

**AN ETHNOGRAPHIC STUDY OF THE SPIRITUAL DIMENSION OF A
CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL**

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An ethnographic study of the spiritual dimension of a Church of England Primary School

Abstract

The research documented in this thesis took place against a background of concern for the wellbeing of children, the educational standards being achieved in schools and questions about the purpose of education itself, particularly within a Christian framework. The focus of the research was an ethnographic study into the factors influencing the development and nurture of children's spirituality in a Church of England Primary School where faith, belief and spirituality are explored as part of the educational experience of pupils. All schools are expected to provide opportunities for children's spiritual development according to the 1944 Education Act, which replaced the term "religion" with the term "spiritual". For Anglican Church Schools such provision is perceived to be a priority. However, because they are church schools within a state system they are subject to the differing expectations of a dual inspection system. This creates certain tensions and a degree of complexity for the schools. Beginning with a focus on the potential contribution that Philosophy for Children could make to children's spirituality, the study broadened its scope to take account of the larger questions and concerns (outlined above) which were impacting on the potential for schools to offer opportunities for spiritual development to children during their primary school experience. The case study is analysed using Bernstein's pedagogic theories and models to elucidate the "double tension" which exists for Anglican Church Schools as they seek to achieve high academic standards and provide opportunities to explore spirituality both of which are central to the mission of church schools. This tension was evidenced in the leadership style, language and pedagogy operating within the case study school. The study concludes that recognising this tension seems to be a prerequisite for supporting church schools as they seek to fulfil their mission within the current educational climate.

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Eleanor’s definition of spirituality (age 9, May 2012);

“Spirituality in a child is ... A kind of wisdom: a way someone might think, and say and act. Sort of holy, good. They think deeply about things and they pray and they listen to advice.”

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Periodically questions and concerns are raised regarding childhood and child well-being in our twenty-first century society. Such soul-searching often arises following the publication of statistics such as those related to the UK's position in the educational league tables of the world (for example, the Program for International Student Assessment or PISA results, an international assessment that measures 15-year-old students' reading, mathematics, and science literacy), the publication of the annual school league tables in England or the publication (in 2007) of a UNICEF report which placed the UK bottom of the child well-being league among developing countries. On occasion these concerns are explored in depth as researchers attempt to uncover the stories behind the statistics. One such landmark publication, *Toxic Childhood: How the modern world is damaging our children and what we can do about it* by Sue Palmer, appeared in 2006 and caused an international debate about modern childhood and education systems.

The latest PISA results published in December 2013 caused Adams (2013) to comment "A stubborn gap in attainment between Britain's best- and worst-performing students has pinned the UK to the middle of international education rankings, despite years of effort by successive governments to raise standards", since the UK's position was virtually unchanged since the tests were last carried out in 2009. Inevitably such statistics will be interpreted in a variety of ways; for example, the opposition Labour Party was prompted to claim, "This report exposes the failings of this government's schools policy – a policy that has sent unqualified teachers into the classroom and prevented effective collaboration between schools" (Adams, 2013). Whereas, Andreas Schleicher, the OECD's deputy director for education and skills and co-ordinator of the Pisa programme, said that anyone looking for the impact of the education reforms introduced in England since the 2010 election was

"three years early ...You are not going to see great surprises about the UK in this data" (Adams. R, 2013).

Whilst politicians concentrated on the performance data and attempted to explain why academic standards appeared to be stagnating, the BBC News web-site (December 2013) reported that although Peru and Indonesia were bottom of the PISA results table, "Indonesia also appears as the country where the highest proportion of children say they are happiest at school. And the least happy pupils are in high-performing South Korea."

As a result of the UNICEF report in 2007 (referred to above), "concern for promoting child well-being shot up the UK's political agenda" (UNICEF, 2013 p.1). UNICEF itself was prompted to ask, "But why did the UK come last, and why do children here continue to fare so poorly compared to other, similar countries?" (UNICEF, 2013 p.1). As a result, UNICEF UK, Ipsos MORI and Dr Agnes Nairn worked together to explore the reasons behind the statistics by comparing children's lives and experiences in the UK with those of children living in Spain and Sweden; "What we found has serious implications for how we move forward as a society and how we tackle the impact that materialism and inequality have on children's well-being" (UNICEF, 2013). The latest UNICEF report (published in April 2013) puts the UK in 16th position – below Slovenia, the Czech Republic and Portugal – in a league table of child well-being in the world's richest countries, indicating a minor improvement on the 2007 report which placed the UK at the bottom of 21 developed countries for overall child well-being (UNICEF, 2013). However, there continues to be much that gives cause for concern since there are still areas in which the UK ranks significantly low, especially among young people aged 15 to 19; "Teenage pregnancy rates continue to be high, as do the numbers of young people under 19 not in education, employment or training. The UK also has one of the highest alcohol abuse rates in 11 to 15 year olds" (UNICEF, 2013).

Palmer (2006 pp. xiii – xiv) draws attention to the increase in recent years of mental health problems in children and adolescents in the UK, calling the British Medical Association statement that in 2006 20% of children and adolescents could expect to suffer from mental health problems a “shameful statistic”. In her book, Palmer (2006) explores answers to the question: “What’s gone wrong?” In her view there is no one single answer. Instead she sees this as a “complex cultural problem, linked to the incredible speed of human progress. We’ve created an amazingly exciting global culture but over the last quarter of a century progress has accelerated so much that our species simply can’t keep up. In a nutshell, our culture has evolved faster than our biology” (Palmer, 2006 pp. 2-3). As a consequence, she claims, the “clash between our technology-driven culture and our biological heritage is now damaging children’s ability to think, learn and behave” (Palmer, 2006 p.3).

In the Preface to her book, Palmer (2006 p.xiv) comments that she was contacted by leading figures from the scientific and the religious communities detailing their active responses to the concerns raised. Archbishop Rowan Williams (the then Archbishop of Canterbury) had commissioned a report (Layard and Dunn 2009) in which the views of children and young people were gathered as well as drawing on the work of leading experts to explore the main influences to which all children are exposed – family, friends, youth culture, values and schooling. In the chapter on schooling, Layard and Dunn (2009 p.89) write that schools “should be transformational – they should expand the powers of the mind and they should enrich the spirit. Both these roles are vital.” They question the over-emphasis on testing, asking “If the main aim of the educational process is to produce exam results, what does this do to a child’s *curiosity* and excitement about what she learns?” (Layard and Dunn, 2009 p.103).

Williams (2000 p.13) draws attention to the “profound impatience” with which modern society regards childhood. In such a society, he continues,

“children are pressed into adult or pseudo-adult roles as fast as possible” (Williams, 2000 p.14) whereas what children actually need is the “safeguarding of a space where identities can be learned and tested in imagination before commitments have to be made” (Williams, 2000 p.31) and where “the messy and time-consuming business of reflection, the thinking through of our relationships and dependencies” (Williams, 2000 p.46) can take place. For Williams (2000 p.58), the nurture of children and the learning of choice are fundamental to the development of children and, he claims, the reluctance to consider these issues is also “a reluctance to think about the role of *time* in the formation of identities.”

The Church of England has been at the forefront of educational debate ever since it established the National Society for the Education of the Poor in 1811 (sixty years before the state got involved in education on a large scale). These concerns regarding childhood, child well-being and the purpose of education are, therefore, of fundamental importance to the Church and its 4,700 plus schools. During a speech made at the launch of the National Institute for Christian Educational Research in 2011, Bishop John Pritchard (Chair of the National Society Council and Board of Education) expressed his concern that we have developed an education system where the “desired outcome is for young people who are fit to contribute to the country’s wealth. This requires an exam culture where students move along an educational assembly line from lesson to lesson and exam to exam until released into the economy as a unit of wealth production” (Pritchard, 2011 p.5). Pritchard (2011 p.5) quotes the PISA study of 2010 to support his view that this industrial-style educational production “does not even work” since the UK had dropped (between 2000 and 2010) from 7th to 25th in reading and from 8th to 28th in maths. He goes on to quote the UNICEF report on child wellbeing discussed above, stating that not only is the system not producing academic results, but our children are also unhappy; “Not only are students unhappy; so too are inspectors ... (and) employers (who want) ‘people who can work with others

who are different, and who ask the sort of questions that challenge not just what we do but how we do it” (Pritchard, 2011 p.6). Pritchard (2011 p.6) concludes that “we need an education that is ‘in whole’ and not ‘in part’, an education of the whole child” (echoing the 1944 Education Act which charged schools with promoting the moral, cultural and spiritual development of children as well as their mental and physical development) which goes beyond the achievement of good exam results to provide a “complete and generous education”, fitting a person “to perform justly, skilfully and magnanimously” (quoting John Milton). He describes this education in Christian terms as being intended to “draw out the full human potential of each child of God” (Pritchard, 2011 p.6).

Central to Pritchard’s views on education is the assertion that “a human person, a child, *is a spiritual, embodied being, living in community*” and that “The Christian tradition has always insisted on our essentially spiritual nature. If we are dust, then we are dust that dreams” (Pritchard, 2011 p.7). The communal nature of Christian teaching and learning, he continues, is located in “the fellowship of faith (school or church) and learnt from how people live, worship, make decisions, handle difference and generally how they behave, as well as from intentional teaching and learning programmes” (Pritchard, 2011 p.8). In the church school, therefore, Pritchard (2011 p.9) claims that children (and their parents) are offered:

the experience of a community of faith in which people of all ages are learning what it is to be made in the image of God. They are learning about being centred and held in a faith tradition, and how that works out in practice. They are learning to look beyond the here and now, to look underneath the stone. They are being encouraged to wonder at the breathtaking nature of nature itself. They are learning how to integrate, not separate, and how all things are connected. They are learning the limits of materialism as a philosophy and consumerism as a way of life. And they are learning to recognise authenticity.

Cooling (2011 p.11) offers practical suggestions for church school leaders as they seek to fulfil this vision of Christian education when he quotes the National College’s statement that the role of school leaders in Christian

schools is to be “Interpreters of faith for the (school) community.” In his view this means that those leaders are to lead their staff team in the process of writing “an educational fifth act, which is both appropriate to their school and faithful to the scriptural teaching, ...” (Cooling, 2011 p.11).

Church of England schools, therefore, are charged with the task of offering a distinctively Christian education which fulfils both the desire for academic success demanded by the government (and society in general) and the desire to educate ‘in whole’ not ‘in part’ espoused in the 1944 Education Act and by Bishop Pritchard (above). Study of the most recent Primary Schools League Tables for England (BBC News, 2013) indicates that thirteen of the top thirty schools are Church of England Schools (ie. not including Catholic or other faith schools) which apparently fulfil the quest for academic success and provide one reason for the continuing popularity of church schools amongst parents.

Questions are often raised concerning church school admissions policies which, it is claimed, can produce inflated academic success. Such claims, however, can indicate a misunderstanding of the nature and role of Church of England schools (explored in more detail in section 2.1) which is distinct from that of Catholic or other faith schools. Recently Jan Ainsworth (Chief Education Officer of the National Society) responded to comments made by the Fair Admissions Campaign (3 December 2013) about the social and ethnic inclusiveness of “faith schools”, including Church of England schools by stating that: “200 years ago, the Church of England provided the first national system of schools, specifically designed to provide an education for the poor. Today, we remain proud of the way in which our schools enable children from disadvantaged backgrounds to succeed. Church schools are a central part of our mission to serve the common good. That is why around the country, they are open to children of Christian faith, of other faiths and of none” (National Society, 2013).

It was against this background of concern for the wellbeing of children, the educational standards being achieved in schools and questions about the purpose of education itself (particularly within a Christian framework), that my research took place.

Palmer (2007 p.3) states that there are four strands (identified by scientists) to human development: physical, emotional, social and cognitive. Of these strands, the first and the last are measurable in various ways and therefore tend to attract the most attention. However, as Einstein memorably stated, “Not everything that counts can be counted and not everything that can be counted counts.” According to Palmer (2007 p.5), the drive from government to constantly test children means that many schools have been turned into “standards factories” where teachers “don’t have the time to provide opportunities for play and talk.” Layard and Dunn (2009 p.104) also refer to a narrow focus on knowledge and skills in schools which leaves “too little room for teaching related to feelings or social commitment.” Whilst acknowledging that the first key role of schools is to “develop the powers of the mind”, Layard and Dunn (2009 p.106) go on to state that “the second key role is equally important – to train the habits of the heart” and claim that “there is no conflict between the objectives of harmonious living and academic excellence. When inner calm is enhanced, better studying results.”

My own interest in these issues has focused on the area of the development and nurture of children’s spirituality in an educational context. All schools are expected to provide opportunities for children’s spiritual development according to the 1944 Education Act, which replaced the term “religion” with the term “spiritual”. However, for Anglican Church Schools such provision is perceived to be a priority. As a Diocesan Schools Adviser, I have been involved in supporting church schools as they work through what this means in their particular context.

When embarking on this study, my original intention was to explore the possible relationship between the teaching of Philosophy for Children (P4C) and the development of children's spirituality in the context of a church school where faith, belief and spirituality are explored as part of the educational experience of pupils. However, as the study progressed it became clear that there were larger questions and concerns (outlined above) which were impacting on the potential for schools to offer opportunities for spiritual development to children during their primary school experience.

My interest in children's spirituality arose from a number of different experiences in both my professional and personal life. Having previously worked as a School Librarian and then trained as an English teacher, I have observed and become fascinated by the way in which children and young people respond to the world of imagination through story and creativity. As a School Librarian in a city school where there were many students from disadvantaged backgrounds, I became passionate about enabling young people to access the resources available to them by providing relevant information and study skills courses, as well as opening up the world of fiction in a more direct way through organising author visits and book weeks. This passion then extended to the classroom when I trained as an English teacher and was able to explore the richness of diverse texts with students and encourage students to express their own opinions, responses and feelings in their written and oral work.

This interest developed further to encompass the area of spiritual development when I went on to teach Religious Education (RE). RE is an area of the curriculum where students have the opportunity to engage with the "big questions" of life and to explore the responses of the major world religions to those questions, as well as developing and expressing their own views. I then became a Diocesan Schools Adviser working alongside colleagues in church schools. I discovered in the church school sector (both

primary and secondary) a level of engagement with the issue of spiritual development in many church schools which I had not encountered in the community schools in which I had previously taught. Through providing training sessions for staff, working with children in the classroom and professional dialogue with Diocesan colleagues, my understanding and interest in nurturing and developing spirituality in schools grew.

In addition to my professional interest in children and young people's spirituality, I also have a personal interest. As a mother, I have (and continue to) engaged in conversation with my daughters which has often contained a "spiritual dimension" as they have explored questions of meaning, justice, morality and the place of religion or spirituality in their lives.

A further catalyst to my thinking occurred when I attended an introductory session on Philosophy for Children (P4C) at a conference in 2007. This introduction to P4C related the approach to teaching RE in a secondary school. Having encountered P4C for the first time in the context of teaching RE to teenagers, I was keen to discover how the community of enquiry approach might be used with younger children in my advisory work with primary schools. I therefore undertook P4C training and offered to facilitate sessions in a church primary school in the Diocese. As an RE specialist I was particularly interested in using P4C as an alternative pedagogical approach within the teaching of RE. The school where I facilitated these first P4C sessions was a small, rural church school where the low number of children on roll meant that there were just two classes – KS1 and KS2. My sessions were with the KS2 class and therefore included children with a wide range of ages and abilities. However, all the children were able to access the sessions and were actively engaged in thinking more deeply about the subjects under discussion. It seemed to me that there was something more than cognitive development taking place here – the children were responding to the materials by asking and discussing the bigger questions of life.

According to Sara Stanley (2004 p.12); “When we introduce philosophy into children’s education, we are aiming to enable them to think deeply about their lives and the world around them. We want them to develop greater understanding of how their thoughts, ideas and personal beliefs equate to those of their community and of wider society.” I was interested, therefore, in exploring whether the community of enquiry encouraged by P4C, with its inclusive approach to enabling children to explore the “big questions” of life, could contribute significantly to providing opportunities for spiritual development in an educational setting. The area of research in which I became engaged was directly relevant to and enhanced my work with the Diocese. The Diocese therefore supported and encouraged my research.

The site for my study was an average size Church of England Primary School situated in the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham which I had visited on a number of occasions in my role as Diocesan Schools Adviser. I had previously worked with the Headteacher and staff, in particular supporting the Religious Education (RE) Co-ordinator to develop the RE curriculum in the school. It became clear from conversations with the Headteacher that whilst the school was fully committed to achieving and maintaining high academic standards, there was also a desire to provide opportunities for children to explore and experience a spiritual dimension to their life in school. In addition, the Headteacher was interested in developing children’s thinking skills and was therefore keen to experiment with the introduction of P4C as a means of developing children’s cognitive ability whilst simultaneously exploring “big questions”. I therefore offered to facilitate a series of P4C sessions with a Year 3 class, modelling the sessions to the class teacher and sharing the outcomes with the rest of the teaching staff.

As I began to read more widely around the subject of children’s spirituality whilst delivering these P4C sessions there appeared to be scope to widen my study to consider the ways in which children’s spirituality was nurtured and

developed in a church school context. I therefore decided to explore the core issue of the spiritual dimension of the school whilst maintaining a focus on the impact of introducing P4C. In order to provide a context for the study I also considered issues around the nature and purpose of church schools; exploring the Christian philosophical and theological premise that children are made in the image of God and that being given opportunities to reflect and wonder allows them to become more fully human as well as more fully developed in God's image. The study included; considering what is meant by children's spirituality; identifying the factors which contribute to an environment where spirituality is nurtured / developed, ie. what does "spirituality" mean in this school context?; focussing on the introduction of P4C and its impact on pupils' spiritual development.

Following the initial phase of my research I identified three key questions to investigate (see Chapter 3 for details):

1. How does teaching and learning contribute to the development of children's spirituality?
2. How do the symbols and cultural life of the school contribute to the nurturing of spirituality?
3. How does the church contribute to the spiritual dimension of the school?

Through considering these questions, I sought to examine the ways in which the spiritual dimension of life might be explored within a Church of England Primary School context; whether, in fact, in Brown's (2013 p.163) words, "the firm Christian foundation of the school allows for a more radical exploration of religious education, worship and a deeper awareness of the spiritual life of children."

In the next chapter I review literature related to the church school context and to children's spiritual, cognitive, moral, religious and faith development.

