

Spirituality, transformation and School Mission

Staff meeting

10-5-17

Revised 17-3-21

Ofsted definition of 'spiritual development'

- **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development is defined in the Ofsted School inspection handbook November 2019:**

The spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:

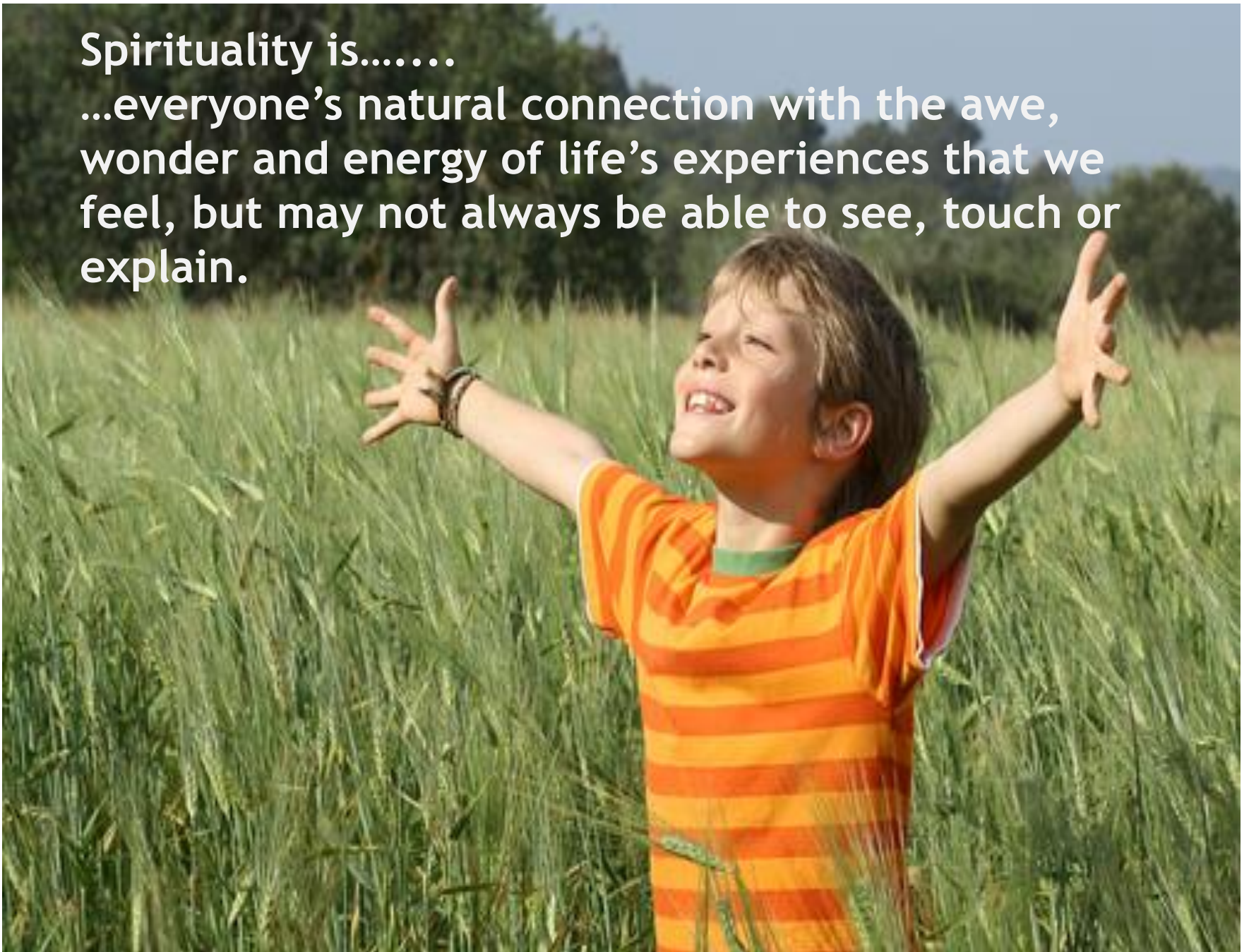
- **ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life**
- **knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values**
- **sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them**
- **use of imagination and creativity in their learning**
- **willingness to reflect on their experiences**

SIAMs assessment of Spirituality is (within Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills):

The school has a clear and secure understanding of spiritual development that is distinguishable from social, moral, and cultural development and is shared by staff. Progressively deeper opportunities exist across the curriculum which enable pupils to develop curiosity through questioning that helps them explore and articulate spiritual and ethical issues. Pupils value learning and enjoy questioning, listening and responding creatively across a range of subjects

Spirituality is.....

