone. We explore together, what friendship with Jesus means for Christians.

Moral Jesus' example of self---sacrificial love and commitment to his friends is one that inspires us to place the needs of others above our own and make our friendships faithful and resilient.

Social Jesus' friends came from a wide range of backgrounds and included fishermen, scholars and tax collectors. We encourage an attitude of inclusivity and openness to others, regardless of religious, ethnic or socio---economic background.

Cultural The culture in our school is democratic, diverse and inclusive. However, we know that if our children are to be fully equipped for life in modern Britain, we need to be pro---active in forming links and building relationships with schools in a wide range of social, cultural and religious settings.

JUSTICE



Matthew 21.12---13: *…my Temple will be called a house of prayer. But you have turned it into a hideout for thieves. (Jesus turning the tables in the temple)*

Micah 6. 9: *What does the Lord require of you? To do justice, love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*

Matthew 5. 13---14: *'You are the salt of the earth…… You are the light of the world.'*

Spiritual Jesus was passionate and uncompromising in standing against the injustices that he saw in his society. The heart of his message was the proclamation of the 'The Kingdom of God' ie.. God's rule on earth as it is in heaven. The Kingdom is glimpsed when justice and mercy are being lived out. We try our best to model these Kingdom values in our school.

Moral Following Jesus' example, we believe that we are called to speak up for the truth and out against injustice. We therefore equip children with the skills required to be reflective, become informed and be able to make just judgements for themselves based on facts and evidence.

Social As a community, we are constantly seeking ways to make our school an even more inclusive, democratic community in which everyone has a voice. We also foster an engagement without national system of democracy, learning how it operates and how decisions that affect all our lives are made.

Cultural As a Church of England school, we believe that justice must be seen to be transparent and unbiased. Children as well as adults therefore contribute to policy making on Behaviour and Anti---bullying.
We learn about the values that have informed our nation's justice system and the way this system functions to maintain law and order and keep us safe.



THANKFULNESS

Luke 22.19: *Jesus broke bread and gave thanks.*

1 Chronicles 29.12: *All things come from you and of your own do we give you.*

Spiritual The Gospels record that Jesus gave thanks as he broke bread with his disciples in the upper room at the Last Supper. Throughout his whole life Jesus' attitude was one of trust in God and thanksgiving for His provision: *Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin. (Matthew 6.28)*

Moral Following Jesus example, we believe that an attitude of thankfulness comes from an active *appreciation* of what we have. We take time to reflect upon the many blessings that we enjoy acknowledging that some people in our own country as well as in the wider world do not have access to basic necessities such as clean air and space and time

to play, education, adequate health care, communication technology or even a healthy diet. We regard as a moral imperative the need to work for a more just world out of an attitude of thankfulness for all we have.

Social As a community, we recognise the Christian belief that each person is made in God's image and reflects his glory. We are thankful for the uniqueness of every individual member of our school and the gifts that we all bring and share to enrich our corporate life.

Cultural As a Church of England school, acknowledging the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God, we foster an attitude of thankfulness and respect for nature, aware of its fragility and the impact of human activity on the environment. In all that we do, we try to create a culture of making informed, ethical choices in order to minimise any negative impact on the environment. We also work with other organisations to improve the environment for the future generations.



RESPECT

Mark 10.14: *Let the children come to me (Mark 10. 14)*

Matthew 10.29: *Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground outside your Father's care.*

Spiritual Jesus valued every person equally regardless of status, gender or wealth. He showed a particular bias to those who were poor, in need or at the margins of society at that time.
At our school we explore the Christian teaching that every child and adult is made in God's image and is uniquely precious and worthy of respect and kindness.

Moral Following Jesus' teaching and attitude towards children, our school values every child equally and is pro---active about ensuring that no individual is disadvantaged or treated differently due to their social background, gender, sexual orientation or cultural or religious background. We equip children with the skills to recognise prejudice in the media or in the political process. We encourage all within our community to learn about and engage with our nation's democratic processes both locally and nationally to help to support, protect and sustain for the future the respect due to every citizen.