Chapter three provides details of the processes involved in gathering the data and the methodology underpinning my research. In the fourth chapter I report the way in which spirituality is defined in the school where my research took place, before reporting on how that spirituality is reflected in the everyday life of the school in chapter 5. An analysis of my findings is recorded in chapter 6 which is followed by my conclusions and the implications of my findings for church schools.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This study is concerned with several huge topics; namely religion, philosophy, children's spirituality and what it means to be a Church of England primary school. Each area has its own large body of literature. My intention in this chapter is to set out a relatively small section of this literature which relates to my specific area of study. To orientate the reader, I offer a brief account of the church school context in England before moving on in section 2.2 to review some attempts by scholars and researchers to define spirituality. Section 2.3 considers developmental approaches to cognitive, moral, religious, faith and spiritual development. The chapter concludes with a consideration of the importance of pedagogy, the ways in which pedagogy is being affected by a "performativity culture" and the place of Philosophy for Children within that context.

2.1 THE ANGLICAN CHURCH SCHOOL CONTEXT

There follows a brief history of Anglican church schools which places the case study school in its historical and cultural context. The literature examined here also offers an insight into the ways in which attempts have been made to define spirituality during successive phases of education and under various inspection regimes in England. The establishment of church schools on a large scale in England can be traced back to 1811 when Joshua Watson (a prosperous Anglican wine merchant) felt that it was important for the established church to take the lead in the national schools initiative. As a result he, along with others of like mind, established "The National Society for the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church". By 1815, 100,000 children were being educated, by 1830 it was 1,000,000 and the Voluntary Census of 1851 indicated the existence of 17,000 schools (Elbourne, 2009 p.13). The common expectation of these schools was that

they would “teach their pupils what was needed to pursue a worthwhile life – to read and write and know the catechism” (Elbourne, 2009 p.13). It was the church and not the state which took the lead in providing mass education since, according to F D Maurice, “The Church must educate. A people cannot be educated aright by its political rulers or government” (quoted by Elbourne, 2009 p.14).

Many individual church schools, however, can trace their origins back even further with The King’s School, Canterbury (founded in 597) often being described as the oldest school in England (Elbourne, 2009 p.12). Indeed, the church can be said to have been in the business of education from its very beginnings as Jesus, a teacher or rabbi who “taught as one with authority” (Mark 1.22), gathered a learning community around him (Mark 6.30) and the early church is described as a “fellowship of believers devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching” (Acts 2.42) since “teaching and learning are activities undertaken together in community” (Elbourne, 2009 p.12). Tracing the origins of Christian education back to the community of first Christians living and learning together provides an important context in which to view all Christian education since, as Elbourne (2009 p.12) states: “Christian education is not simply a matter of passing on information and expertise. It invites people to take their own place in the salvation history of the people of God. Teaching and learning are closely linked in our tradition with worship and action; they flow into each other.”

It was not until the Education Act of 1870 that state provision for public education was established, supplementing rather than replacing voluntary provision. Dearing (2001 p.6) considers the Act to be a significant moment in the development of the partnership between the state and the churches in education. During the years between 1870 and the Education Act of 1944, the church was unable to maintain the quality of its premises and equipment such that the quality of education was suffering (Dearing, 2001 p.6). The 1944 Act

(which resulted from intense negotiations between Rab Butler, President of the Board of Education, and the then Archbishop of Canterbury, William Temple) provided “a new deal in which church schools were offered the option of increased State funding and control as ‘Voluntary Controlled schools’ or lesser State support and greater independence as ‘Voluntary Aided schools’.” (Dearing, 2001 p.6) As a result of this Act more than half of the Church of England schools became Voluntary Controlled, in contrast to Roman Catholic Church Schools which retained their independence as Voluntary Aided schools. It appears that this was contrary to the Government’s expectation that most church schools would choose to become Voluntary Controlled (Dearing, 2001 p.6).

According to *The Way Ahead Report*, the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 effected changes which brought the churches “more substantially into the decision-taking mechanism at local level ... At both national and local levels the church works in a partnership with government” (Dearing, 2001 p.7). The Act provided for the creation of School Organization Committees, which included both Local Authority and Church representation, and Admissions Forums to consider admissions to schools which again included Church representation (Dearing, 2001 p.7). Governing bodies of Voluntary Controlled schools when appointing a headteacher were to “have regard to the candidate’s ability and fitness to preserve and develop the religious character of the school” whilst in Voluntary Aided schools the governing body may give preference to committed members of the Church of England or other Christian churches when making staffing appointments (Dearing, 2001 p.7).

The policies of successive governments have provided challenges for church schools as they seek to maintain their core objectives of offering an approach to education that is distinctively Christian (Dearing, 2001 p.19) yet inclusive of children of all faiths and none (Dearing, 2001 p.16). Greater accountability

and assessment has been achieved through, for example, the introduction of GCSEs replacing 'O' levels and CSEs, OFSTED inspections, Standard Assessment Tests (SATs), target setting and league tables raising the concern that "horizons are lowered to the measurable" rather than "kindling human flourishing within God's creation" (Elbourne, 2009 pp.15 – 16). At the same time greater local autonomy for schools has resulted from a gradual devolvement of funding and governance with local authorities becoming the commissioners rather than the providers of schools (Elbourne, 2009 p.16). This situation, according to Elbourne (2009 p.16) has largely been welcomed by the Church of England as it provides opportunities for other faith groups to enter the maintained system. However, he goes on to state that these developments represent a mixed blessing since the church prefers to collaborate rather than compete.

According to Elbourne (2009 p.22), "Most Anglican church schools are more accurately described as 'neighbourhood schools with a Christian character' than 'faith schools.'" The vast majority of church schools give their pupils "the experience of the meaning of faith and of what it is to work and play in a community that seeks to live its beliefs and values" (Dearing, 2001 p.9). This includes meaningful daily worship and high quality religious education "as well as a distinctively Christian ethos" (Dearing, 2001 p.9). *The Way Ahead* report highlights the fact that, "Church schools are places where a particular vision of humanity is offered" (Dearing, 2001 p.11) and that this is offered in the context of a community where relationships are the key and where "both church and church school are involved as co-workers in the activity of God in the world" (Elbourne, 2009 p.17).

Elbourne (2009 p.26) describes the church school as a whole as belonging to the church family; it is a community of faith, a family where there is a context of unconditional love, stability and security in which exists the "possibility for spiritual growth through inhabiting the Christian narrative in the life of the

church school.” According to *The Way Ahead* report, the twin aims of the church school are to “nurture and maintain the dignity of the image of God in human beings through service ...” (Dearing, 2001 p.11). *The Way Ahead* report summarises the central purpose of church schools in the following statements:

Church schools are places where the faith is lived, and which therefore offer opportunities to pupils and their families to explore the truths of Christian faith, to develop spiritually and morally, and to have a basis for *choice* about Christian commitment. They are places where the beliefs and practices of other faiths will be respected. Church schools are not, and should not be, agents of proselytism where pupils are *expected* to make a Christian commitment. (Dearing, 2001 p.12)

In offering an education which reflects God’s love for humanity, church schools engage with children and young people to:

Nourish those of the faith;
Encourage those of other faiths;
Challenge those who have no faith.
(Lord Runcie, late Archbishop of Canterbury, quoted by Dearing, 2001 p.4)

Dearing (2001 p.4) goes on to claim that in order to offer such nourishment, encouragement and challenge there need to be sufficient numbers of church schools which are significantly distinctive in their spiritual life and are staffed by enough Christian teachers to maintain their distinctiveness whilst offering a quality education to the whole community.

Cox (2011 p.34) maintains that: “At the heart of what makes a school and its ethos distinctive lie beliefs ... And in a church school the foundational beliefs are those of the Christian Church. They are distinctive.” Cox (2011 p.35) identifies the essence of the distinctive Christian beliefs that should underpin church schools as: “what we believe about God; what we believe about being human; what we believe about the world and what we believe about the Church.” According to Cox (2011 pp.148-149) the distinctiveness of a church school has an intangible element: “It is that which grows out of the life of a community where faith is held and lived by ... To put it in religious terms, it is

the presence of the Spirit of God in a place where a community of faith is itself open to the working of that Spirit.” Cox (2011 p.149) concludes that “distinctiveness is not just a collection of neatly phrased policies or value statements on the wall ... but is to do with the ‘lived-ousness’ of faith treasured and committed to.”

According to the views within the Anglican Church represented by *The Way Ahead* report (Dearing, 2001 p.14), it is the aim of church schools to offer an invitation to children and young people from all backgrounds to participate in a Christian community since church schools can provide a real experience of God’s love for all humanity. In a church school, claims Dearing (2001 p.14), pupils not only learn about religion but they can experience it as a living tradition. The church’s presence in education, Dearing (2001 pp.18-19) concludes is “to offer an approach to education that is distinctively Christian” whilst remaining inclusive and welcoming to all in “developing the potential of each child as an individual, made in the image of God.”

The views represented by Dearing have been reaffirmed and expounded further in *The Church School of the Future Review*. This report states that faith and spiritual development are to be positioned “at the heart of the curriculum” and a Christian ethos should permeate “the whole educational experience” in a church school since “distinctiveness is more than organisational arrangements and designation as a school of religious character” (Chadwick, 2012 p.3). According to the report, church schools can provide an alternative approach in a culture where the “pressure is always there for education to be solely driven by economic and utilitarian pressures” (Chadwick, 2012 p.9). The emphasis in church schools on spiritual and moral health, claims the report, “builds social and emotional capital contributing to community and individual well-being and resilience” (Chadwick, 2012 p.9).

In arguing for the idea of “Doing God” in education, Cooling (2010 p.36) states that: “All children need to be nurtured in a worldview in a way that enables

them to think for themselves.” Worldviews, he maintains (Cooling, 2010 p.43), provide the source of “the underpinning vision for what it means to flourish as a human.” Cooling (2010 p.43) claims that without this vision, education offers children exhortation with no foundation, the what without the why, and therefore becomes moralizing.” Cooling (2010 p.69) concludes that: “In faith schools, the curriculum should be developed in line with the distinctive ethos, taking account of the need to introduce pupils to the diversity of beliefs that exist in society.”

Within the changing educational landscape post-2010, the Church of England recognised the fact that, through the Diocesan Board of Education (DBE), it would be held increasingly accountable for the education provision within its schools. It would, therefore, need to ensure “that our schools are effective as well as distinctive” (The National Society, 2013 p.1). Having published the *Church School of the Future* report as a call to action “to maintain and develop the proud history of the Church of England’s significant contribution to education in this country” (The National Society, 2013 p.1), The National Society then published *A Diocesan Board of Education for the Future* with the purpose of enabling Diocesan Boards of Education to fulfil their role in education. This report offers further clarity about the nature and purpose of Church of England schools by reiterating the fact that church schools serve the whole community, providing “appropriate nurture for children of the faith whilst engaging those of different faiths or no faith” (The National Society, 2013 p.6); that church schools “offer a distinctive education rooted in the Christian narrative” (The National Society, 2013 p.6); that whilst fulfilling human potential (the goal of education) with a focus on “progress and achievement, excellence and high quality of educational experience”, there should also (in church schools) be the offer of “a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ”, as determined by the local context (The National Society, 2013 p.6).

According to the report, a key partnership in developing this “rounded education ... which will enable the flourishing of every child and the opportunity for life enhancing encounters with Jesus Christ,” is the relationship between the church school and the local parish church (The National Society, 2013 p.15). This relationship is worked out at a local level with external assessment provided by the SIAMS inspection system. DBEs are encouraged to take an active role “in developing the school/parish relationship and providing training and support for the clergy and lay ministry teams working with them” (The National Society, 2013 p.15).

The report goes on to highlight the fact that since the church, through the DBE, will be held increasingly accountable for the quality of provision within its schools, it will no longer be sufficient to be “distinctive and inclusive” (as stated in the Dearing and Chadwick reports discussed above). Instead, “we must ensure that our schools are effective, rooted, distinctive and inclusive” (The National Society, 2013 p.10). According to the report, the core purpose of church schools remains the provision of high quality education that “effectively equips children by giving them the resources to learn, to test and challenge ideas and ideologies, and to be able to have the freedom to be able to draw their own conclusions on the basis of that knowledge so that they are able to pass that knowledge and freedom to others” (The National Society, 2013 p.10). The report maintains that the ethos and character of the school “is the key to improving standards and we cannot claim to be serving our children well if we are not striving for the highest possible standards of education” (The National Society, 2013 p.10). Therefore, the report calls for education teams to see “rigorous school improvement and effectiveness as part of our pastoral care for schools and their children” (The National Society, 2013 p.10).

The relationship between schools, religion and the state goes back, therefore, to the earliest introduction of education for “the masses” and continues to be

debated to the present day. In 2007 the Department for Children, Families and Schools published a document, *Faith in the System*, in which the government and faith communities re-stated their commitment to the provision of a dual system of education, offering a rationale for faith schools which is significantly different from the original aim of providing mass education:

This dual system of voluntary schools supported by faith organisations and schools without a religious character is therefore at the heart of the school system in England. The Government continues to support the benefits to society that this system brings for parental choice and diversity and we recognise that with the changes in society, it is only fair that pupils of all faiths and none have the opportunity to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents. Our unequivocal purpose in agreeing this document is for other parties to appreciate the contribution of faith schools (2007 p.3).

The report recognises that the existence of faith schools offers both increased parental choice and school diversity and concludes with a statement that such schools contribute to community cohesion by nurturing children in their faith so that schools can build “bridges to greater mutual trust and understanding and to contribute to a just and cohesive society,” (DCFS, 2007 p.20)

The ongoing debate which began in Victorian times with the establishment of church-sponsored schools came to a head with the 1944 Education Act in which the term “spiritual” replaced “religion”. In an attempt to unite all parties in the discussion, “spiritual” was used because there was less understanding of the term whereas use of the term “religion” created division with each group having its own understanding of the word (Gilliat, 1996 p.164). Thus spiritual development became an “underlying value of the national education service” (Gilliat, 1996 p.161) as the Act sought to acknowledge the spiritual dimension by giving Religious Education (RE) a more defined place; “...springing from the desire to revive the spiritual and personal values in our society and in our national tradition” (‘Educational Reconstruction’ white paper, 1943, quoted by Gilliat, 1996 pp.162-3). According to Gilliat (1996 p.163), the term “spiritual values” refers to the

Protestant tradition with its sense of moral duty and respect for religious freedom which was guaranteed by legislation in the 1689 Toleration Act.

Defining spirituality is difficult and will be considered in further detail in section 2.2. Definitions provided in government curriculum documents can be traced back to 1977 when two definitions of “spiritual” were offered in the *Supplement to Curriculum 11-16* (DES, 1977 quoted by Gilliat, 1996 p.166):

The first suggested that spiritual should be ‘defined in terms of inner feelings and beliefs’ and always ‘be concerned with matters at the heart and root of existence’. The second described the spiritual area of experience as ‘derived from a sense of God or Gods’ and claimed that it was a ‘meaningless adjective for the atheist and of dubious use for the agnostic’.

Gilliat (1996 p.166) goes on to state that the first definition was the one carried forward in the 1985 HMI booklet, *The Curriculum 5 to 16*, “with references to ‘feelings and convictions about the significance of human life’. The description also recognised ‘that there is a side of human nature and experience which can only be partially explained in rational or intellectual terms’ and that ‘dance, drama, music, art and literature witness to the element of mystery in human experience’.” A clear link was also made between spirituality and RE with the spiritual section containing substantial references to RE (Gilliat, 1996 p.166).

However, in tracing the development of government policy on the curriculum from 1976 through to the Education Reform Act in 1988, Gilliat (1996 p.166) remarks that spiritual education does not appear in DES documents “except for a reference in *The School Curriculum* (DES, 1981) to the place of RE which ‘provides an introduction to the religious and spiritual areas of experience’.” Gilliat (1996 p.166) goes on to state that in the 1987 consultation paper on the National Curriculum (DES, 1987) “areas of experience”, including the spiritual, were ignored in favour of a subject-based curriculum.

Between 1988 and 1994 it was the locally agreed syllabus for RE which reflected thinking on the spiritual dimension of life within the education system. Hampshire's syllabus, for example, was published in 1992 and aimed to develop "an awareness of the spiritual dimension of life" (Gilliat, 1996 p.168); whilst Avon's called for "reflection on and response to the spiritual dimension of life" (Gilliat, 1996 p.168).

In 1993 a key document was published by the National Curriculum Council, *Spiritual and Moral Development: A Discussion Paper*, which provided guidance and advice to headteachers and governors. This document lists and describes eight aspects of spiritual development; beliefs; a sense of awe, wonder and mystery; experiencing feelings of transcendence; search for meaning and purpose; self-knowledge; relationships; creativity; feelings and emotions (Brown and Furlong, 1996 pp.8-9). Brown and Furlong (1996, p.9) claim that this idea that pupils "will develop spirituality raises the expectation that this is an area in which pupils can make progress" and they list some "steps to spiritual development":

- recognising the existence of others as independent from oneself;
- becoming aware of and reflecting on experience;
- questioning and exploring the meaning of experience;
- understanding and evaluating a range of possible responses and interpretations;
- developing personal views and insights;
- applying the insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to one's own life.

(Brown and Furlong, 1996 p.9)

Later in 1993 the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) offered its own evaluation criteria in which:

Spiritual development is to be judged by the extent to which pupils display:

- a system of personal beliefs, which may include religious beliefs;
- an ability to communicate their beliefs in discussion and through their behaviour;
- willingness to reflect on experience and to search for meaning in that experience;

- a sense of awe and wonder as they become more conscious of deeper meanings in the apparently familiar features of the natural world or their experience.
(Brown and Furlong, 1996 p.9)

This emphasis on pupil outcomes was altered to an emphasis on school provision in May 1994:

Spiritual development is to be judged by how well the school promotes opportunities for pupils to reflect on aspects of their lives and the human condition through, for example, literature, music, art, science, religious education, and collective worship, and how well the pupils respond. (Brown and Furlong, 1996 p.10)

By 1995, the OFSTED criteria had moved on again. Inspectors were to consider whether the school provides pupils “with knowledge and insight into values and religious beliefs and enable them to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness(?)” (Brown and Furlong, 1996 p.11). The guidance acknowledges that RE and spiritual development “are not synonymous, religious education can make a significant contribution to spiritual development. Inspectors might consider, for example, whether religious education encourages pupils to consider life’s fundamental questions and how religious teaching can relate to them; respond to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions as well as from their own experience and viewpoint; and reflect on their own beliefs or values in the light of what they are studying in RE” (Brown and Furlong, 1996 p.11).