...everyone's natural connection with the awe, wonder and energy of life's experiences that we feel, but may not always be able to see, touch or explain.



ABW definition Spirituality is....

...everyone's natural connection with the awe, wonder and energy of life's experiences that we feel, but may not always be able to see, touch or explain.

A Spiritual Experience is one which opens the mind and the heart to a deeper understanding of oneself and one's place in the cosmos and the world.



**What on earth is
Spirituality?**

*We touch spirituality when we encounter
an experience on life's journey
that causes us to reflect on
the deeper things of life,
its meaning and our purpose within it,
and as a consequence
our lives are transformed*

**Jon Westwood's
Definition**

Scientists find that a touch of awe can do us all good

Regular awe-inspiring experiences may improve our mental health and make us nicer people, psychologists have claimed, raising the prospect of "awe therapy" to overcome the stressful effects of fast-paced modern life.

(Independent July 2012)

In a world which is gathering pace in the speed...

- * Children who have learnt the importance of taking time out to reflect on life
- * Provide opportunities to develop a life of faith



Spirituality in Life

Regular awe-inspiring experiences may improve our mental health and make us nicer people, psychologists have claimed.

Studies on groups of volunteers showed that experiencing awe made people feel they had more time to spare. This in turn led them to be more patient, less materialistic, and more willing to give up time to help others.

**Scientists find that a touch
of awe can do us all good
(Independent July 2012)**

Developing approaches to support spiritual development:

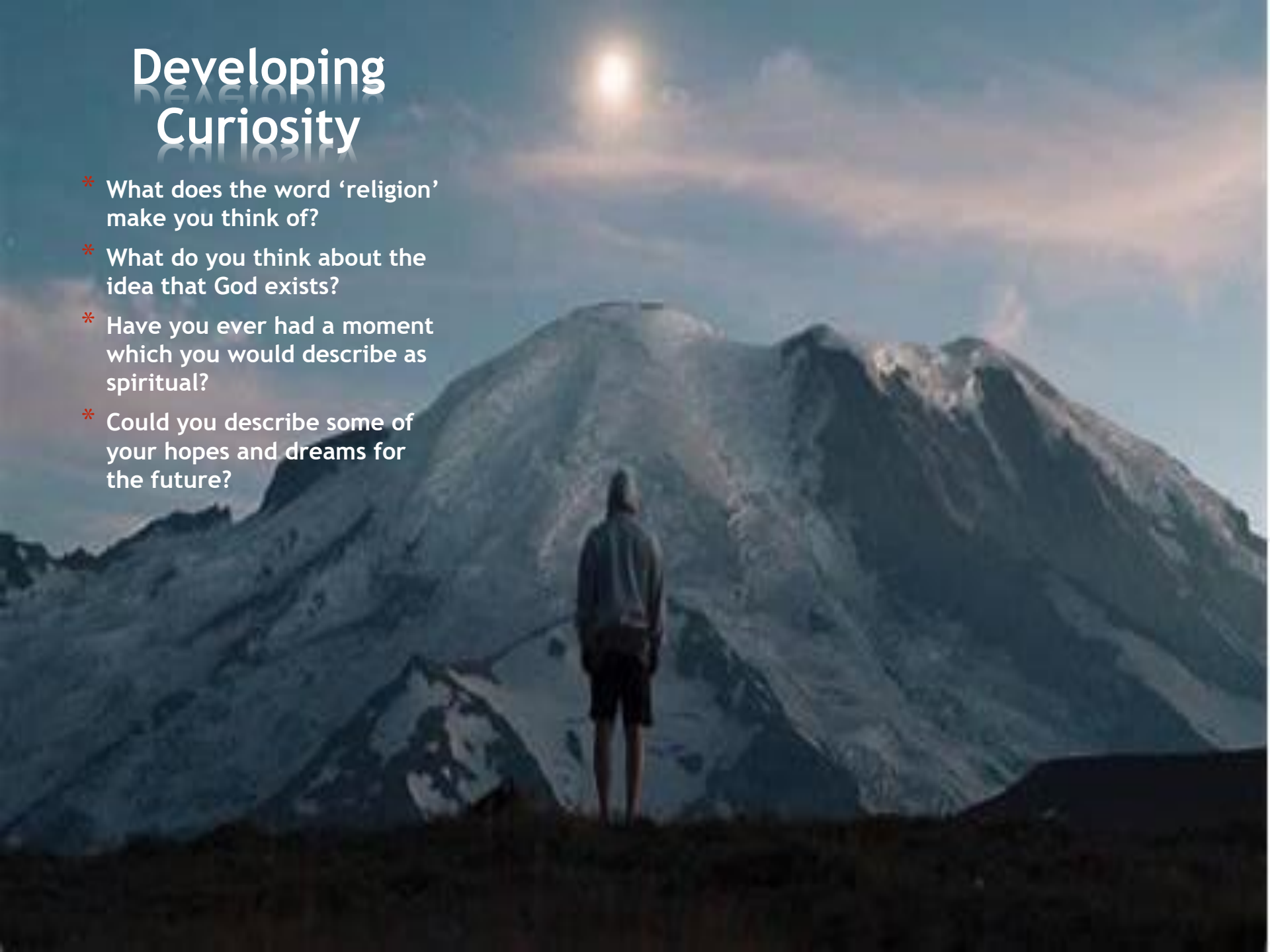
- Teaching children how to meditate
- Teaching breathing techniques (physical > spiritual)
- Use of candles for reflection
- Listening to and creating music to aid thinking/reflection
- Prayer
- Reflecting on the outstanding beauty in our world - awe and wonder
- Guided visualisation
- Stilling and Meditation
- Responding to 'big questions' about life and living, raised by the teachers
- Asking 'big questions' about life and living, raised by the children/young people
- Use of a reflection/spiritual focus/space in the classrooms, playground, field.