Social As a community whose life is founded upon Christian values, we do not merely *tolerate* difference and diversity, we actively *celebrate* the uniqueness of all individuals. Whilst it may not always be possible to respect the opinions of every member (e.g. if they are sexist, homophobic or racist) we do respect the individual and their right to hold views that are different from our own.

Cultural As a Church of England school, we strive to create a culture that is characterised by openness, empathy and respect. We try to foster humility and thankfulness in our relationships with one another and the natural world. We continually strive to improve our understanding of different faiths and cultural diversity, celebrating the richness of experience and beliefs represented in British society.



FORGIVENESS

1 John 1.9: *But if we confess our sins to God, he can always be trusted to forgive us and take our sins away.*

Mark 11.25: *If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you.*

Spiritual Jesus came into the world to show us how much we are loved by God; by taking the sins of the whole world upon himself on the cross Jesus made forgiveness and a personal relationship with God possible We. strive to offer every member of our school community a life---giving encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.

Moral Following Jesus' example, we always offer forgiveness and a fresh start to children and adults who have made mistakes. We teach that an individual's behaviour can have a positive or negative impact on others and that this consideration must be paramount in deciding whether behaviour is appropriate. When sanctions are deemed necessary because behaviour falls short of expectations, we endeavour to demonstrate justice with compassion.

Social As a community whose life is founded upon Christian values we recognise that forgiveness, offered and received, will be at the heart of all our relationships. We teach about how we can *show* we are sorry in practical ways and equip individuals with strategies to prevent them from repeating mistakes in the future. We believe that learning from the past and not holding grudges will help to develop character by making us more resilient.

Cultural As a Church of England school, our behaviour policy is informed throughout by our Christian values. We try not to make assumptions about people or situations before knowing all the facts and circumstances. Decisions about sanctions are made carefully and after consultation. We teach children about the justice system in modern Britain and the emphasis on principles such as the presumption of innocence until proven guilty and the concept of restorative justice.



SERVICE

Matthew 20.26: *The Son of Man did not come to be served but to serve and give his life as a ransom for many.*

John 13.12---15: *After Jesus had washed his disciples' feet … he said: "Do you understand what I have done? ….. And if your Lord and teacher has washed your feet, you should do the same for each other."*

Spiritual Jesus' gave us an example of servant leadership at the Last Supper when he took a towel and washed his disciples' feet, a job usually carried out by a servant; he then told his disciples to go and do likewise. As those values are rooted in the example and teaching of Jesus, we are inspired by this act of love of his friends.

Moral Following Jesus' example, we value a model of servant leadership in our school. We encourage children to seek the common good in all that they do, striving to put the needs of others before our own.

Social As a community, we believe that our gifts and talents are to be used in ways that will improve the lives of others. We provide opportunities in school for serving as monitors, peer mediators and to stand as elected members of the school council. We help children to develop skills that will allow them to participate fully and contribute positively to the social and cultural life of modern Britain.

Cultural As a Church of England school we create a culture in which serving one another and the wider community is celebrated and seen as an important mark of character development. We regularly invite to our school others who are making a difference to society through their service and charitable works, to inform and inspire us and to present positive role models for us to follow.

As a staff team:

- We have a staff understanding of spiritual development.
- We have a culture within our school that recognises the importance of spirituality to individuals, both children and staff.
- We revisit spirituality as an area for consideration in our staff meetings and offer training.
- Our governors monitor the impact of our spirituality focus through discussions with pupils and observing lessons and experiences.
- We have staff guidance accessible to continue to support staff in this aspect of our curriculum.
- We ensure new staff are aware of our school policy on spiritual development.
- We use models to support our own thinking in spirituality, such as the 'Candle, Windows, Mirrors, Doors,' approach.
- We have a variety of spiritual spaces both inside and outside the school building.