The challenge of defining spirituality in the educational context was heightened by the advent of the OFSTED inspection regime and the publication of *The Framework for Inspection*. In this document the question was raised of how one judges, evaluates and inspects opportunities for spiritual development? Hence, a term which had been embedded in both the 1944 and 1988 Education Acts as a convenient way to avoid the more limiting term “religion” now needed to be defined in order to be recognised by inspectors. Once the new arrangements for inspection were put in place in

1992 this need became urgent as the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils was to be one of the core areas of inspection.

Gilliat (1996 p.171) states that in OFSTED's different versions of the *Framework for Inspection* it is clear that "spiritual development is a whole-school and whole-curriculum issue, and not just the concern of religious education and collective worship." At the centre of successive pieces of legislation has been "the belief that education is not only about the gaining of knowledge and the acquiring of essential skills, but also about personal development in its fullest sense" (*Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: A Discussion Paper* quoted by Gilliat, 1996 p.171).

The SCAA document *Spiritual and Moral Development* (1995 p.3) attempts a wordy definition which seeks to encapsulate several different aspects of spirituality in the educational context: "The term (spirituality) needs to be seen as applying to 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 with 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."

This definition provides a link between the individual search for identity, the desire to live by a set of values and our relationship with others which are explored in the research of, for example, Coles (1992), McCreery (1996), Hart (2003), Hay and Nye (second edition, 2006), and in the writing of Adams, Hyde and Woolley (2008) and Wright (1999).

The desire to promote children's spiritual development continues and is reflected in the 2010 OFSTED report on RE, *Transforming Religious Education*, which comments that "the contribution of RE to the promotion of pupils'

spiritual development was often limited because opportunities for genuine reflection were too superficial.” A hint, perhaps, that the spiritual will be more readily discerned when children are provided with the skills whereby they can reflect on their lives in relation to their beliefs, as articulated by Brine (2010) who says that there is a need to “ensure that RE promotes pupils’ spiritual development more effectively by allowing for more genuine investigation into, and reflection on, the implications of religion and belief for their personal lives.”

OFSTED continues to include the extent of spiritual, social and cultural development as one of its seven judgements for pupil outcomes (OFSTED, 2011a p.14). Inspectors are to evaluate: “Pupils’ development of personal insight and purpose, and their understanding of society’s shared and agreed values.” (OFSTED, 2011b p.28). They may take into account, where relevant:

pupils’ spiritual development as shown by their:

- beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people’s feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences (OFSTED, 2011b p.28)

These indicators of spiritual development are also included in the latest guidance issued to OFSTED inspectors in January 2012 (OFSTED, 2012 p.23). In this document, inspectors are advised to “gather evidence of the impact of the curriculum on developing aspects of the pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development” (OFSTED, 2012 p.19). This may be done through lesson observations where subjects promote aspects of SMSC (this could include RE, art and music but not exclusively so); observation of other activities which indicate a coherent approach to SMSC such as tutorials and citizenship lessons; evaluation of a range of opportunities provided for pupils, including artistic, cultural, sporting, dramatic, musical, mathematical, scientific, technological and, where appropriate, international events and

activities that promote aspects of pupils' SMSC development (OFSTED, 2012 pp.19-20).

In addition to the statutory OFSTED inspection, Anglican Church Schools also experience the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools (SIAS) which considers how distinctive and effective the school is *as a church school*. The self-evaluation process for Anglican church schools includes several references to spiritual development and grade descriptors which enable both the school and the inspector to identify where evidence may be observed. For example, "How well does the Christian character (of the school) support the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none?" (The National Society, 2009 p.2) The "outstanding" grade descriptor for this question states: "Across the whole curriculum Christian values consistently encourage, nourish and challenge the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners." The Self-Evaluation Toolkit also asks: "How well is the spiritual development of learners enhanced by the school environment?" (The National Society, 2009 p.3) and encourages schools to consider how effectively they use a focus for reflection, interactive displays, outside space, common space, quiet areas, prayer corners, respect for creation, symbols and artefacts.

Evidence of spiritual growth and development is also expected to be found within provision for collective worship and RE: "To what extent do learners and staff derive inspiration, spiritual growth and affirmation from worship?" (The National Society, 2009 p.4); "How well does RE contribute to the spiritual and moral development of all learners?" (The National Society, 2009 p.7). The "Outstanding" grade descriptor for the contribution of RE to the spiritual development of learners states that: "Learners are confident in their spiritual and moral awareness through reflection on their experiences in RE."

In the revised Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) there is an emphasis on the provision of opportunities for pupils to “engage in high quality experiences that develop a personal spirituality” (The National Society, 2012 p.7) which goes beyond the provision of quality RE. The “Outstanding” grade descriptor for the Christian character of the school describes “a highly developed interpretation of spirituality shared across the school community” which will be evidenced by pupils who are “passionate and confident to express their thoughts and views in considerable depth through a rich variety of styles and media” (The National Society, 2012 p.7). Within collective worship, inspectors are to evaluate “how well collective worship develops personal spirituality within the school community through a range of experiences” and “the extent to which opportunities for prayer contribute to the spiritual development of members of the school community” (The National Society, 2012 p.9). Prayer and reflection are viewed as intrinsic to the spiritual journey of learners where the “Outstanding” grade descriptors for collective worship include the statement; “Learners understand the value of personal prayer and reflection as part of their own spiritual journey. They seek out opportunities for this in their own lives and contribute confidently and sensitively to prayer in worship” (The National Society, 2012 p.11). Conversely, where prayer and reflection “play a limited role in the pattern of school life so learners derive little spiritual benefit” a church school could be judged to be “Inadequate” in this area of provision (The National Society, 2012 p.13). SIAMS also states that focussed planning for spiritual development within the collective worship of a church school is required if a school is to achieve above a “Satisfactory” grade (The National Society, 2012 p.12).

2.2 DEFINING SPIRITUALITY

The following section reviews some attempts by scholars and researchers to define spirituality in order to provide a context within which to place the definition of spirituality that had developed within the case study school and to identify some of the academic sources that had informed the discussion of spirituality in the school.

Despite the difficulties involved, researchers and commentators in this field have attempted to encapsulate the essence of what spirituality is; in the words of McCreery (1996 p.200), the world of the spiritual is often related to encounters and response: “It is related to human beings trying to find meaning in the world as it appears to them.” According to Alexander and Carr (2006 p.74): “*Spirituality* is difficult to define because of deep ambiguities of everyday usage that have encouraged educational theorists, policy makers, and practitioners to pursue diverse social, cultural, and political aims, agenda, and outcomes in the name of spiritual education.”

Definitions of spirituality vary in their length and complexity although there is some consensus of opinion. McCreery (1996 p.197) offers the following: “An awareness that there is something other, something greater than the course of everyday events” whilst Nye (2009 pp.5-6) offers three ways of defining spirituality which are discussed in more detail later in this section. Both Nye and McCreery consider spirituality to be concerned with the everyday yet also with “the other” or One greater than the Self. Nye (2009 pp.2-5) quotes several theologians and educators giving their definitions of spirituality before concluding that the spiritual is in fact in the everyday – in the language we use and in the recent fashion for those outside organised religion to describe themselves as “spiritual but not religious”, reflecting changing perceptions of the relationship between spirituality and religion noted in section 2.1. Spirituality has come to be regarded as something rather vague as a result of this familiarity, although Nye (2009 p.5) claims that it is perhaps this everyday

quality that is the *key* to the challenge: “Its everydayness in both secular and church language makes the point that spirituality is meant to entail *all* that we are called to be.”

Miller (2009 p.2706) and Schoonmaker (2009 p.2713) both refer to the spiritual as a way of being in relation to the world around us. For Miller (2009 p.2706), the term “spiritual” expresses our relationship to the surrounding world, “absolute values experienced personally, and ultimate connection to meaning and transcendence, as expressed in every moment, most importantly right here and now.” Schoonmaker (2009 p.2713) expands this definition so that spirituality may be seen as; “a way of being that includes the capacity of humans to see beyond themselves, to become more than they are, to see mystery and wonder in the world around them, and to experience private and collective moments of awe, wonder and transcendence.”

Whilst agreeing that spirituality includes seeing beyond the self, Hart (2006 p.164) also maintains that spirituality “is the very direct and intimate experience of divinity.” He defines divinity as; “the incomprehensible life force that remains so difficult to pin down, but to which we try to point with words like *God* or *spirit*.” Evidence of such spiritual experiences may emerge as “a sense of interconnection or compassion”, revelatory insights or quests for meaning; ways of “being-in-the-world” which may take place within or outside the context of religion (Hart 2006 p.164).

Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006) makes a more direct connection between spirituality and religion. Although it has become more commonplace in recent times to speak of “the spiritual”, Hay asserts that western assumptions suppress natural spirituality: “It turns spirituality from something explicitly reflected upon, and therefore potent within political and social life, into something implicit and vague, disconnected from the mainstream of human activity” (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.32). This, he argues, has been exacerbated by the separation of the spiritual from the religious since religion provides a

language with which to describe the spiritual. Given the close historical links between spirituality and religion, Hay, Helmut Reich, and Utsch, (2006 p.53) claim that a likely consequence of religion being rejected is that “spiritual intuitions will also be suppressed or perhaps even repressed.”

Hull (2002 pp.171 – 172) provides a useful framework within which to consider the relationship between spirituality, religion and faith. According to Hull’s argument, three of the key concepts can be viewed as three concentric circles – the largest on the outside being spirituality, the middle ring being religion and the inner circle being faith. This gives a visual image of Hull’s description of the relationship between them: “Spirituality includes religion but is more comprehensive. Religion as a whole is concerned with spirituality but not all spirituality is concerned with religion. Everything that is truly religious is also spiritual but there may be spirituality outside religion. Similarly, the concept of religion is larger than that of faith. Faith is a category within the religious.” Hull rejects the idea that the spiritual is a separable part of the human. He regards the spiritual, moral and cultural references in the education legislation as “aspects or dimensions of the human rather than as parts or sections.” In Hull’s view, “the spiritual is the whole of the human considered from a certain point of view, that of personhood continually transcending itself. So the spiritual refers to the achievement of human being. The spiritual process is the same as the process of humanisation.” According to Hull, therefore, the cultural, mental, social and spiritual all refer to those aspects of being human which lift us above the biological. Thus Hull concludes that the biological, like the world of nature, has spiritual potential.

In attempting to distinguish between religion and spirituality, Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006 pp.18 – 22) describes an exercise he has carried out with various groups of students in which they are asked to brainstorm words they associate with “religion” and then with “spirituality”. Most people, he says, make a clear distinction between them – religion being associated with what

can be seen (buildings, books, officials, services) and with (often) negative experiences, whilst spirituality is perceived as “much warmer, associated with love, inspiration, wholeness, depth, mystery and personal devotions like prayer and meditation.” However, when asked to represent the relation between religion and spirituality most people were keen to make a real link, using metaphors to illustrate this link. One of the most common metaphors reported by Hay is that of a tree with its roots labelled “spirituality” and the leaves “religion”. The interchange between the two sustains the life of the tree as a whole, both are needed if the tree is to flourish.

Hay goes on to consider why “spirituality” receives far less criticism than the word “religion”. He refers to three connotations which link the meanings associated with these two words; religious devotion, being fully aware of one’s “species-being” and being aesthetically or ethically aware. Although they appear to be far apart in meaning, Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.21) concludes that “they express a fundamental insight. Each of us has the potential to be much more deeply aware both of ourselves and of our intimate relationship with everything that is not ourselves.” Here he also claims that a holistic notion of spirituality is probably widely acceptable in a highly secular society, at the same time leaving open a religious understanding of the word. Thus he argues that raised awareness itself constitutes spirituality, as implied in all forms of religious meditation, including Christian contemplative prayer where a person places themselves as awarely as possible in the presence of God.

Spirituality and religion, by these accounts, are intricately linked but the nature of the relationship between the two is dynamic and highly personal, defying attempts to define and “capture” their meaning. These attempts must continue, however, if we are to heed the warning contained in Margaret Chatterjee’s words; “It is surely dangerous to invoke something whose

meaning is no longer reasonably clear” (quoted by Hay in Hay and Nye, 2006 p.17).

By listening to the child’s voice and recording spirituality as a living personal experience, Coles (1992) argues that children can identify spirituality. Coles (1990 p.xvii) illustrates this by providing an anecdote in which his own son (ten years old at the time) linked spirituality and religion: “There’s religion and there’s the spirit.” On being asked where this idea had come from, his son replied that, “St Paul talked about ‘the letter and the spirit,’ the difference, and the teacher said you can go to church all the time and obey every [church] law, and you’re not really right in what you do, you’re not spiritual.” Coles followed this up by asking his son how we could know if we are being spiritual, not just religious and the reply came back, “It’s up to God to decide, not us.” Listening to the voice of children themselves is, therefore, in Coles’ view a crucial part of our efforts to understand children’s spirituality.

In her investigation into the beliefs of four and five year-olds about the world in which they live, McCreery (1996 pp.197 - 198) was looking for ways in which we can know when we are developing the spiritual. She asks what represents the “ultimate” in children’s lives? What questions do they ask about the world? What meaning do they find in life? How do they explain the unexplainable? In her research she attempts to discover their questions by giving them situations arising from familiar events and asking the children to identify the questions. For young children, she maintains, there is no need for artificial spiritual activities since everything around them is “life”. In painting and drawing, for example, children are beginning their encounters and responses with themselves, other people and the world around them. For McCreery, the spiritual is in the everyday; it is to do with living and is not specifically related to religion.

These encounters and responses are important elements in a child’s development and Nye (2009 pp.5 – 6) draws upon her experience as a

psychologist, as well as an expert in children's spirituality, to offer three definitions of children's spirituality:

1. A simple definition of children's spirituality: "God's ways of being with children and children's ways of being with God." A Christian perspective which serves as a reminder "that God and children have ways of being together because this is how God created them."
2. An evidence-based approach using Nye's own research to define spirituality through the child's capacity for "relational consciousness". "This way of defining spirituality suggests some specific key features:

Children's spirituality is an *initially natural capacity* for awareness of the sacred quality to life experiences. This awareness can be *conscious or unconscious*, and sometimes fluctuates between both, but in both cases can affect actions, feelings and thoughts. In childhood, spirituality is especially about being attracted towards 'being in relation', *responding to a call to relate* to more than 'just me' – ie. to others, to God, to creation or to an inner sense of Self. This encounter with transcendence can happen in specific experiences or moments, as well as through imaginative or reflective activity (thoughts and meaning making)."

3. In her final definition, Nye compares children's spirituality with a child; saying, for example, that; "It does not neatly conform to accepted norms or use conventional expression"; "It can be intense one minute and nonchalant the next. Development is rarely in a straight line or under our control"; "And often it feels like it matters to the child, but is perceived by them *not* to matter to anyone else, and not to be part of mainstream values"; "It is vulnerable, and can even die if neglected, ignored or misunderstood."

The fact that Nye is here defining spirituality by analogy with child development, using metaphor rather than an exposition, suggests the difficulty inherent in attempting to define spirituality. In using this analogy, Nye is attempting to offer a definition of spirituality which is as inclusive as possible of the experiences of children. She is seeking to ensure that it is not only experiences that can be recalled and talked about that are considered "spiritual" but that all their imaginings, questionings, views, play and ideas may be considered when gathering evidence of children's spirituality (Nye, 2009 p.7).

Nye (2009 p.9) maintains that, according to previous studies, “spirituality is a common, natural feature of most, probably all, children’s lives.” She quotes Tamminen’s (Nye, 2009 p.9) research in which 60 per cent of eleven-year-olds and 80 per cent of seven-year-olds mentioned times of being aware of God’s presence, compared with only 30 per cent of adults, concluding that: “spiritual awareness is especially natural and common in childhood, and comparatively rare in adulthood.” Nye (2009 p.11) therefore takes as her key themes the idea that children’s spirituality is more natural than taught; that more fertile ground for spirituality may be found in childhood than in adult life; that the spirituality of childhood carries over into adulthood; and that spirituality is profoundly relational.

According to the results of the research quoted above then, children come to us already “full” of thoughts, ideas and experiences (including ones that might be termed “spiritual”); ready to use imagination and play to explore the world around them and to ask the “big” or difficult existential questions about the meaning of life which adults themselves find difficult to express or, indeed, to attempt to answer. Donaldson (1992 p.86) asks the question, “Do children really accept the world adults ‘give’ to them as the only world as is often contended?” She suggests that perhaps they do not: “Their conversations are so full of doubts and wonderings – and, often, of an ability to ‘take on’ adults and confound them” (Donaldson, 1992 p.86).

Privett (2005) urges teachers to attend to their own spirituality and imagination as much as that of their pupils. In his view, “One way of understanding spirituality is to see it as that which brings connection and relatedness to the separate and diverse elements of experience; moments of oneness, where everything makes sense, when we see things differently, and perhaps ask the questions of: why, when, how?” He sees the power of imagination and creativity as key to this process and, in his presentation on children’s spirituality (*Emptying the Vessel*), claims that “children do not come

to us empty.....” For him, the starting place “is the mystery of the child’s in-born experience.”

Huebner (1993 p.413) calls for an “educational landscape that makes room for the spiritual” where education is seen as a way of attending to and caring for the “journey of the self or soul” (Huebner, 1993 p.405). Therefore, he continues, educators should not be asking how people learn and develop “but what gets in the way of the great journey” (Huebner, 1993 p.405). In his view, teaching is more than passing on knowledge; there is a spiritual dimension to teaching which is recognised when teaching is acknowledged as a vocation: “Teaching needs to be grounded in a life. It is not a way of making a living, but a way of making a life” (Huebner, 1993 p.411). Teachers themselves, he concludes, can only be aware of the spiritual in education if they “maintain some form of spiritual discipline” (Huebner 1993 p.415). He describes these disciplines as being “in the company of co-journeymen” and as a “discipline of the mind ... in the sense of developing an imagination that has room for the spiritual” (Huebner, 1993 p.415).

Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.50) holds the view that it is a mistake to assume, as Goldman did, that “spiritual awareness is always something extraordinary, equated with mystical ecstasy, instead of holding open the possibility that it might be a very ordinary aspect of young children’s everyday experience.” The implications of this view are that adults should develop ways of listening to and observing children which are sensitive to the different types of language they use to express themselves which may conceal a level of spirituality hitherto unnoticed. Children will not necessarily use “religious” language to express their “spiritual” experiences. Given “safe spaces” in which to explore such thoughts, ideas and questions, children often provide a wealth of expressive play and imagination which can open the minds of the adults around them to the possibilities of encountering “the other” in the everyday.