Giving children opportunities to explore spirituality:

- * We aim to give our children opportunities to explore spirituality across many areas...
- * This quote from Henry Ford puts it well: “When I use the word spirituality, I don’t necessarily mean religion; I mean whatever it is that helps you feel connected to something that is larger than yourself.”
- * The sense of awe and wonder in our world and our own place in it leads to many of life’s biggest questions, such as: “Why are we here?”.
- * Obviously, spirituality and religion are often naturally linked too, and questions such as “Is there a God?” and “If there is a God, what exactly is he/she like?” are explored.

Developing Curiosity

- * What does the word 'religion' make you think of?
- * What do you think about the idea that God exists?
- * Have you ever had a moment which you would describe as spiritual?
- * Could you describe some of your hopes and dreams for the future?



A lack of curiosity

- * Some CYP see questioning as disrespectful or possibly offensive especially when talking to people with different faiths
- * A misunderstanding that we are all the same. CYP try to minimise the fact that people can have very different views and thoughts and they feel uncomfortable with this.
- * Beliefs are personal - religion can be seen as personal and private. Therefore, spiritual moments are not really talked about or reflected on.
- * CYP do not build up sufficiently well the skills to articulate questions that are abstract rather than those linked to the practical living out of a faith. For example, who some people might choose to fast as part of their faith.
- * Build the space to be curious...

* Whatever it is that helps you to feel connected to or with something that is larger than yourself

* An awareness that there is something other, something greater than the cause of everyday events

Spiritual Development Planned opportunities for spiritual development in all subjects can be seen across the school.

Children are given opportunities to reflect upon the meaning of spiritual experiences.

Examples of experiences commonly regarded as spiritual include:

- Curiosity and mystery
- Awe and wonder
- Connection and belonging
- Heightened self-awareness
- Prayer and worship
- Deep feelings of what is felt to be ultimately important
- A sense of security, well-being, worth and purposefulness

The school will develop a climate and ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected; accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals. These can occur during any part of the school day, e.g. when listening to music, discussing the care needed for animals, exercising empathy or creativity, how we live, contemplating the future, etc.

At ABW

- Candle on the worship table
- Call and response
- Collective worship
- Time to reflect
- Stories from the Bible linked to other religions
- Reflection areas
- Visitors from different denominations
- Open the Book
- School values
- British values
- Responses to world events
- Big Questions
- Visit to Salisbury Cathedral
- Class assemblies
- Leading prayers
- Other faiths valued and respected
- Christian festivals focus
- Church WOW days
- Experience days
- Prayer box/tree
- WOW tree
- P4C
- Teamwork
- Thought for the day

Spirituality at ABW

- Opening doors and opportunities
- Understanding ourselves and our place in the world
- I have a dream....
- Dream work makes the team work
- Believing in yourself and others
- Is it OK to be yourself
- Not about beliefs
- About the way we live and the way we conduct our lives
- Sense of self, place, in the grand scheme of things
- Touches your soul
- Sense of responsibility
- Impact we make
- The part we play
- What is your place in the world?
- How do you make a difference?
- Belief in something larger than yourself
- Reflection Books - record/share thoughts/words, actions influences by worship

Windows, Mirrors and Doors

Windows are for looking out onto the world and becoming aware of its wonders, both the 'wows' and 'ows'; things that are 'awe-full' and make us wonder and be grateful and things that are 'awful' and make us wonder and ask questions. The whole curriculum and life itself are full of opportunities to recognise this sensitively.

Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting, alone and together, to see things more clearly, for thinking and asking important questions learning from our own and each other's responses. In schools we must allow time for this for individual and group reflection and sharing of perspectives. Some subjects and times allow for this specifically, such as religious education and collective worship but in all subjects, there will be opportunities, unexpected or planned, when things just 'crop up'. Handled sensitively, it is possible to make the most of all these times, if there is ongoing deliberate and corporate staff and pupil support.

Doors are for looking through in order to then act or express this in some way in response; for moving on, making choices, and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving.

Some 'real-life' examples...

Recognising Spiritual Development in the Primary School - Part 2

Spiritual Capacities	Experience Window	Reflection Mirror	Growth Door
<p>Reception & Year 2 Be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and forgive others.</p>	<p>Playtime: A Y2 child in my class caused a child in Reception to be upset by something that he said to her. This was unintentional on his part.</p> <p>I gently brought the matter to his attention, pointing out that the Reception child was now in tears.</p>	<p>The Y2 child went home that evening and (completely independently) wrote a little story book. The subject of the story was unrelated to the incident in question, but he made the Reception child the main character in the story. The next morning, he asked the Reception teacher to suggest a time that he could say sorry and read the story to the child.</p>	<p>The Reception child and the Y2 child are now good friends and can often be seen on the Buddy Bench chatting together at break times. They have learned a lot about what it means to give and receive forgiveness.</p>

Some 'real-life' examples...

Year 3/4

Demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions.

Royal Wedding celebration: Interest was generated by a royal wedding in why people choose to marry and what makes two individuals decide to commit to one another for life.

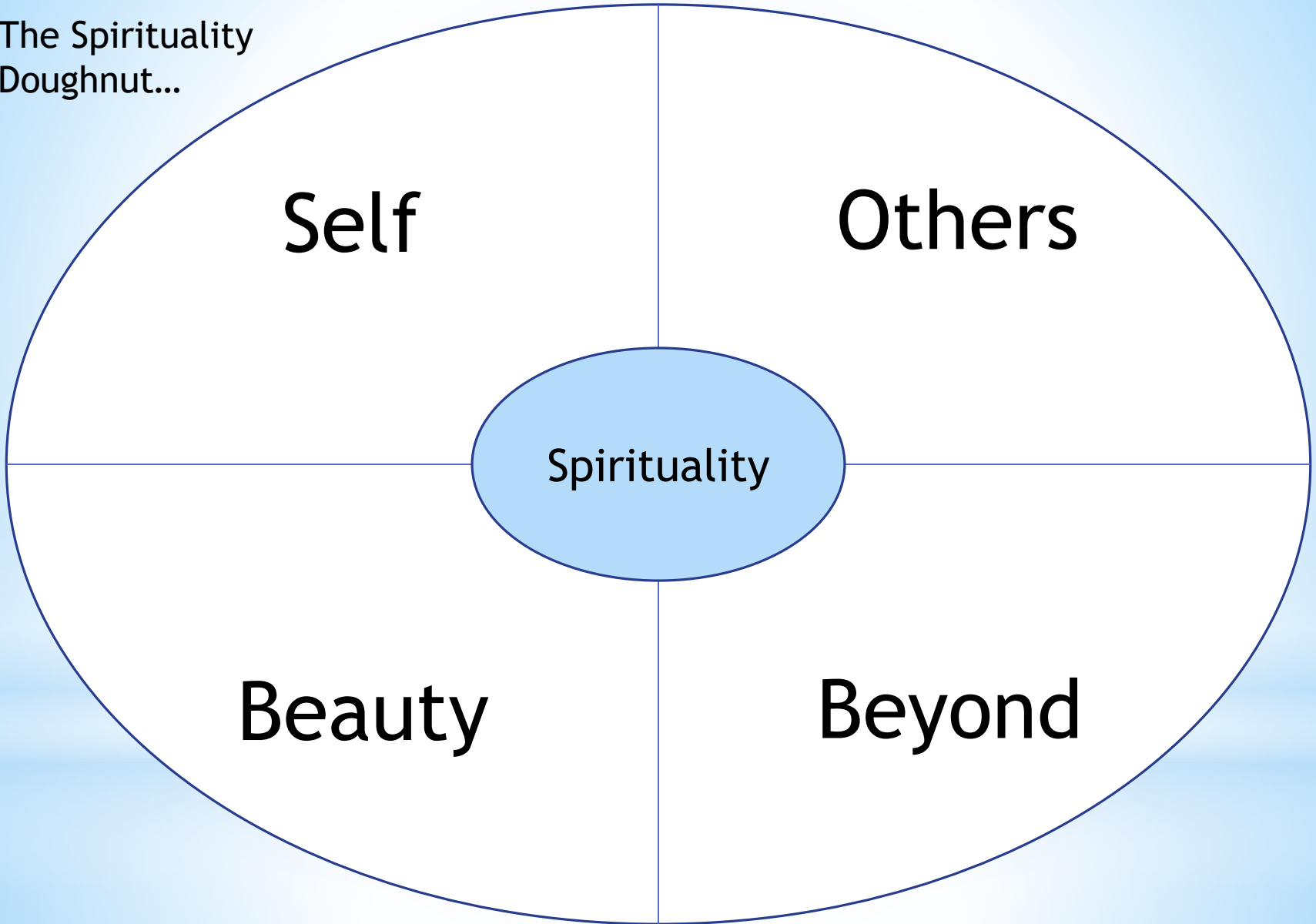
Whilst making bunting for the school celebrations a discussion took place about the promises that are made when people marry and the values that would be needed within a relationship to enable both parties to keep the promises. They also reflected about why some people want to be married in a religious ceremony and others prefer another type of ceremony.