- We are aware of spiritual development shown across four key areas of Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond (Andrew Rickett / Rebecca Nye).
- We recognise that children will have different 'Spiritual Temperaments' or 'Sacred Pathways, through the work of Gary Thomas (2010) and Myra Perrine (2007). This will influence our planning as we look to nurture spirituality across the curriculum, not just in RE and Collective Worship. We encourage staff who are specialist subject leads to identify opportunities for spiritual development in their subject, and to share them with colleagues.
- We actively use the language we have agreed on with staff to nurture an awareness of spirituality and its importance to well-being and development with the children.
- We aim to help each pupil to develop a spiritual understanding in terms of their own cultural context.
- We share with parents, whenever possible, the outcomes of our focus on spiritual development through newsletters, social media, displays and our website.
- We discuss spirituality with our church and others who can further support this thread.

Our awareness and understanding of spiritual development will enrich what we offer to the children and to all in our school community.

Other related policies:

Collective Worship
Religious Education
Teaching and Learning
Behaviour

Referenced reading:

Church of England Education Office (CEEO) Spiritual Development – Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom (2019)
https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-effectiveness/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/spiritual-development.

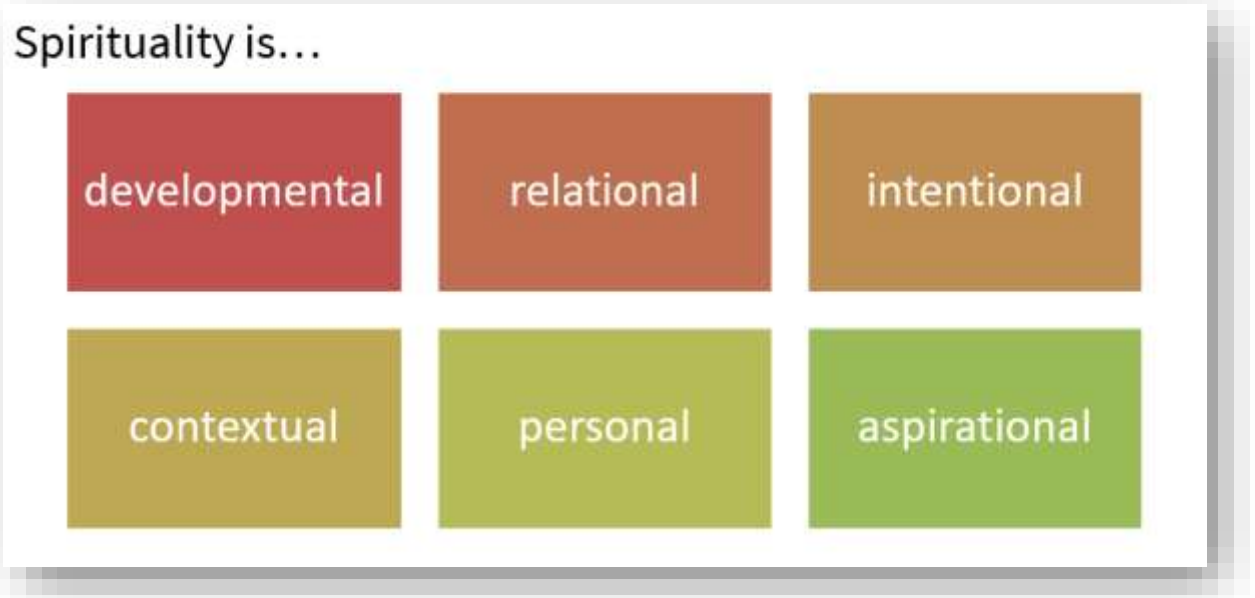
Appendix 1
Spirituality Vocabulary Spine

faith	think	prayer
compassion	me	kindness
strength	others	truth
courage	ideas	change
humility	questions	transform
love	response	embrace
care	transform	celebrate
reflect	hope	meditate
challenge	profound	eternal
spiritual	philosophical	listen
grace	attitude	joy
rejoice	nourish	nurture
inspire	aspire	dream
contemplate	absorb	grasp
heal	peace	calm
pause	enlighten	seek
forgive	repent	unify

Appendix 2

Words and Ways we Articulate Spirituality in School







Mirrors allow us to reflect upon ourself, to look inside, to consider our own views and those of others.



We use windows to look out, to seek something new from a safe place.



Doors allow us to walk through to experience something new, to find a new path, to respond in a new way.

Spirituality can be seen in three layers…