The very nature of childhood play brings with it the possibility of and need for relating to others. It is in this forming of relationships that Nye (2006 p.109) in her original research analysed her conversations with children, using the “grounded theory” approach described by Strauss and Corbin, to develop the notion of “relational consciousness”; bringing together a child’s ability to consciously reflect on themselves objectively as “subject” with their ability to perceive their world in relational terms. The children demonstrated an awareness of being in relationship not only to family and friends but also to Self, the World and God. In expressing these relationships, says Nye, there was a sense that this added value to their ordinary or everyday perspective. Nye therefore claims that: “In this ‘relational consciousness’ seems to lie the rudimentary core of children’s spirituality, out of which can arise meaningful aesthetic experience, religious experience, personal and traditional responses to mystery and being, and mystical and moral insight” (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.109).

Nye (2006 p.128) uses these insights to conclude that children’s spirituality is not only “special” it is also “ordinary”, occurring as it does in the everyday world that children inhabit. According to Nye, children have a more inclusive and all-pervading sense of relation to the spiritual which means that for them it is normally “everyday” rather than unusual or dramatic. Hart (2009 p.7) takes this further in claiming that, “*Spiritual* naturally pertains to spirit, that unquantifiable force, the mystery that animates all things and of which all things are composed.” As a result “our life *is* a spiritual life. It is not that some of us are spiritual and some are not; our entire existence is a spiritual event” (Hart, 2009 p.8). Hart (2009 pp 7-8) finds it more helpful to think of ourselves as spiritual beings having human experiences rather than as human beings occasionally having spiritual experiences. Perhaps because they are less experienced in “the ways of the world” which would tend to militate against this innate spirituality and its potential development in all of us, Hart (2009,

p.10) claims that children often have remarkable access to deep inner guidance and insight.

In her work, Adams (2010) highlights the reality of unseen worlds to children and emphasises “how *real* these worlds are to the children. It is that ‘realness’ which can give these worlds significant meaning to children” (Adams, 2010 p.21). Like Hay and Nye, she reports a lack of willingness to talk about such worlds as children get older, since “the children were aware of society’s taboos and had not initiated conversations, so a cycle of silence is born and maintained” (Adams, 2010 p.22). For children, she continues, there is often a “blurring of boundaries between the worlds of work and play, which they can slip in and out of effortlessly”; such a distinction, she claims, “is in fact an adult construction” (Adams, 2010 pp.37-38). Adams advocates the need for a greater understanding by adults of the impact on many children’s sense of self and their place in the world that these unseen worlds have (Adams, 2010 p.101). In fact, for adults to gain access to these worlds, “the child needs to be sure that the adult will take them seriously in this particular aspect of their lives” (Adams, 2010 p.125). Adams indicates that despite the fact that children increasingly have a stronger voice in society, they are often “not enabled to express their inner or spiritual voice in societies which value the material over the non-material, because adults often do not recognise or value it, and children sense this” (Adams, 2010 p.163). Levine (1999 p.128) also draws attention to “the living reality of the child” who is able to maintain “dual realities” whereby a child may, during play where a broom becomes a horse on which they ride, see that “The broom is real as a material entity; the horse is real as an absent entity. Both are present to the child during play and this cognitive presence is vividly expressed.”

Champagne’s (2003) research highlights the possibility of recognising spirituality in the daily activities of the lives of pre-school children. This, she claims, is achieved through being aware of children’s “modes of being” –

Sensitive, Relational and Existential (Champagne, 2003 p.44). Through her observations of pre-school children, Champagne recognises their spirituality not only by listening to the children's (limited) verbal language "but to what they communicate with their whole body and person" (Champagne, 2003 p.45). Observing this Sensitive mode of being of children, she continues, "allows us to witness what inhabits them, it gives us access to *who they are*" (Champagne, 2003 p.46). She concludes that "*being a child* has something to do with being sensitive to the world as a fundamental and necessary dimension of one's spiritual life" (Champagne, 2003 p.46). According to Champagne (2003 p.47) good relationships (Relational mode) allow children to discover "the closeness in the distance, the presence in the absence: a very fundamental experience in spirituality terms." The Existential mode refers to "the relation in time and space and to the relation to existence itself through daily activities" (Champagne, 2003 p.50). Since children live in the present, she continues, the purpose of the child's life "is simply to be a child. In a sense, children are meant to live their *being-a-child*" (Champagne, 2003 p.52).

The "everydayness" of children's spirituality highlighted in the research above provides links with the cognitive development and psychological theories of child development. Theories of moral and religious development also provide an important context for this study.

2.3 DEVELOPMENTAL APPROACHES

The following section on developmental approaches to cognitive, moral, religious, faith and spiritual development offers an opportunity to consider the importance of each in relation to the education that is provided for children in church schools; to consider whether spirituality can be viewed as part of a developmental process in the way that cognitive development might be viewed; to consider where faith and spiritual development might converge or diverge; to consider ways in which moral development (which is such an

important aspect of church school education and values) might impact on the spiritual nurture of children in church schools.

2.3.1 Cognitive development

For many years the work of Piaget (1959) has provided scholars and researchers in the field of child cognitive development with a classic theory of language and thought development. His development of a model of moral development was built on by Kohlberg (1973 and 1981) in his moral stages of development and used by Fowler (1981) to inform his “stages of faith”.

In exploring the relationship between language and thought, Piaget (1959 p.1) sought to answer the question: “What are the needs which a child tends to satisfy when he talks?” Is language just about communicating thoughts? Piaget (1959 p.2) suggests that the functions of language are complex and cannot be reduced to just this one function. He claims that for the child “words are much nearer to action and movement than for us” and because the child talks as s/he plays, even when alone, s/he can use words to bring about what the action alone cannot do: “Hence the habit of romancing or inventing, which consists in creating reality by words and magical language, in working on things by means of words alone, apart from any contact with them or with persons” (Piaget, 1959 p.14). Piaget observes that from early childhood to adulthood there is a gradual disappearance of the monologue.

Piaget (1959 pp.38-49) claims that up to the age of about seven children think and act more egocentrically than adults; sharing each other’s intellectual life less than adults do. Children talk more about what they are doing but usually to themselves whereas adult talk (which happens less often) is generally socialised. Young children, in other words, cannot keep their thoughts to themselves! As a consequence, adults think socially; they develop an inner speech so that their thoughts are comprehensible when presented to others and “...the further a man has advanced in his own line of thought, the better

able he is to see things from the point of view of others and to make himself understood by them” (Piaget, 1959 p.39).

Between the ages of seven and eight, Piaget says, children develop the desire to work with others and egocentric talk loses some of its importance. This leads to the development of higher stages of conversation between children as they begin to understand one another through language rather than through explanations in which gestures are as important as words. Piaget goes on to discuss two fundamentally different modes of thinking – directed (or intelligent) thought and undirected (or autistic) thought. Directed thought is related to reality, pursues an aim and can be communicated by language. Undirected thought, however, is subconscious, not adapted to reality, satisfies desires rather than establishing truths and cannot be communicated by means of language. This latter form of thinking creates for itself a dream world of imagination and “works chiefly by images, and in order to express itself, has recourse to indirect methods, evoking by means of symbols and myths the feeling by which it is led.” These two modes of thought function alongside one another but are subject to very different sets of logical laws. Directed thought is controlled more and more by the laws of experience and of strict logic whereas autistic thought “obeys a whole system of special laws (laws of symbolism and immediate satisfaction)” which Piaget chooses not to elaborate upon. It is perhaps this latter area of thought which is of most interest in a consideration of the development of children’s spiritual thinking.

The work of Goldman highlights questions regarding children’s ability to understand religious ideas. Goldman (1964 p.3) asks the question; “Are there ages or stages of what we might call ‘religious readiness’ in the growing young person, when the mind can more readily understand certain religious truths?” He carried out a series of structured interviews with children aged five to fifteen who were asked questions about three line-drawings and three Bible stories. Goldman used Piaget’s stage theory to classify the responses

according to the development they indicated (Hyde, 1990 p.24). According to Hyde, Goldman's results indicate that "children's religious ideas followed a stage development. The responses of the youngest children from five to seven were consistent with other Piagetian studies, ..." (Hyde, 1990 p.24). Hyde continues, "Goldman had shown that mental ability and age were the major factors associated with the development of religious thinking, rather than other religious variables" (Hyde, 1990 p.25).

Goldman claims that religious thinking is no different from non-religious thinking in the way it operates (Goldman, 1964 p.3) such that adult religious thinking, like any other type of thinking, is preceded by "a long period of apprenticeship, experimentation and searching in childhood religion" (Goldman, 1964 p.5). According to Goldman (1964 p.14), religious concepts are not based on direct sensory data "but are formed from other perceptions and conceptions of experience" and religious thinking is a "process of generalising from various experiences, previous perceptions and already held concepts to an interpretive concept of the activity and nature of the divine." He concludes that religious thinking depends upon understanding the original experience from which analogies and metaphor are drawn (Goldman, 1964 p.15).

Goldman agrees with Piaget in identifying the two factors which limit the child's early thinking as "egocentricity" and "concretisation" of thinking and states that both these factors are recognisable "in children's responses to religious problems and set severe limits to levels of understanding in religious thinking" (Goldman, 1964 p.21). According to Goldman, children under the age of ten have not reached sufficient maturity of thinking to be able to cope intellectually with the "complexity of thinking demanded by religion" (Goldman, 1964 p.23). In his view, more abstract thinking becomes possible when adolescence is reached and therefore "more religious insights can be seen" (Goldman, 1964 p.33) and he identifies the ages of twelve to thirteen as

the period when religious insight generally begins to develop (Goldman, 1964 p.225). He does, however, concede that “chronological and mental ages are only rough guides in following religious development. A considerable variety of factors appears to lie behind wide divergencies in the spread of ability in religious thinking, despite similarity of age and intelligence” (Goldman, 1964 p.219).

Donaldson (1978 p.19) challenges Piaget’s view that pre-6 year olds have difficulty in decentring and therefore find communication difficult . She cites the research of Hughes which shows children de-centring when given a task they understand and which makes sense to them, unlike the tasks Piaget used which were more abstract. Donaldson (1978 p.25) claims that we are all egocentric through the whole of our lives in some situations and are able to decentre in others and concludes that “pre-school children are not nearly so limited in their ability to ‘decentre’, or appreciate someone else’s point of view, as Piaget has for years maintained” (Donaldson 1978 pp.30-31).

According to Donaldson (1978 p.88) a child will interpret situations rather than words in isolation as they are more concerned to make sense of what people do when they talk and act than to decide what words mean. Personal relations play a key role in this process of learning. In attempting to make sense of the world and work out meaning children will ask questions, they “want to know”. When young children listen to stories they do not usually ask questions about the language in which the stories are told. Instead they ask many searching questions about “the intentions and motives of the characters, the structure of the plot – if you like, the meaning of the story. They rarely ask about the meanings of the words, even when these must clearly be unfamiliar” (Donaldson, 1978 p.90).

Donaldson (1978 p.86) argues that as well as wanting to know, a child wants “to do” and together these questionings and strivings imply a sense of possibility reaching beyond a realisation of how things are to a realisation of

how they might be. As children learn to reflect in this way they develop an awareness of “what is within”. It may be that what Donaldson refers to as an awareness of “what is within” if given nurture and space, may lead to a growing sense of the spiritual.

In her later work, Donaldson (1992) develops the idea of a framework within which different minds develop at different rates. She identifies four main modes of mental functioning;

The names of the four main modes as defined by the loci of concern are:
point mode – locus ‘here and now’
line mode – locus ‘there and then’
construct mode – locus ‘somewhere / sometime’ (no specific place or time)
transcendent mode – locus ‘nowhere’ (that is, not in space-time)
(Donaldson, 1992 p.268).

These modes, according to Donaldson (1992 p.10), come in succession upon the scene as we grow older, but they do not replace one another; none is lost (except through severe injury or illness) and within each mode change occurs over time. Neither are they static – the functioning of each mode looks different at different ages.

Donaldson (1992 p.65) states that as our brains develop through these modes they become adept at thinking of possible future states, at considering not simply what is but also what might be; realising that they have the ability to “change the world”. We come to understand how things are or are not or not yet; we can think of both actuality and possibility. This ability, says Donaldson (1992 p.65), often leads to the asking of “big questions” as “Knowledge of being rests upon knowledge of becoming...” Hence, children in their second year are able to treat the world “not as it is, nor even as it might become, but as if it were other” (Donaldson, 1992 p.65) as they engage spontaneously in “make believe” or “pretend play”.

Donaldson also argues that the role of adults in enabling children to develop as independent thinkers should not be underestimated. Adults who

participate in dialogue with children are extremely helpful in this process as children ask questions in their quest to find out about the way things are. By watching and listening, receiving information and instruction, engaging with the TV and technology, playing, arguing and reading, children come to construct “highly complex belief systems which become essential in their lives” (Donaldson, 1992 p.87). These beliefs, according to Donaldson, relate to self-image and the nature of the world, especially the social world.

According to Astington (1993 p.162), children have discovered the mind by the age of five and this discovery of the mind, she claims, “underlies their ability to communicate and interact with others.” Astington (1993 p.182) contrasts two systems of education – the first-order or traditional system and the second-order or progressive system. Within the traditional system, children are filled up with facts and knowledge and need to develop social behaviours. In the progressive system, children construct knowledge through their own activity and experience which requires social understanding. In traditional systems children think about the task and they think about the world, “But they do not need to think about their thinking” (Astington, 1993 p.183). However, in progressive systems, Astington continues, children are seen as constructing their own knowledge and consequently “They need to understand what it is to know and how one comes to know. They do need to think about thinking” (Astington, 1993 p.183). In such a setting, Astington claims, teachers encourage children to make their understanding explicit by talking about it; “Children need to think and talk about their thinking, and about their knowledge and learning. Such things are not directly observable but are made into objects of reflection through language” (Astington, 1993 p.184).

Astington observes that teachers in the classroom consciously introduce and use language about thinking which leads children “to reflect on and to articulate their thinking and its expression” (Astington, 1993 p.184). Such

teachers, she continues, talk not just about things in the world but also about the children's thoughts about things in the world (Astington, 1993 p.185) so that children become aware of their thoughts about, for example, a story and they are enabled to articulate a variety of second-order states such as "reminding", "wonderings", "decisions", "opinions" (Astington, 1993 p.186). Children, states Astington (1993 p.186), should be helped to think and talk in this way, "to reflect on their own and others' thoughts". This may be achieved through teachers talking about the way they themselves "*think, know, expect, remember, wonder about, have decided on, guessed*, and so on, and if they use these terms to describe and inquire about the child's thoughts, the children themselves will come to think and talk like this" (Astington, 1993 p.186). Astington discusses Donaldson's view that children are able to think and reason when they come to school; in school they learn to think and reason in "disembedded contexts" (Astington, 1993 p.188). They have to learn to deal with symbol systems and representations of the world such that children need a "reflective awareness of their thought. In order to direct their own thought processes, children must become aware of them" (Astington, 1993 p.189). Vygotsky's insight, according to Astington (1993 p.189), was that "control of a function is the counterpart of one's consciousness of it ... We use *consciousness* to denote awareness of the activity of the mind" and, states Astington, "This is exactly what the child's discovery of the mind leads to – awareness of the mind's activity. And this is what is essential for success in school." Astington concludes that "School and family, cognition and affect, work and love – these remain of fundamental importance throughout our lives. It all begins with the child's discovery of the mind" (Astington, 1993 p.190).

For Vygotsky (1986) the way to uncover the origins of human consciousness and emotional life is to study the development of "inner speech". For him, this development moves from social to individual speech. Vygotsky's theory of inner speech is therefore in contrast to Piaget's who sees it happening the

opposite way round. In exploring the relation between thought and speech, Vygotsky (1986 pp.218-219) maintained that the structure of speech does not simply mirror the structure of thought. Thought undergoes many changes as it turns into speech, "it does not merely find expression in speech; it finds its reality and form." Vygotsky argues that a child's thought may be a whole and can be expressed in one word. As thought becomes more differentiated it needs a whole sentence to express it. Inner speech, according to Vygotsky (1986 pp.225-226), is speech for oneself; external speech is for others. External speech is turning thoughts into words whereas inner speech is the reverse, moving from the outside to the inside. He concludes that inner speech may be termed "thinking in pure meanings" and as such may be very difficult to achieve: "Thought has its own structure, and the transition from it to speech is no easy matter" as when a thought "will not enter words" (Dostoevsky quoted in Vygotsky, 1986 pp.249-250). The argument here, then, is that we struggle to express our thoughts in words, as a direct transition from one to the other is impossible.

For Vygotsky, the relation between thought and word is a living process (1986 p.255): "thought is born through words." The connection between them emerges and evolves. Vygotsky quotes Goethe who makes Faust reply to the Biblical assertion that "In the beginning was the Word" with "In the beginning was the deed", stating that the thought behind this was that "The word was not the beginning – action was there first; it is the end of the development, crowning the deed." Vygotsky claims that through his investigation he has come to "the threshold of a wider and deeper subject, ie the problem of the relation between word and consciousness." (1986 p.256). If, as he states, perceptive and intellectual consciousness reflect reality differently, "then we have two different forms of consciousness. Thought and speech turn out to be the key to the nature of human consciousness." (Vygotsky, 1986 p.256).

Nye (1996 pp.114-116) makes a connection between Vygotsky's research into the theory of mind and understanding more about "educating the spiritual." Both are concerned, she maintains, with "a kind of reality that is 'invisible'": "The findings of theory of mind research therefore may suggest ways to build a spiritual understanding on to children's developing understanding of the psychological." The development of the ability to recognise mental states begins, says Nye, at age 5 and such development facilitates reflective awareness which is closely linked to spiritual awareness. Vygotsky's research, Nye argues, traces the development of the child's ability to appreciate possibility and relativity "and to conceive of the world in terms of an alternative to a concrete view of reality." Significantly for some commentators (Nye, 1996 p.116), these are the ingredients of a sense of wonder which is often cited as a defining characteristic of spirituality.