Whilst this discussion was initiated by a wedding, the children reflected more widely about the values which are important in all long-lasting relationships. It showed that they were able to apply our school's Christian values to life outside the classroom.

Some 'real-life' examples...

Spiritual Capacities	Experience Window	Reflection Mirror	Growth Door
<p>Year 6 Be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community.</p>	<p>Forest school: Children were asked to use items from forest school to create a waterproof boat that would float. Great care and attention to detail was invested in this project and children were very proud of their boats.</p> <p>Children tested their boats in front of their peers. Some floated but others sank or fell apart</p>	<p>During this process children reflected on why some designs were successful and others were not.</p>	<p>The activity demonstrated that children were aware that some children felt sad that the boats which they had carefully made, had been destroyed when put in the water. They were respectful and sensitive when discussing why this might have happened. The children concluded that the activity showed that a great deal can be learned from 'mistakes'.</p>
<p>Whole School Be comfortable with stillness and silence and able to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer.</p>	<p>Whole school worship: The children had heard a poem about the time that Jesus visited the home of Martha and Mary (from Roots & Fruits 2 *).</p> <p>(Mary sat down to spend time with Jesus, but Martha was too busy.)</p> <p>The children were then invited to spend some time in meditation imagining that Jesus was visiting their home.</p>	<p>Children had some perfumed candles to create a special atmosphere of welcome. They used our normal mindfulness breathing awareness and stilling exercises to prepare for the time of meditation.</p> <p>The children either focussed on the candles or closed their eyes. We asked a few simple questions to guide the children's reflection (Who might be in your home when Jesus arrived? How could you welcome him? How might you spend the time together?) We then left two or three minutes of silence.</p>	<p>After the meditation, the children spoke about how thinking about Jesus in their own homes made him much more real to them than when they just heard stories about him. They said the time went very quickly. We discussed the idea that 'prayer' for many people includes the practice of spending time with Jesus in their imagination.</p>

The Spirituality
Doughnut...



Self

Others

Spirituality

Beauty

Beyond

Actions:

- ✓ Be aware of the definition of Spirituality for ABW - share with the class
- share the diagram - self, others, beauty and beyond
- ✓ Ensure the reflection books encourage reflection on moments - not just religious moments, but those that inspire spirituality and deeper thought - this may also include local, or world events - use the reflection book more flexibly if you wish
- ✓ Use questions to guide pupils to think about the impact on them, others, the world (beauty) and beyond - include these in your reflection books
- ✓ Increase your awareness of spiritual moments - where you can, plan for them in your curriculum
- ✓ Capture - where you can, when you can, the moments that present themselves - use the class reflection book as a diary...
- ✓ Share - when you have moments that can be shared, email me so these can be shared on Twitter / YouTube (if recorded)
- ✓ Link - where you can, spiritual moments to the school vision and values
- ✓ Take time - within the realms of well-being - take time to stop - be still
- encourage that time for windows, mirrors and doors
- ✓ School prayer...(DC)

Do you have any questions? How can I help further?