2.3.2 Moral Development

Piaget also provides a convenient starting point for consideration of the child's moral development. Bridger (1988 pp.107-108) summarises Piaget's model of moral development:

Stage 1: Early infancy up to two years – behaviour and morality governed by what a child can do physically eg. call a child "good" when they take their first steps.

Stage 2: Two to five years – learn simple rules for social behaviour but still fundamentally self-centred definition of right and wrong as what s/he can get away with in order to satisfy their own desire.

Stage 3: Six to ten years – play with other children. There is some understanding of the need to obey rules but still operates individualistically. A vague understanding of right and wrong as co-operation within a team.

Stage 4: Eleven plus years – aware of moral responsibility towards others. Rules become fixed in detail and need to be fairly applied. Right and wrong become related to abstract values and standards – the abstract idea of justice takes hold. Before this stage morality has been about concrete situations.

It was from this model of moral development that Kohlberg (1973, 1981) came to develop his own "moral stages". According to Kohlberg (1981 p.15),

Piaget started the modern study of child development by recognising that the child, like the adult philosopher, was puzzled by the basic questions of life; by the meaning of space, time, causality, life, death, right and wrong and so on: “What he found was that the child asked all the great philosophic questions but answered them in a very different way from the adults.” Piaget, states Kohlberg, called the difference a difference in stage or quality of thinking, rather than a difference in amount of knowledge or accuracy of thinking (Kohlberg, 1981 p.15).

In his own work on morality, Kohlberg (1981 p.16) started with Piaget’s notions of stages and his notion that the child was a philosopher. Kohlberg (1981 pp.17-19) identified three distinct levels of moral thinking (the Preconventional Level, the Conventional Level and the Postconventional, Autonomous, or Principled Level) and within each level he identified two related stages, giving the six stages of moral development:

- Stage 1. The Punishment and Obedience Orientation.
 - Stage 2. The Instrumental Relativist Orientation.
 - Stage 3. The Interpersonal Concordance or “Good Boy – Nice Girl” Orientation.
 - Stage 4. Society Maintaining Orientation.
 - Stage 5. The Social Contract Orientation.
 - Stage 6. The Universal Ethical Principle Orientation.
- (Kohlberg, 1981 pp.17 – 19)

According to Kohlberg (1981 p.16), these levels and stages may be considered separate moral philosophies or distinct views of the social-moral world. To illustrate what these stages mean in concrete terms, Kohlberg (1981 p.19) relates them to the motive given for obeying rules or moral action:

- In this instance, the six stages look like this:
1. Obey rules to avoid punishment.
 2. Conform to obtain rewards, have favours returned, and so on.
 3. Conform to avoid disapproval and dislike by others.
 4. Conform to avoid censure by legitimate authorities and resultant guilt.
 5. Conform to maintain the respect of the impartial spectator judging in terms of community welfare.
 6. Conform to avoid self-condemnation

(Kohlberg, 1981 p.19)

Children, he states, have their own morality or series of moralities and “as soon as we talk with children about morality we find that they have many ways of making judgements that are not ‘internalised’ from the outside and that do not come in any direct and obvious way from parents, teachers, or even peers.”

The sequence of development is not affected, in Kohlberg’s (1981 p.25) view, by religion or by social or cultural conditions. Instead, he claims that the only thing affected is the rate at which individuals progress through this sequence. Each stage of development takes account of everything present in the previous stage but makes new distinctions and organises them into a more comprehensive structure. Children and adolescents comprehend all stages up to their own but not more than one stage beyond their own. According to Kohlberg (1981 p.20), children can move through these stages at varying speeds; they may be half in and half out of a particular stage; they may stop at any given stage or at any age but any movement will be in accord with these steps. Thus, Kohlberg (1981 p.20) concludes that no adult in Stage 4 has gone through Stage 5, but all Stage 5 adults have gone through Stage 4, suggesting from his study that moral change fits this pattern.

In his earlier work, Kohlberg (1973 p.15) states that each stage is defined by values that enter into the moral decisions being reached and that these values indicate how life itself is valued. He claims that it is only at Stage 6 that each life is seen as inherently worthwhile. According to Kohlberg (1973 p.15), the other factor which defines the stage of judgement is the motivation for moral action; at the lowest stages the individual acts to avoid punishment or to exchange favours whereas at the highest level it is to avoid self-condemnation. Central to Kohlberg’s (1973 p.14) progressive view of morality are the principles of human welfare and justice. Children, he states, as well as adults can reason about morality, justice and fairness, but in a different way

from adults since a child's reasoning represents a different stage of moral reason. Kohlberg therefore concludes that stimulating the child's ability to act consistently in accordance with his / her own moral judgement is an approach that "generates a new 'Socratic' way for the teacher to conduct discussions about values in the areas of social studies, humanities, religious education and sex education. It also gives the democratic school a way to foster moral development through increasing the child's participation and responsibility in a community he perceives as just" (Kohlberg, 1973 p.14).

Kohlberg attempts to identify why some people progress from one stage to another more quickly than others. In his view it is due to an increased ability to perceive social reality or to organise and integrate social experience: "Being able, through wide practice, to take another's viewpoint, to 'put yourself in his place' is the source of the principled sense of equality and reciprocity" (Kohlberg, 1973 p.15). Kohlberg (1973 p.165) does not, however, see religion as a necessary condition for the development of moral judgement and conduct. Instead, Kohlberg argues that "formal religious education has no specifically important or unique role to play in moral development as opposed to the role of the public school and the family in this area. The primary purpose of religious education in our society is not to develop moral character but rather to develop religious beliefs and sentiments" (Kohlberg, 1973 p.181).

Gilligan (1982) challenges Kohlberg's emphasis on individual rights in his assessment of moral development, emphasising instead the importance of relationships in morality. She contrasts the differences between an eleven year-old girl and an eleven year-old boy in their responses to the "Heinz dilemma" originally devised by Kohlberg to measure moral development in adolescence by presenting a conflict between moral norms and exploring the logic of its resolution (Gilligan, 1982 p.25). In this dilemma, "a man named Heinz considers whether or not to steal a drug which he cannot afford to buy

in order to save the life of his wife. In the standard format of Kohlberg's interviewing procedure, the description of the dilemma itself – Heinz's predicament, the wife's disease, the druggist's refusal to lower his price – is followed by the question, 'Should Heinz steal the drug?' The reasons for and against stealing are then explored through a series of questions that vary and extend the parameters of the dilemma in a way designed to reveal the underlying structure of moral thought." (Gilligan, 1982 pp.25-26) According to Gilligan, the boy's response shows the logic of justice (Heinz should steal the drug); his view of the law assumes agreement about moral values that "allows one to know and expect others to recognise what is 'the right thing to do'" (Gilligan, 1982 p.26). The girl's response, however, stresses the importance of relationships: "the world should just share things more and then people wouldn't have to steal" (Gilligan, 1982 p. 29). Gilligan maintains that different interpretations of these responses (especially the girl's) are possible. The girl, Amy, recognises the problem and searches for a more adequate solution whereas the boy, Jake, sees a conflict between life and property which is resolved by logical deduction (Gilligan, 1982 p.31). For Amy this is "a fracture of human relationship that must be mended with its own thread" (Gilligan, 1982 p.31). The responses of these two children would, according to Gilligan, score very differently on Kohlberg's scale with Jake's judgements being deemed a full stage higher than Amy's in moral maturity. The reason, states Gilligan (1982, p.31), is that Kohlberg's theory can answer the question, "What does he see that she does not?" but is unable to answer the question, "What does she see that he does not?"; "Since most of her responses fall through the sieve of Kohlberg's scoring system, her responses appear from his perspective to lie outside the moral domain" (Gilligan, 1982 p.31). Hence, says Gilligan (1982 p.32), these two children display different modes of moral understanding, different ways of thinking about conflict and choice.

Gilligan's argument concludes that the disparate experiences of men and women are, in the end, connected: "While an ethic of justice proceeds from

the premise of equality – that everyone should be treated the same – an ethic of care rests on the premise of nonviolence – that no one should be hurt ... This dialogue between fairness and care not only provides a better understanding of relations between the sexes but also gives rise to a more comprehensive portrayal of adult work and family relationships” (Gilligan, 1982 p.174).

Hart in his writing on children’s spirituality, which will be discussed more fully below, argues that relational spirituality can be awakened when empathy enables a child to connect with another person with compassion and love (Hart, 2006 p.172). He continues; “empathy has been described as the basis of moral development (Hoffman) and even the trait that makes us most human (Azar). We realize our humanity and our divinity through the quality of our meetings” (Hart, 2006 pp.172-173). Hart concludes that if we really meet others and understand them, then it is more difficult to act against them; “This is the root of a living relational morality” (Hart, 2006 p.173).

Former Archbishop Rowan Williams (2000 p.57) claims that the child does not come into the world fully equipped for moral self-definition. Making choices (including moral choices), says Williams, is a skill to be learned and practised and requires “a space for fantasy, a licence for imagination, where gradually the consequences, the self-defining knots, of adult choice can be figured, fingered, experimented with” (Williams, 2000 p.57). In Williams’ (2000 pp.58-59) view, the crucial elements in the nurture of children, and with this the learning of choice, are the role of time in forming identities and the importance of stable relationships so that the imaginative space of childhood is protected which requires a background of security, adult availability and adult consistency. Having such conditions, explains Williams (2000 pp.31-32), will enable the “safeguarding of a space where identities can be learned and tested in imagination before commitments have to be made.” In these

safeguarded spaces, he continues, children can be free of the pressure to make adult choices so that they can “*learn* how to make adult choices.”

2.3.3 Religious and faith development

According to Kohlberg (1973 p.165), religion is not a necessary component in the process of moral development. Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.47), however, argues that morality is still associated with religion despite the fact that there has been a loss of the religious basis for morality. He goes on to state that “morality has its source at a deeper level than specific religious adherence, since it arises in the first place out of spiritual insight” and quotes Nicholas Tate’s speech at the 1996 SCAA Conference in which were highlighted the words of the Archbishop of Canterbury: “people ever since the Enlightenment ‘have been living off the legacy of a deep, residual belief in God. But as people move further away from that, they find it more and more difficult to give a substantial basis for why they should be good.’ This is one reason why religious education must continue to be a vital part of every child’s curriculum... It is also a reason why children’s spiritual development is so important, as the origin of the will to do what is right” (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.47). There remains, according to Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006 p.48), no obvious alternative to religion “as a vehicle for the nurture of spiritual awareness” which provides the deeper personal motivation enabling people to engage with moral behaviour. Hay (Hay and Nye, 2006, p.48) concludes, “The danger is that the loss of religious coherence is only the surface appearance of a more profound loss or suppression of spirituality which begins in childhood.”

Bridger (1988 p.106), in examining how children find faith, uses the models of child development inspired by Piaget and Kohlberg to address the question of what it means to be responsible before God. Bridger places alongside these models of child development the faith models of Westerhoff and Fowler (Bridger, 1988 p.106). In Westerhoff’s model the acquisition of “owned faith” or “conversion” is the outcome of both a moment and a process: “The

process of development comes to a head in the momentary act of surrender when the individual renounces self and gives everything to Christ. At that point he moves from a faith given to him largely by others to a faith which is appropriated and held for himself. 'Their faith' becomes 'his faith'. He has reached the stage of owned faith" (Bridger, 1988 p.119). According to Westerhoff, there are four faith stages:

Stage 1 Experienced faith (babyhood and infancy)
Stage 2 Affiliative faith (children believe what friends / family believe – not a thought-out faith of their own)
Stage 3 Searching faith
Stage 4 Owned faith
(Bridger, 1988 p.118)

Fowler, however, whilst accepting Westerhoff's four stages of faith claims that conversion or "owned faith" is not confined to adolescence or adulthood: "In his view, 'Conversion has to do with changes in the *contents* of faith.' This can take place at any stage of development since there will always be some content to a child's faith (at least after infancy). It does not have to follow a period of searching or despair" (Bridger, 1988 p.123). According to Fowler (1981 p.4), the search for meaning and faith does not necessarily lead to answers about religious commitment or belief:

Faith is a person's or group's way of moving into the force field of life. It is our way of finding coherence in and giving meaning to the multiple forces and relations that make up our lives. Faith is a way of seeing him– or herself in relation to others against a background of shared meaning and purpose (Fowler, 1981 p.4).

People, says Fowler (1981 p.4), need meaning, purpose and priorities; a grasp of the "big picture." He refers to Niebuhr's view that faith "grows through our experience of trust and fidelity with those closest to us" and that faith is seen in shared visions and values holding human groups together (Fowler, 1981 p.5); faith is seen "in the search for an overarching, integrating and grounding trust in a centre of values and power sufficiently worthy to give our lives unity and meaning" (Fowler, 1981 p.5). Fowler (1981 p.5) claims that we are engaged with issues of faith before we are deemed to be religious or irreligious: "Whether we become nonbelievers, agnostics or atheists, we are

concerned with how to put our lives together and with what will make life worth living. Moreover, we look for something to love that loves us, something to value that gives us value, something to honour and respect that has the power to sustain our being.” Faith, he says, is always relational – there is always another in faith; “I trust in and am loyal to...” (Fowler, 1981 p.16). These commitments and trusts in others shape our identities as we become part of what we love and trust: “‘Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also,’ Jesus said” (Fowler, 1981 p.18).

Fowler (1981 p.25) reflects on faith as a kind of imagination since, he claims, virtually all our knowing begins with images. Thus, says Fowler (1981 p.24), “Faith forms a way of seeing our everyday life in relation to holistic images of what we may call the ultimate environment.” For Fowler (1981 p.31), the opposite of faith is not doubt but nihilism; the inability to imagine any transcendent environment and despair about the possibility of even negative meaning. According to Fowler (1981 p.27) religion is the means by which faith is expressed, celebrated and lived in relation to this ultimate environment.

According to Fowler and Dell (2006 p.34) faith development theory was conceived as a framework for understanding “the evolution of how human beings conceptualize God, or a Higher Being, and how the influence of that Higher Being has an impact on core values, beliefs, and meanings in their personal lives and in their relationships with others.” The theory and research surrounding faith development focus on a generic understanding of faith; seeing faith as the foundation of social relations, personal identity and the making of personal and cultural meanings (Fowler and Dell, 2006 p.36). They go on to state that this understanding of faith extends beyond religious faith, is inclusive and is a common feature of human beings. Faith, claim Fowler and Dell (2006 p.36) may be “characterized as an integral, centering process, underlying the formation of (the) beliefs, values, and meanings ...”

Fowler identifies six stages of faith with a pre-stage called Undifferentiated faith in which “The emergent strength of faith in this stage is the fund of basic trust and the relational experience of mutuality with the one(s) providing primary love and care” (Fowler, 1981 p.121). Fowler calls stage one ‘Intuitive – Projective Faith’ during which the child (between the ages of three and seven) develops imaginative thought processes which produce “longlasting images and feelings (positive and negative) that later, more stable and reflective valuing and thinking will have to order and sort out. This is the stage of first self-awareness” (Fowler, 1981 p.133).

Stage two of Fowler’s six stages of faith is termed ‘Mythic – Literal Faith’. During this stage the child is sorting out the real from the make-believe (Fowler, 1981 p.135). The child doesn’t stop being imaginative or having a fantasy life but “the products of imagination are confined more to the world of play and will be submitted to more logical forms of scrutiny before being admitted as part of what the child ‘knows’” (Fowler, 1981 p.136). According to Fowler (1981 pp.136 – 137), it is during this stage that the child develops the ability to re-tell stories they have been told and begins to tell their own stories, making it possible to conserve, communicate and compare their experiences and meanings. These meanings, he continues, are “trapped in the narrative, there not being yet the readiness to draw from them conclusions about a general order of meaning in life” (Fowler, 1981 p.137). The ability to step back from stories, reflect and communicate their meanings by way of more abstract and general statements comes, claims Fowler, at a later stage (Fowler, 1981 p. 137). At Stage two the child’s identity is closely connected to the story of their relationships and roles (Fowler, 1981 p.139).

Fowler calls stage three ‘Synthetic – Conventional Faith’ during which the adolescent first experiences intimacy outside the family (Fowler, 1981 p.151). At this point, says Fowler (1981 p.152), the adolescent can develop the ability to reflect upon their thinking so that a myth of the personal past can be

composed which represents a new level of story, a level Fowler calls the “*story of our stories*.” During this stage the adolescent composes hypothetical images of themselves as they think others see them and may reach the realisation that their friends, too, have “a rich, mysterious and finally inaccessible depth of personality” (Fowler, 1981 p.153). In addition, “God ... must also be re-imaged as having inexhaustible depths and as being capable of knowing personally those mysterious depths of self and others we know that we ourselves will never know” (Fowler, 1981 p.153). Thus, concludes Fowler (1981 p.153), the adolescent’s religious hunger is for a God who knows, accepts and confirms the self deeply; a God who is an infinite guarantor of the self as they establish their personal identity and faith.

At Stage four, called by Fowler (1981 p.179) ‘Individuative – Reflective Faith’, the individual no longer relies on external sources of authority and develops the ability to reflect critically on hitherto tacitly held systems of beliefs and values. There is, says Fowler, a relocation of authority within the self and the formation of a new identity which is expressed and actualised through the choice of personal and group affiliations and the shaping of a “lifestyle.” This stage is also characterised by the demythologizing of symbols and symbolic acts so that:

Dimensions of depth in symbolic or ritual expression previously felt and responded to without reflection can now be identified and clarified. The ‘mystification’ of symbols, the tendency to experience them as organically linked with the realities they represent, is broken open. Their meanings, now detachable from the symbolic media, can be communicated in concepts or propositions that may have little direct resonance with the symbolic form or action (Fowler, 1981 p.181).

Stage five or ‘Conjunctive Faith’, involves “going beyond the explicit ideological system and clear boundaries of identity that Stage 4 worked so hard to construct and adhere to” (Fowler, 1981 p.186). At this stage, according to Fowler (1981 p.186), a person will recognise the task of

integrating or reconciling conscious and unconscious. Fowler (1981 pp.187-188) goes on to state that they will distrust the separation of symbol and symbolised. They will continue to exercise the critical capacities and methods of the previous stage but will no longer trust them “except as tools to avoid self-deception and to order truths encountered in other ways.” Thus symbolic power is re-united with conceptual meanings (Fowler, 1981 p.197) as the Stage five person (typically at the mid-stage of life) “can appreciate symbols, myths and rituals ... because it has been grasped, in some measure, by the depth of reality to which they refer” (Fowler, 1981 p.198).

According to Fowler (1981 p.200), few people reach Stage six, “Universalizing Faith” since they “have generated faith compositions in which their felt sense of an ultimate environment is inclusive of all being. They have become incarnators and actualizers of the spirit of an inclusive and fulfilled human community.” They are often “subversive of the structures (including religious structures) by which we sustain our individual and corporate survival, security and significance” (Fowler, 1981 p.201) and as a result often die at the hands of those they seek to change. Fowler continues (1981 p.201): “The rare persons who may be described by this stage have a special grace that makes them seem more lucid, more simple, and yet somehow more fully human than the rest of us ... Life (for them) is both loved and to be held loosely. Such persons are ready for fellowship with persons at any of the other stages and from any other faith tradition” (Fowler, 1981 p.201).

Fowler and Dell (2006 p.36) recognise that there is a complex interplay of factors which must be taken into account when attempting to understand faith development. They identify these factors which include; biological maturation; emotional and cognitive development; psychosocial experience; and the role of religiocultural symbols, meanings and practices (Fowler and Dell, 2006 p.36). Since, Fowler and Dell (2006 p.36) argue, development in faith involves all of these aspects, human development (movement from one

stage to another) “is not automatic or assured.” Consequently, they conclude, people may reach chronological and biological adulthood whilst remaining at a structural stage of faith associated with early or middle childhood, or adolescence (Fowler and Dell 2006 p.36). Conversely, they continue, “contexts of spiritual nurture and practice, coupled with a person’s spiritual aptitude and discipline, may lead some children to a deeper and more rapid development in faith” (Fowler and Dell, 2006 p.36).

Like Fowler, Rizzuto (1979) identifies different stages in a child’s development of what may be termed a consciousness of God. Rizzuto’s (1979 p.7) argument centres around the image of God which a child concocts “out of this matrix of facts and fantasies, wishes, hopes and fears, in the exchanges with those incredible beings called parents, ...” According to Rizzuto, “the mature person reencounters the God of his childhood in later years at every corner of life: birth, marriage, death. God may have to be repressed again, or dug out of the unconscious, or reevaluated” (Rizzuto, 1979 p.7). In Rizzuto’s (1979 p.8) study most children were introduced to God in the family where he is presented as invisible but nonetheless real. Consequently when they are introduced to organised religion, the child “brings his own God, the one he has himself put together, to this official encounter. Now the God of religion and the God of the child-hero face each other. Re-shaping, rethinking, and endless rumination, fantasies and defensive manoeuvres, will come to help the child in his difficult task. This second birth of God may decide the conscious religious future of the child” (Rizzuto, 1979 p.8). Throughout life, she argues, ideas about God are re-shaped and refined as questions of the existence of God become a personal matter to be faced or avoided, especially when contemplating death (Rizzuto, 1979 p.8). This becomes a central thesis of Rizzuto’s argument: “God is a special type of object representation created by the child in that psychic space where transitional objects – whether toys, blankets, or mental representations – are provided with their powerfully real illusory lives” (Rizzuto, 1979 p.178). Rizzuto (1979 p.179) claims that

throughout life, therefore, “God remains a transitional object at the service of gaining leverage with oneself, with others, and with life itself.”

Rizzuto (1979 p.194) argues that God may be unseen but, through adult hints and gestures is given an existence in reality, in contrast with all the other creatures of the child’s fantasy. Many children, she states, are defined as God-given at the beginning of their lives when parents (even those who do not practise religion) want to perform a religious ritual – offering their child to God by consecrating them (for example by circumcision or christening) as one of his people, during which the child will be marked physically or spiritually by the sign of God (Rizzuto, 1979 p.183). Usually the sign includes the naming of the child which is of critical importance in the development of self-representations and identity: “It is in this preset stage of meanings and private myths that the baby begins his long awakening to himself, to others, and to the world” (Rizzuto, 1979 p.183). Religious development, according to Rizzuto (1979 p.197), is marked at the age of six by the child developing a “feeling relationship with God” in which prayers become important. In puberty the individual grasps a concept of God which is beyond the limits of his/her God representation and leads to theorizing and the construction of philosophical or theological arguments (Rizzuto, 1979 p.200). During the last part of adolescence, Rizzuto (1979 p.201) maintains, there is a process of self-searching and re-shuffling of self-images which leads to new encounters with old and new God representations which may or may not lend themselves to belief. Rizzuto (1979 p.209) concludes from her study that God is “a creation of the child” and as such “he has other traits that suit the child’s needs in relating to his parents and maintaining his sense of worth and safety.”

Huebner (1985 p.372) disagrees with Fowler’s view that faith grows through stages. According to Huebner (1985 p.372), faith does not grow; “It is present through God’s grace, although we may choose to disregard that presence.” He acknowledges that people change with time and experience and that it is

therefore appropriate to ask how faith is related to these changes (Huebner, 1985 p.372). However, he concludes, that does not mean that faith itself grows; “Rather it becomes more and more a part of the complex evolving structures that involve us in the rest of the universe” (Huebner, 1985 p.372). Huebner (1985 p.373) describes faith as “a clearing in our everydayness, a place for acknowledging God. Growth is a manifestation of God’s presence. It is a continuation of God’s creation and creating.” Therefore, for Huebner, rather than asking how we can make faith grow it is more appropriate to ask where faith (“the clearing in which we acknowledge, seek, and thank God”) is located in “that part of us that is socially constructed?” and “How can it be located in other aspects of our being?” (Huebner, 1985 p.374).

Streib (2001 p.150) builds on Fowler’s “faith stages” by calling them “faith or religious styles”, describing them as “geological layers” rather than “developmental stages”. According to Streib (2001 p.153); “At a certain time in life, a certain style appears to be prevalent and to structure most of the religious activity and correspondingly most of one’s interpersonal and social relationships.” These layers may, he continues, lie dormant below the surface of everyday life; “earlier religious styles are present and available in our psychic resources” (Streib, 2001 p.153). These earlier religious styles, Streib maintains, require our attention through revisiting and reflection: “It means to tell and retell, to read and rewrite the story of one’s own life in terms or symbols of religion” (Streib, 2001 p.153). According to Worsley (2013b p.58); “By referring to stages as styles, Streib has removed the imperative for sequential cognitive development that, despite Fowler’s guidance, has tended to preoccupy the religious educator.” Worsley goes on to explain his use of Fowler’s faith stage theory not as a form of structural analysis but as a way of offering insight into how the child “makes meaning from life” (Worsley, 2013b p.69). He claims that Streib’s concentration on life history and life world “add to how faith can be seen in context” and “where faith becomes less categorised by biological development and more by life experience, the

description of 'faith styles' for stages four and five are likely to add value" (Worsley, 2013b p.69).

In attempting to describe and define the religious potential of children, Cavalletti (1983 p.21) used her twenty-five years of experience of teaching three to eleven year-olds. During this time she tried to understand the child's way of thinking in the course of personal conversations and group discussions rather than using systematic questions. Cavalletti (1983 p.22) observed that children show "peaceful joy when meeting the world of God" and that religious experience responds to a "deep hunger" in the child (Cavalletti, 1983 p.22). Cavalletti holds certain assumptions which influence her conclusions:

1. That children experience a God who enters a relationship with them.
 2. The child's religious potential is a global experience – it touches the child's total being and it is also "natural". Therefore it is essential to what defines being "human" regardless of where the child is born in the world.
 3. That "human beings are not fully developing unless their religious potential is stimulated and growing. Religious potential is not a matter of willed commitment, intellectual reasoning, or political force. It is *systemic* to human health."
 4. That the religious language of the Judaeo – Christian tradition is a language that is very powerful as an agent "to describe, evoke and express multidimensional aspects of a child's experience of God. It is probably the most powerful tool for knowing this reality."
- (Cavalletti, 1983 pp.8 – 9)

Cavalletti (1983, p.10) attempts to define religious potential in terms of an experience that the child "has" and that can be observed by the researcher.

Four points summarise this definition:

- 1) The experience of the child is "spontaneous" rather than a response to an adult's prompting.
 - 2) The experience is "complex." It involves feelings, thinking, and moral action although moral consciousness is not expected until about age six.
 - 3) The experience is not limited to cultural conditioning.
 - 4) The experience is "deep" rather than involving only a single function like auditory or visual memory.
- (Cavalletti, 1983 p.10)

Religious potential, according to Cavalletti (1983, pp.10-11), moves towards actualization and as it does so growth can be identified through the following indicators:

- A global and deep joy results.
 - A “mysterious knowledge” results, which no adult told the child.
 - The child is aware of the “invisible” (nonmaterial) meaning in the material environment.
 - A capacity develops for deep and personal prayer that expresses itself in praise and thanksgiving rather than memorized prayers or requests for favours.
- (Cavalletti, 1983 pp.10-11)

Cavalletti (1983, p.32) asks the question: “Does there exist in the child a mysterious reality of union with God?” as she provides examples of childhood “spiritual” experiences that were “wonderful” and “altogether natural” (Cavalletti, 1983 p.35). She concludes: “... it has been observed from many sides that there appears to be a difference between the child’s natural and supernatural capacities, and that the religious element in children is not proportionate to the external stimuli” (Cavalletti, 1983 p.36). Such childhood experiences are ephemeral but they let us glimpse the “mysterious reality present within the child; they manifest the child’s potentiality and richness, the nature of which we are not successful in defining clearly” (Cavalletti, 1983 p.37) and she goes on to state that “In the religious sphere, it is a fact that children know things no one has told them” (Cavalletti, 1983 p.42). In fact, “Children penetrate effortlessly beyond the veil of signs and ‘see’ with utmost facility their transcendent meaning, as if there were no barrier between the visible and the Invisible” (Cavalletti, 1983 p.43).

Unlike Kohlberg (1973 p.165) who does not see religion as a “necessary or highly important condition for the development of moral judgement and conduct”, Cavalletti (1983 p.152) sees the enjoyment of God’s presence in a person’s life as a fundamental part of moral formation. According to Cavalletti (1983, p.153), religious experiences in early childhood contribute to the child’s harmonious formation in the present and are an indirect moral preparation for later life: “In fact, what is morality in the Christian view if not the response to God’s love, our reaction to our encounter with him?”

For Cavalletti (1983 pp.177-178), having access to religious experience is essential if a child is to have access to the full knowledge of the reality in which he is immersed since the child's deepest need is "to be open to the transcendent". Cavalletti's final conclusion is that: "The 'metaphysical' child, the 'essential' child will find the full realization of himself only in the world of the transcendent, a world in which he has shown he moves completely at his ease."

2.3.4 Spiritual development

In the introduction to his book, Hart (2003 p.9) maintains that spirituality is not just a worldview, it is "also a process of development." In his view spirituality should not be considered simply as the top of the developmental ladder but rather as "an ongoing growth process – a process of identity, of finding out more about who we really are" (Hart, 2003 p.9). Hart goes on to argue that this process is not only about liberation, transformation, enlightenment and self-realization; "It is also recognized as integration and wholeness; the more of oneself and the world we can integrate into our being, the greater our development" (Hart, 2003 pp.9-10).

Until the 1990s, research in the field of children's religious and spiritual development had largely focussed on children's religious development. The emphasis was on the way in which children thought about religion and was summarised in Kenneth Hyde's book *Religion in Childhood and Adolescence*. According to Ratcliff and May (2004 p.10), research such as Hyde's rarely considered children's experience of faith and spirituality. The focus, comment Ratcliff and May (2004 p.11), was on a sequence of stages of thinking about religion (based on Piaget) rather than upon the experience of religion where common ground may be found between spirituality and religion. Both spirituality and religion relate to ultimate meanings in life and the quest for transcendence, although they are also distinctive in many ways (Ratcliff and May, 2004 p.11).

Farmer (1992 p.260) maintains that the study of faith development in the 1990s relied too heavily on the conceptual language of cognition and the field of emotion. However, since religious knowledge has a different meaning from knowledge *about* religion, “I submit that no amount of refinement and blending of the work of Piaget, Kohlberg and Erikson will bring us closer to understanding religious knowledge” (Farmer, 1992 p.260). Therefore, Farmer continues, it must be possible that religious knowledge is independent of the growth of cognitive abilities and/or emotional capacities. Farmer maintains that this distinction is particularly important for those interested in religious knowledge in childhood.

Levine (1999 p.137) also challenged the view that spirituality is part of a developmental process, arguing that “spirituality is not a point along the way in cognitive development” and concluding that “the cognitive skills of children must be understood as cognitive strengths within the sphere of spirituality.” Levine asserts that children’s cognitive abilities “are precisely those skills necessary for the very experience of spirituality” (Levine, 1999 p.123). Schoonmaker (2009 p.2715) claims that these are the same skills that adults use in spiritual practices “rather than capacities unique to childhood.” Schoonmaker (2009 p. 2715) highlights the different stances taken by those who see spirituality as an inherent part of being a human of any age “and those who see it as something that children possess in nascent form but that needs to be taught or built through adult intervention.” She cites Champagne’s “modes of being” or “being in the world” in concluding that “Spiritual experience as a way of being can potentially be manifested in any human activity, including the activities of classroom life with young children” and that, as Champagne suggested, understanding children’s modes of being in the world “can make us better witnesses of children’s spirituality” (Schoonmaker, 2009 p.2716).

Miller and Athan (2007 p.17) state that this awareness of the spiritual within the classroom can extend to every aspect of classroom pedagogy and that “every moment in class, (is) a spiritual opportunity.” They describe the use of Spiritual Awareness Pedagogy (SAP) which “emphasises collective use of the classroom as an inherently spiritual space; the spiritual reality always operates” (Miller and Athan, 2007 p.18). According to Miller and Athan (2007 p.18), this approach to pedagogy enables the “learning group” (including the teacher) to travel the “spiritual path” together.

An alternative view of childhood is put forward by Rahner (1971 p.36) when he states that childhood is not something that we lose as it recedes into our past, rather “we go towards it as that which has been achieved in time and redeemed forever in time. We only *become* the children whom we *were* because we gather up in time – and in this our childhood too – into our eternity.” The unique value of childhood, Rahner (1971 pp.36-37) continues, is that it has a direct relationship with God; it touches on the divinity of God in a special way and is therefore valuable in itself. For Rahner (1971 p.37) the child has the value and depths “implied in the name of the man” – the child is already a man he does not grow into a man, rather as he matures he realises what he already *is*. In Rahner’s (1971 pp.38-39) view, the child is the partner of God and is already spirit and body united in a single entity but “What is already present in the child has still to be realised, to become actual in experience.” Childhood, says Rahner (1971 p.42), is a mystery which can be preserved so that life becomes a state in which we are open to expect the unexpected, still able to play and to recognise “that the powers presiding over existence are greater than our own designs, and to submit to their control as our deepest good.”

As interest in children’s religious development declined in the 1990s, interest in children’s spirituality increased with the work of Hay and Nye (discussed above in section 2.2) focussing attention on “relational consciousness” to

describe spirituality. Ratcliff and May (2004 p.9) also refer to the term spirituality implying the idea of being self-directed and exuberant (a child having plenty of spirit) or referring to a mystical “otherness” of the child. They go on to consider the work of Walter Wangerin who wrote of the importance of children moving into stories “with their whole being and selfhood” stating that: “... the experience of a good story is always profoundly spiritual, because it helps children connect with deeper truths and ultimate meanings in life, as well as move them into a different realm that transcends everyday life and the world as youngsters usually see it” (Ratcliff and May, 2004 p.12). As the child enters the story in this way they begin, says Wangerin (Ratcliff and May, 2004 p.12), to identify not only with the cognitive content but also with the emotions, suspense and totality of the story as all the senses as well as reason and imagination are involved and the child is “into” the story. For Wangerin, this is the way stories work since they are a “means of the child discovering the self in relationship” as the ritual of storytelling invites dialogue and you weave a story to the child (Ratcliff and May, 2004 p.12).

Hart (2003 p.12) argues that spirituality is “often lived out at the intersection of our lives – at the *meeting between you and me*” and says that the relational spirituality Nye wrote about (see section 2.2) is based on the way we know and treat each other. Children, Hart (2003 p.12) claims, “have the capacity to connect or relate deeply to others.” Although Hart draws attention to many dramatic stories of children’s spiritual experiences in his book, he is also keen to stress that “the simple spirituality of a compassionate act, an open heart, or a small moment of courage is just as much the stuff of a spiritual life” (Hart, 2003 p.14) so that spiritual capacities “may take the form of wisdom and moments of wonder” (Hart, 2003 p.14). Childhood wonder, he maintains, may be best described through the everyday way of being exhibited by children; “the greatest significance is not in how small or large an experience is, but in how those moments are integrated and expressed in one’s life” (Hart, 2006 p.168).

Erricker and Erricker (1996 p.190) claim that children interpret knowledge and information within the framework they have constructed. They put forward the idea of genres or the way children approach life “with a set of attitudes and ideas which constitute an identifiable package” (Erricker and Erricker, 1996 p.190) within which children operate. According to Erricker and Erricker (1996 p.190) various genres can be identified, including the “my little pony” genre (a Disneyesque approach with a deep interest in the welfare of animals) and the family-centred genre (where relationships within the family are all-important). These indicate, claim Erricker and Erricker (1996 p.190), the way that children approach life with a set of attitudes and ideas. Within this view, metaphor is seen to be highly significant for children as it acts as a way of making meaning out of experience (Erricker and Erricker, 1996 p.191) and can become a way of accessing children’s world-views. Hence in their research Erricker and Erricker (1996 p.192) use the three terms of narrative, metaphor and genre together to provide them with a structure by which to analyse children’s conversation about their world. In their conclusion, Erricker and Erricker (1996 p.194) suggest that teachers need to deconstruct children’s storying in attempting to educate them, especially in the areas of values education and spirituality.

Following his extensive interviews with children, Coles (1992 p.108) concludes that a child’s mental life can and does connect with their religious and spiritual thinking: “Moral attitudes, including emotions such as shame and guilt, are a major psychological and sometimes psychiatric side of young spirituality.” According to Coles (1992 p.109), accidents, illnesses and bad luck prompt reflection in children as well as adults. For those children who come from a religious tradition the task is, asserts Coles (1992 p.109), to work out a version of morality which is both personal and tied to a religious tradition, “and then (the essence of the spiritual life) ponder their moral successes and failures and, consequently, their prospects as human beings who will someday die.”

According to Nye (1996 p.111), the focus of research on children's "God-talk" (Tamminen, Coles, Taylor) and children's religious thinking and concepts (Goldman, Elkind, Fowler, Reich) has not contributed much to our understanding of the development of spirituality as conceived in the more general, universal sense provided by the Oxford English Dictionary definition: "attachment to or regard for things of the spirit as opposed to material or worldly interests. From Latin: *spirare*, to breathe: spirit – the animating or vital principle in man, the breath of life". Nye (1996 p.111) goes on to state that focussing on the "religious" end of spirituality may be developmentally "off-target" as evidence for children's early spiritual life should be sought in their perception, awareness and response to ordinary activities that can act as "signals of transcendence".

Nye (1996 p.111) claims that Vygotsky's theory of child development has implications for the development of spirituality in a secular culture. Here Nye refers to Vygotsky's view that learning takes place in the "zone of proximal development" which is the distance between what the child can do with and without help or encouragement. The importance of a social context of expectation and provision of "help" to reach the expected next level of understanding are also referred to as Nye (1996 p.111) concludes that in a secular culture "help" in spiritual development may be overlooked in pursuit of more valued goals such as cognitive and physical development. She also points out that there are implications for religious cultures where spirituality may be reserved for adulthood as pure learning is followed by spiritual awakening (Nye, 1996 p.111). Hence, says Nye (1996 p.112), both religious and secular cultures need to discover where the child's unaided spirituality can be found so that the right kind of "help" can be provided to nurture this.

Nye (1996 pp.114-115) suggests that Vygotsky's findings may enable building a spiritual understanding on to children's developing understanding of the psychological as children come to impute mental states (for example, beliefs

and desires) to themselves and others and in so doing facilitate the reflective awareness often cited as a cornerstone of spirituality and spiritual capacities. This research also maps the development of the child's ability to appreciate possibility and relativity, "to conceive of the world in terms of an alternative to a concrete view of reality", which are the ingredients of a sense of wonder, another defining characteristic of spirituality according to Nye (1996 p.116).

In her discussion of cognitive development, Donaldson (1992 p.103) raises the question as to whether there is a parallel development for the emotions or whether emotional development reaches an upper limit in the "core construct mode". If this is the case, she argues, then "this means a marked asymmetry between the intellect and the emotions" which could explain why progress in science and technology is not matched by the development of morals and emotions. Later in her book, Donaldson (1992 p.246) argues that "doing well at school" should not be confined to intellectual development since that does not tell us about a child's "potential for skiing or for spirituality, or even for intellectual development under other circumstances." Giving children a sense of the experience that comes with developing spirituality as it aspires towards transcendence cannot, says Donaldson (1992 p.259), be done in an explicit form that children can understand. Instead, she argues (Donaldson, 1992 p.260) there are two things which can make a difference. Firstly, offering intermediate goals in a well-planned sequence so that each achievement is also an opening, revealing new challenges not too far out of reach, with the teacher as the one who knows what lies ahead and also how to get there. Secondly, Donaldson (1992 p.260) refers to the traditional ways of the East when offering spiritual goals. Here the key figure is the holy man whom the child sees is valued and treated with reverence and respect, "for whatever strange reason," since the reasons for the reverence are not immediately obvious. However, the child's current values are being challenged and there is the possibility of aspirations that lie beyond the immediate. The teacher, says Donaldson (1992 p.261), promises to teach the

novice how to have “other and better desires”, new kinds of goals hitherto unimagined. The novice has to learn to trust that the guru will have something to reveal in the end which is worth the effort. This trust is built as society highly values the skills possessed by the teacher and novices aspire to something which is at present beyond them. Donaldson (1992 p.262) concludes that: “Some kinds of competence are more visible than others; and visibility is not a safe measure of value”.

Adams, Hyde and Woolley (2008 p.86) argue that a holistic approach (where adults create space for children) to the school-based curriculum is needed if the child’s sense of awe and wonder is to be nurtured along with their appreciation of the natural world and their own sense of being valued and valuable. In such an environment children are enabled to develop “contextualized understandings of difficult and complex issues” (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008 p.86). According to Adams, Hyde and Woolley (2008 p.43) schools prefer certainty to mystery yet children need the space to be listened to; to explore ideas without too much adult direction; to reflect and imagine; to enquire. Hart (2003 p.94) quotes Patricia Arlin in summarising this view: “Wisdom is the capacity not so much for problem solving as for problem finding”. Adams, Hyde and Woolley (2008 pp.48-49) agree with Hart when he suggests that adult society “has grown a cataract over the eye of contemplation: it has made it cloudy with mistrust”, unlike most children who still have clear vision and are natural contemplatives.

Adams, Hyde and Woolley (2008 pp.48-49) point out that children’s learning is more than the cognitive – education and the growth of the whole person are synonymous. Children, they claim, are continually encountering new situations and experiences and therefore keep having to imagine new possibilities, take risks and face up to new possibilities thus gaining a sense of self and of their capabilities. Adams, Hyde and Woolley (2008 pp.48-49) go on to argue that finding this sense of self is an essential part of childhood and

that a developing sense of being connected to others goes beyond anything tactile or visible, “it is, in essence, spiritual”. The spiritual dimension, they say, requires that individual children gain a sense of who they are and begin to develop their view of how they fit into the world (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008 p.50). The spiritual aspect of learning, in their view, involves understanding that we are part of something far greater than ourselves and that life is a precious thing to be valued and treated with care (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008 p.76). Similarly, the spiritual element of relationships (the sense of one’s own being and the notion of respect for the self and others) is highly important (Adams, Hyde and Woolley, 2008 p.77).

Although children do appear to go through cognitive development in stages, as described by Piaget’s model, Hart (2003 p.92) argues that these stages are general and broad and that it is relatively easy to find exceptions to this model. He claims that young children have shown a capacity for thinking about the big questions (metaphysics), “inquiring about proof and the source of knowledge (epistemology), reasoning through problems (logic), questioning values (ethics), and reflecting on their own identity in the world” (Hart, 2003 p.92). The ability to use the imagination, says Hart (2003 p.110), can lead to spiritual breakthroughs and he goes on to develop the idea that Froebel (the nineteenth-century creator of kindergarten) emphasised, “that play is very much a spiritual activity” (Hart, 2003 p.164). Play, Hart (2003 p.165) continues, enables children to find and define themselves; “Play is the holy work of children.” Hart (2003 p.171) takes the view that children are “inherently spiritual beings” and that nourishing their spiritual life means drawing out the spirituality that is already there. According to Hart (2003 p.214), the beliefs that logical thought and language is more important than feeling and that “God-talk” (how a child thinks and talks about God in relation to a particular religious doctrine) is more important than spiritual experience logically prevents the possibility that children have a spiritual life; “Based on these beliefs, children have to wait until adolescence or adulthood, when

they have sufficient cognitive capacity and religious knowledge, for genuine spirituality.” However, Hart (2003 p.214) argues that although children’s capacity for obtaining finite knowledge may be underdeveloped, “they have surprising access to the *infinite*.”

Hart (2006 p.167) maintains that wonder is of developmental significance for children. He cites several factors which enable children to respond readily to moments of wonder; their lack of rigid egoic structure; their natural capacity for absorption; their intuitive style of knowing; their perception of novelty, “all mixed with the novelty of life” (Hart, 2006 pp.167-168).

Hart (2003 p.143) is keen to stress the importance of integrating and balancing all the different parts of one’s life in order to develop spiritual potential. Hart (2003 p.186) claims that seeing life as an opportunity to learn (“earth school”) makes it easier to accept and welcome what life brings. Spirituality, he maintains, is about the whole of life, not just isolated moments, ideas or skills; experiences and capacities are less important than how we use what we know: “The goal is not to have big experiences; it is to learn and to live with big love and big wisdom” (Hart, 2003 p.218). Hart (2003 p.144) summarises this view by stating that it is not our capacities or wondrous experiences that determine a spiritual life, “it is what we do with them – what we learn and how we live – that is the measure of our spirituality.” In his later paper, Hart (2006 p.170) develops this idea in relation to the child’s capacity to demonstrate wisdom which, he says, in the spiritual life is something to be strived for. Hart maintains that wisdom does not come only with age and experience since “children often show a remarkable capacity for cutting to the heart of the matter, for accessing profound insight and wise guidance” (Hart, 2006 p.170). Some children, Hart continues, manage to master the concept that wisdom is not just about what we know but is about how we live, “how we embody knowledge and compassion in our life and, as Emerson said, blend a sense of what is true with what is right”

(Hart, 2006 p.171). Hart concludes that children already have a spiritual life; “they have access to wisdom and wonder, struggle with questions of meaning and morality, and have a deep sense of compassion” (Hart, 2006 p.175).

Scarlett (2006 p.26) analyses four approaches to religious and spiritual development which all take the stance that religious and spiritual development should not be thought of in terms of stages and universal end points. Among these approaches is the “spiritual child movement” represented by Hay, Nye and Hart which, according to Scarlett (2006 p.28), is “bent on getting across one main idea, namely, that children have the capacity for rich and varied spiritual experiences that form ... the foundation of their religious, ethical, and spiritual development.” In his view, however, there are weaknesses in this approach since by emphasising children’s “spiritual experiences” the group has de-emphasised the role of judgement, reasoning and thinking (Scarlett, 2006 p.29). He also questions the group’s approach to the way in which development is conceived: “It is one thing to point out moments of awe, wonder, and wisdom in the lives of children and another to define faith and its development” (Scarlett, 2006 p.29). In Scarlett’s view, the latter is the more significant task. Scarlett (2006 p.29) goes on to suggest that research has yet to show whether moments of awe, wonder, wisdom and relational consciousness enable or contribute to the establishment of a foundation for religious and spiritual development. For Scarlett (2006, p.29) the question remains as to “how these innate capacities develop into mature patterns of faith.”

Scarlett (2006 p.31) calls for a new phase of research which combines the strengths of stage-structural approaches (which assisted in the task of defining religious and spiritual development) and current approaches (which have attempted to correct deficiencies in stage-structural approaches). He explains that this next phase of research needs to provide a more differentiated concept of stage; describe and explain the development of

persons and not just “domain-specific” achievements; describe and explain the development of religious and spiritual imagining and not just reasoning; provide ways to evaluate content and not just structure: “But most of all it needs to focus on faith, not just belief, and faith’s development” (Scarlett, 2006 p.32).

Wright (1996 p.147) claims that all education is spiritual in nature since all learning inevitably asks questions of ultimate truth and meaning. Spirituality, he states, is “embodied in the whole of the curriculum” and spiritual education must be concerned with the way things actually are in the world and the appropriateness of our relationships to such truth (Wright, 1996 p.147). According to Wright (1996 p.145) the self is constituted and formed by the developing nature of its communal relationships – with the self, with others, with the natural world and with God – as the individual experiences a spiritual striving towards a true relationship and communion of self with the world. Wright (1996 p.148) summarises his view of the spiritually educated child as one who has more than a highly developed sensitivity towards his or her existential self: “Rather, the whole child will be able to utilize the learning that is central to education in a way that allows him or her to develop communal relationships with themselves, with society, with nature, and with the presence or absence of divinity in a manner that takes seriously the ultimate issues of the truth and meaning of the world we have been thrown into, and that is informed, articulate, literate and above all realistic” (Wright, 1996 p.148).

Farmer (1992 pp.265-266) points to imaginative activity as a significant aspect of the child’s attempts to cope with the discrepancies in their understanding of the world, enabling them to maintain or protect their inner lives: “The activity of the imagination, as it emerges here, is a vital means of communication between the mysterious, the pre-conceptual, and language, the conceptual in all its forms.” For participants in Farmer’s study, nature is

seen as a source of nourishment and healing which both establishes their connection with spiritual realities and is an immediate expression of them (Farmer, 1992 p.266). This view of nature reached its fullest expression in the Romantic movement and, Farmer (1992 p.266) points out, it was also the Romantics who said that children are capable of understanding this idea in an immediate and non-conceptual form. For those taking part in Farmer's study (Farmer, 1992 p.267) it was essential for the process of finding purpose in their lives that they be "present to" or "stay with" their own spiritual perceptions and "discover, for them, its unique and changing intersection with the world." Ultimately they discovered that the result of this process (of finding purpose in their lives) was increased understanding and compassion for others as they were faithful to the truths they had seen in early transcendent experiences (Farmer, 1992 p.268).

In their research into the role of choral reading of plays in supporting children's spirituality, Trousdale and Bach (2010) state that poetry has long been a primary means of spiritual expression. However, to their surprise, they discovered that it was not simply the content of the poems that touched the children on a spiritual level, it was the *process* of working with the poems which enabled them to express their spirituality: "The freedom to play with the poems, the physical involvement that choral reading afforded were what provided for them an expression of their spirituality" (Trousdale and Bach, 2010 p.9). The children appreciated the opportunity to bring themselves (the "whole child" including body, emotions, imagination and mind) to the process of interpretation as the researchers created the space for the children to express their own spirituality and stepped back, allowing them to take the lead in the process (Trousdale and Bach, 2010 p. 9). Trousdale and Bach (2010 p.9) conclude that a sense of freedom in approaching an aesthetic experience – freedom to play with possibilities, try out ideas, abandon ideas that do not work, hear other's voices and adjust one's own thinking – are important components of providing a spiritually enriching experience for children.

Worsley (2009 p.146) argues that the act of storytelling between parent and child enables a deeper processing to take place when a sacrosanct space and time allows the child to relax and explore ideas and concepts contained within the stories: "Children who can rely on this custom will be those who are better resourced educationally, spiritually and in terms of their own security." Here the child, says Worsley (2009 p.148), can face the darkness from the security of the parent's arms and from a known place. According to Worsley (2009 pp.148-149), religious narratives can offer an explanation of how the world works as stories can span the past, the present and the future and wrestling with the meaning of the story "in the company of a parent who is comfortable with the process, is likely to develop spiritual wonder in the child."

According to Fisher (2009 p.10) the spiritual dimension is at the heart or very essence of being; it is one of the six separate, but interrelated, dimensions that comprise human health – the others being physical fitness, the mental and emotional aspects of knowing and feeling, the social dimension that comes through human interaction and the vocational domain. He quotes Eberst in saying that "it is the spiritual dimension which seems to have greatest impact on overall personal health" (Fisher, 2009 p.11). Spiritual well-being, Fisher (2009 p.11) goes on to claim, is an indicator of an individual's quality of life in the spiritual dimension. Fisher's review of the relevant literature leads him to conclude that there are four sets of relationships which are mentioned when discussing spiritual well-being and that these relationships can be developed into four corresponding domains of human existence, for the enhancement of spiritual health:

relation with self, in the *Personal* domain
relation with others, in the *Communal* domain
relation with the environment, in the *Environmental* domain, and
relation with the transcendent Other, in the *Transcendental* domain.
(Fisher, 2009 p.11)

Fisher (2009 p.11) developed detailed descriptions of these four domains of spiritual health following interviews with 98 educators in 22 secondary

schools in Victoria, Australia. From these were derived a definition in which spiritual health is described as: “a, if not *the*, fundamental dimension of people’s overall health and well-being, permeating and integrating all the other dimensions of health ...” Spiritual health, he goes on to state, is shown by the extent to which people live in harmony within relationships in the domains of spiritual well-being outlined above.

In his research, *The Spirit of the School*, Stern (2009 p.17) claims that spirituality is best understood as dynamic rather than as a set of traditions and beliefs. He examines the relationship between creativity and inclusivity and their contribution to spirituality in the school context, as well as considering the ability of the school community to provide safe opportunities for the suspension of belief or disbelief, and to return or move on from those suspended beliefs or disbeliefs (Stern, 2009 p. 52). Stern (2009 p.57) quotes Buber in describing how spirituality emerges when a child begins to speak “and the growth, learning and spirit of the child develop through learning.” Hence, “although the spirit was in the child before it tells its story, ... [t]he child ‘has spirit’ for the first time when it speaks” (Buber quoted by Stern, 2009 p.57). Spirituality, therefore, emerges through dialogue or communication (Stern, 2009 p.57). The spirituality Stern (2009 p.12) puts forward is “personal, communal, human, inclusive and creative” and essentially ordinary.

A cautionary note is sounded by Smith (2001 p.3) in his discussion of the term “spiritual” when he points out that often when we use this word we have something good in mind but we also use the word to refer to an aspect of being human which everyone has, regardless of how it is lived out, so that to be human is to be spiritual. It may be associated with good qualities such as humility or empathy or a sense of purpose and meaning which are not necessarily shared by all to the same degree, so that being “spiritual” is something to be attained: “This is where spirituality becomes spiritual

growth” (Smith, 2001 p.3). However, Smith (2001 p.4) maintains that it is unhelpful to think about spiritual development as a clearly defined set of stages and instead speaks in terms of “creating spaces where spirituality is affirmed and spiritual growth can happen.”

Cox (2011 p.110) argues that the spiritual is part of what makes up a “whole” person and should therefore be included in a person’s education. According to Cox (2011 p.111): “The human spirit, no less than the physical body, has needs that have to be met if it is to be healthy and develop.” Those needs, he continues, include “the need to be loved and to love, to feel worth and appreciation, to have opportunities for giving as well as receiving, to have a sense of belonging” (Cox, 2011 p.111). Cox (2011 p.111) maintains that in order to flourish, the spirit must have opportunities to be stimulated and express itself through art, writing, music, dance or physical activity. In addition he says that: “Religious faith believes that the spirit also needs to be supported through opportunities for what has been described as ‘devotional spirituality’ – individual and corporate prayer, worship, reflection and contemplation” (Cox, 2011 p.111).

Cooling (2010 p.44) challenges curriculum planners to address the question, “how can my subject be taught in a way that promotes the development of pupils as spiritual beings?” rather than asking, “what has to be done to ensure that pupils become competent in the knowledge and skills inherent to my subject?” This entails a shift in thinking, Cooling (2010 p.44) continues, from subject competence towards the contribution that subject teaching makes to character development. Cooling (2010 pp.46-47) uses examples from language teaching to illustrate the way in which linking learning with reflection on moral and spiritual issues can enable pupils to learn something about themselves.

Instead of exploring children’s spiritual development, Csinos’ research concentrates on discerning children’s “spiritual styles”. From his research,

Csinos (2010 pp.48-51) argues that there are four spiritual styles exhibited to a greater or lesser degree by children which he labels, “*word, emotion, symbol and action*”. Each style has its distinguishing characteristics and Csinos maintains that a healthy spirituality involves a good balance between these styles being present in the lives of individuals and calls for adults to “work to create spaces of intentional inclusivity and environments of harmonious dissonance” (Csinos, 2011 p.124) where each style can be explored and none will feel excluded.

2.4 PEDAGOGY, PERFORMATIVITY AND PHILOSOPHY FOR CHILDREN

This section first explores the importance of prevailing pedagogical approaches and provides an important context in which to explore how successfully the case study school was able to nurture children’s spirituality through its classroom pedagogy. The section then goes on to consider the effects of a ‘performativity culture’ on classroom pedagogy. These effects are then explored later in the thesis in relation to the case study school and the way in which it attempted to maintain high levels of performance alongside a desire to encourage and nurture children’s spirituality. The section concludes with a review of literature related to Philosophy for Children which would provide a rationale for the introduction of P4C within the curriculum of the case study school and allow connections to be made between the pedagogical approach offered by P4C and the nurturing of children’s spirituality.

2.4.1 The importance of pedagogy

In attempting to define pedagogy in 2003/4, Alexander (2008 p.173) offered the following statement:

Pedagogy is the act of teaching together with its attendant discourse. It is what one needs to know, and the skills one needs to command, in order to make and justify the many different kinds of decisions of which teaching is constituted.

This definition was adapted in 2007 by the Department for Education and Science; “pedagogy is the act of teaching, and the rationale that supports the actions that teachers take. It is what a teacher needs to know and the range of skills that a teacher needs to use in order to make effective teaching decisions” (quoted by Alexander, 2008 pp.173-174).

Alexander (2008 p.173) arrived at his definition having identified that despite teaching being at the heart of pedagogy, they are not synonymous; “we need a separate word to connote the combination of the act of teaching and the values, evidence, theories and collective histories that inform, shape and explain it, a word that will lead us away from the blinkered pragmatism of ‘what works’ into the realm of ideas and argument. That word ... is pedagogy.” From this standpoint, Alexander (2008 p.183) argues that pedagogy as discourse is not an optional extra, rather there is an obligation to expose and debate the ideas, beliefs, values and theories that shape what teachers and students do; “Pedagogy has a purpose. It mediates learning, knowledge, culture and identity. It enshrines – or ought to enshrine – visions of human empowerment, the good society and a better world.”

Therefore, according to Alexander (2008 p.1) pedagogy provides teaching with a “bigger picture” as it makes teaching educative not just technical since it provides values, justifications, theories and evidence for the practitioner. Pedagogy, he continues, enables exploration of the curricular context of teaching and learning; exploring the relationship between knowledge “out there” and the ways in which learners engage and reach their own understanding of the world that the subjects seek to explore and map (Alexander, 2008 p.3). For Alexander (2008 p.4), there is a crucial link between teaching and values since, he claims, pedagogy “is the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and beliefs by which that act is informed, sustained and justified ...” He summarises the distinction between teaching and pedagogy; “Teaching is an *act* while pedagogy is both act and

discourse. Pedagogy encompasses the performance of teaching together with the theories, beliefs, policies and controversies that inform and shape it. Pedagogy connects the apparently self-contained act of teaching with culture, structure and mechanisms of social control” (Alexander, 2000 p.540).

Leach and Moon (2008 p.4) state that good teachers examine values and beliefs not just strategies and techniques since pedagogy is more than an accumulation of strategies and techniques, “it is formed by a view of mind, of learning and learners and the kinds of knowledge and outcomes that are valued” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.6). Quoting Bruner, Leach and Moon (2008 p.101) proffer the view that when children are seen as constructing a model of the world to aid them in understanding their experience, “Pedagogy then becomes the process to help them understand better, more powerfully, less one-sidedly.” Leach and Moon (2008 p. 102) claim that pedagogy is a social, collective process since “It requires an engagement with groups as well as individuals, and learning expectations that go beyond the personal.” They go on to state that “If we believe that learning is essentially a lifelong process, then identity must be at the heart of pedagogy” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.143).

Moss and Petrie (2002 p.118) also take the view that “Because it relates to learning, and social learning in particular, pedagogy cannot be value-free” and that the values that inform pedagogy differ from country to country and over time (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.141). Therefore, they continue, pedagogical discussion can take place around such questions as “What do we want for our children?” and “What is a good childhood?” In their view, in children’s settings “sharing daily life is the stuff of the pedagogic approach: pedagogues and children form a community sharing ideas, activities, learning, meals and outings ...” (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.143). They define pedagogues as reflective practitioners who think about situations and relationships, bring to bear theories on these, decide how to proceed and review the results of their

actions (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.143). This pedagogic approach is, they claim, holistic since it views the body, mind, emotions, creativity, history and social history as inter-connected parts of the child's life and it is relational since the child is not seen as an autonomous subject but as living in networks of relationships (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.143). Thus, for Moss and Petrie (2002 p.144), "Pedagogy has learning at its heart, with the pedagogue as someone whose role it is to accompany children in their learning process and, often, to help children become conscious and reflect on their own learning." This learning is, they continue, an ongoing process which encompasses learning about "self in relation to others, about one's talents and power, about creativity and about the physical world" (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.144).

Alexander (2000 p.393) emphasises the importance of classroom talk within the learning process, stating that "Classroom talk is *managed* talk; and to manage classroom talk is to orchestrate events, people and time as well as knowledge, understanding and learning." However, he takes the view that talk, although agreed to be vital, is rarely used in an effective way in order to engage children and scaffold their understanding (Alexander, 2008 p.92). The use of closed teacher questions, he continues, results in children reporting someone else's thinking rather than thinking for themselves (Alexander, 2008 p.93). In his analysis of classroom talk, Alexander concludes that in interactive whole class teaching, "there may be a failure to attend to the *meanings* that are being constructed and exchanged" (Alexander, 2008 p.96). Consequently he states that classroom interaction can be too limited or one-sided "to provide the teacher with contrary evidence about what kind of a person each of their students really is" since "if children need talk to learn about the world, teachers need talk in order to learn about children. The first condition is more generally understood than the second" (Alexander, 2008 pp.99 and 93). Dialogue should, he states, be something that teachers and students do together in order to learn (Alexander, 2008 p.100).

As a result of his observation and analysis of interactions in English primary school classrooms, Alexander (2008 p.105) noted that teachers gave children time to recall but less commonly gave them time to think. He contrasts this with his observation of Russian classrooms where the teacher constructs a sequence of more sustained exchanges with a smaller number of pupils with the result that “because there is time to do more than parrot the expected answer, the talk is more likely to probe children’s thinking” and often leads to children explaining the way they have worked through a problem while the others listen, look and learn (Alexander, 2008 p.106). The type of classroom talk Alexander espouses is ‘dialogic’ talk which, he states, is different from extended talk; “A long answer is not enough. It’s what happens to the answer that makes it worth uttering, and transforms it from a correct or incorrect response to a cognitive stepping-stone” (Alexander, 2008 p.118).

According to Leach and Moon (2008 p.165) pedagogy can change people’s lives since it has a power to transform lives. They quote Dewey’s assertion that “Education is not the preparation for life, it is life itself” and the approaches of Montessori and Ciari when they argue children should engage in a continuous process of discussion, interpretation and presentation of their work in order to achieve pedagogical success (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.2). They state that pedagogy should build the self-esteem and identity of learners by developing their sense of what they believe or hope themselves to be capable of; their sense of self, where they are coming from, where they think they are going, what sort of person they want to be (Leach and Moon, 2008 pp.6-7). In order to do this, they continue, “pedagogic settings should create the conditions for reflection and dialogue as well as productive cognitive conflict. Developing habits of mind that are questioning and critical is central to pedagogic endeavours. Therein lies the power of pedagogy to transform lives” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.7).

Leach and Moon (2008 p.8) state that “authentic pedagogy” is explicit about vision, values and educational purposes and “addresses ‘big ideas’”. In their view, “the process of identifying the big ideas and working pedagogic strategies around these is important” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.103). They examine the process of Assessment for Learning, stating that teachers should allow longer “wait time” during whole-class discussions so that students realise that their learning depends less on their capacity to spot the “right” answers and more on their readiness to express and discuss their own misunderstandings; “In this sense teachers shift their role from being presenters of content to leaders of exploration and the development of ideas” (Leach and Moon, 2008 pp.88-89). Teachers, they conclude, need to balance the known and the new since knowing a place well provides the security and energy to change and innovate; “A teacher who is confident in their pedagogic knowledge, understanding and expertise has the power to improve, innovate and reform. This places the teacher as an intellectual at the heart of the pedagogic endeavour” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.173).

In arguing for children to have spaces in which to explore and realise new possibilities, Moss and Petrie (2002 p.145) claim a central role for the pedagogue who gets children to reflect on learning so that they arrive at meanings together; “In this space, children and pedagogues engage in reflective and critical ways of knowing and in the construction rather than the reproduction of knowledge.” They ask whether schools can become “children’s space” where there are spaces for co-operative learning, children’s culture and children’s voices (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.178). Whilst acknowledging that there may be a place for performance indicators, Moss and Petrie (2002 p.184) express the view that, “A concern for delivery and outcomes leaves little time or space for thinking differently – or much thinking of any kind. A concern for standardisation and regulation is not conducive to the exploration of different approaches, both in theory and practice.”

2.4.2 Performativity

Research by Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007, pp.549-572) indicates that schools, caught in the high stakes accountability systems that currently operate in England and Wales, focus particularly on the collection of what is measureable. The work of Ball demonstrates the ways in which, in order to do well in these measurable terms, schools adopt forms of performativity that reflect the need to succeed in inspections rather than their own deep seated beliefs about teaching. Ball discusses the effects of this performativity on the “soul” of teachers who lose the sense of the authenticity of their work and professional identity. Teachers themselves become “ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent” (Ball, 2003 p.220).

Ball (2003 p.216) defines performativity as:

... a technology, a culture and a mode of regulation that employs judgements, comparisons and displays as means of incentive, control, attrition and change – based on rewards and sanctions (both material and symbolic). The performances (of individual subjects or organisations) serve as measures of productivity or output, or displays of ‘quality’, or ‘moments’ of promotion or inspection. As such they stand for, encapsulate or represent the worth, quality or value of an individual or organisation within a field of judgement.

According to Ball (2003 p.215), performativity requires teachers to respond to targets, indicators and evaluations by “setting aside personal beliefs and commitments and liv(ing) an existence of calculation.” He maintains that the issue of who controls the field of judgement is crucial since who it is that determines what counts as valuable, effective or satisfactory performance and what measures or indicators are considered valid leads to highly individualised struggles on the part of teachers whose values “are challenged or displaced by the terrors of performativity” (Ball, 2003 p.216). These struggles, comments Ball (2007 p.216), “are often internalised and set the care of self against duty to others.” Ball (2003 p.217) argues that these

developments are changing what it means to be a teacher leading to a struggle over the teacher's soul which is illustrated in the sense of who teachers are in relations with students and colleagues. He cites Bernstein in support of his assertion that for teachers "contract replaces covenant" or "putting it another way, value replaces values – commitment and service are of dubious worth within the new policy regime" (Ball, 2003 p.217).

Ball (2003 p.218) claims that this performative culture has introduced a new ethical system which is based upon "institutional self-interest, pragmatics and performative worth" creating an ethics of competition and performance that contrasts with "the older ethics of professional judgement and co-operation. A new basis for ethical decision-making and moral judgement is erected by the 'incentives' of performance." This, he continues, leads teachers to become uncertain about the reasons for their actions; "Are we doing this because it is important, because we believe in it, because it is worthwhile? Or is it being done ultimately because it will be measured or compared?" (Ball, 2003 p.220). The result is, according to Ball (2003 p.221), that teachers experience a "*values schizophrenia*" where "commitment, judgement and authenticity within practice are sacrificed for impression and performance" and there is a split between teachers own judgements about "good practice" and students' "needs" and the "rigours of performance."

According to Ball's (2003 p.222) research, teachers find themselves struggling for their identity; as one teacher stated, "I don't care anymore. I think that's why I haven't found myself because I do in fact care ... I don't feel that I'm working with the children, I'm working at the children and it's not a very pleasant experience." Linked to this, says Ball (2003 p.222) is a loss of opportunity for teachers to develop a rationale for practice or to recognise that what they do has meaning since they "are required to produce measurable and 'improving' outputs and performances, what is important is *what works*." Ball (2003 p.222) quotes a teacher from research by Jeffrey and

Woods who summarises this loss; “I never get the chance to think of my philosophy anymore, my beliefs. I know what I believe but I never really put them into words anymore. Isn’t your philosophy more important than how many people get their sums right?”

Ball (2003 p.224) documents a shift in the meaning of the word “care” within this performance-related culture, stating that whilst we are no longer expected to care about each other “we are expected to ‘care’ *about* performances and the performances of the team and the organisation and to make our contribution to the construction of convincing institutional spectacles and ‘outputs’”. As a consequence, Ball (2003 p.226) concludes; “Effectivity rather than honesty is most valued in a performative regime.” Ball (2003 p.226), therefore, warns that the nature of teaching and learning and the inner-life of the teacher are potentially profoundly affected by this regime.

Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007 p.549) also explore the implications of the performance culture for primary teachers’ work, identities, commitment to teaching and how they view their careers. In particular, they document the difficulties teachers have faced when attempting to implement policies of creativity in the context of “unremitting performative pressures” (Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl, 2007 p.552). They draw attention to the Primary National Strategy (PNS) which indicated a more creative approach to teaching and learning without abandoning the standards agenda (Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl, 2007 p.558). This strategy, according to interviews carried out by Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007 p.558) appeared to resonate with headteachers who wanted to re-focus on the “real task (of) developing human beings.” The difficulty facing headteachers identified in this research was how to maximise test scores “whilst maintaining the motivation and commitment of staff and pupils, and satisfying external inspectors that policies were being implemented in a cost-effective manner” (Troman, Jeffrey

and Raggl, 2007 p.559). This resulted in what the researchers termed a “cautious” creativity which did not abandon a focus on maximising test scores (Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl, 2007 p.562). They concluded that in the schools where they carried out their research, raising pupil test scores involved “both performative and creative strategies” within a complex policy context (Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl, 2007 p.568).

Jeffrey (2002 p.4) states that performance indicators act as a form of accountability but that this is also a form of discourse since “it is a practice that incorporates values, establishes behaviours and affects relations”. He discusses the new values that result from this performativity discourse which prioritises “the pursuit of excellence and accountability by focusing on the satisfaction to be gained from the achievement of goals and improvements in performance” (Jeffrey, 2002 p.4). The inter-dependency of teachers and children espoused by the Plowden Report has, according to Jeffrey (2002 p.6), been replaced by the mutual dependency of children becoming more dependent on teachers “to supply all the necessary knowledge and skills to increase performance skills” whilst teachers become dependent on children’s performance in tests for assessments of their practice. Jeffrey (2002 p.8) claims that the influence of the performativity discourse has led to “the person in the child (becoming) transformed into the ‘pupil’” with teachers applying more pressure on the children such that their caring, nurturing role “was reconstructed into caring predominantly for pupil performance”. Jeffrey (2002 p.10) claims that the performativity approach changes the learning relation “from an investigative one into one of deliverer and receiver, a relation in which the child as pupil becomes the subject of curriculum aims.”

Lumby and English (2010 pp.71 and 73) state that the performative world has ensured that the scrutiny of a school’s audience is more intense than ever, such that a great deal of leadership activity is concerned with preparation for inspection or the presentation of data; “as a performance designed to control

what is revealed and what is concealed.” They quote Perryman who asserts that “the whole school effort is directed away from education and toward passing inspection” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.73). There are, they claim, ongoing high levels of surveillance under which leaders demand “compliance with standards in order to maintain a fragile sense of control” (Lumby and English, 2010 pp.108 and 111). They agree with Korac-Kakabadse, A and Korac-Kakabadse, N who suggested that the obsession with target setting and performance management in the late twentieth- and twenty-first centuries “is an attempt to manage and defeat the uncertainties and anxieties of modern life” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.66). Lumby and English (2010 p.112) conclude that “values are set aside to deliver primarily the economic goods, rather than the social good.” In response to this situation, Lumby and English (2010 p.123) call for leaders to demonstrate the qualities of a steward in their leadership. A school steward, they maintain, recognises the value of every child and the right of that child to be seen as worthy of care and support (Lumby and English, 2010 p.123). They suggest that whilst passing tests does matter, “a steward would see this achievement as a part of a holistic picture of an individual’s worth, and not as the primary value” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.123). A second level of meaning, they continue, is suggested by Murphy’s use of the term “moral steward” since “What is to be protected and preserved goes beyond individual students and relates to the values that must be communicated to each generation as it experiences education” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.123).

In countering the negative effects of the performativity culture, Lumby and English (2010 p.126) suggest that school leaders should adopt a middle way by becoming “strategic compliers” who do not reject all change demanded by policy; “rather, they filter possibilities through their value system and act with shrewdness to accommodate to some degree, and to deflect or adapt, as their values dictate.” Such a leader, they claim, makes their primary contribution to the education of children by modelling values-based

behaviour (Lumby and English, 2010 p.126). Education, they state, is a moral venture connected to sets of values “and school leaders are the custodians of those values and moral purposes” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.95). They compare the nature of school leadership to that of religious leaders and claim that in doing so this can “open the door to a more realistic view of the nature of our work” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.95).

2.4.3 Philosophy for Children (P4C)

Leach and Moon (2008 p.3) claim that the approaches to pedagogy advocated by Dewey, Ciari and Montessori all faced controversy because each saw a new approach to pedagogy “as representing something much greater than a more effective approach to teaching” since with their vision of teaching came “a new view of learners and learning within which to conceive the relationship between teacher and learner ... they saw pedagogy as going beyond the specific skills of the teacher to embrace ... wider purposes and beliefs ...”.

Leach and Moon (2008 p.4) go on to state that good teachers examine values and beliefs not just strategies and techniques and quote Dewey’s assertion that teachers need to be freed from thinking that knowledge “simply required passing on to students an agreed curriculum of relatively de-contextualised information” since “School instruction is plagued by a push for quick answers. This short circuits the necessary feeling of uncertainty and inhibits the search for alternative methods of solution” (Dewey in Leach and Moon, 2008 p.22). They conclude that “It may be that there is no higher obligation for contemporary pedagogy than the re-instatement of big ideas and humanity” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.29). Teachers, they continue, are required to develop the “big questions that are worth asking and that explore those issues that are critical to students developing understanding” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.89). They point to the need for “shared goals” or a shared agenda among pupils and between teachers and pupils (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.150) and the creation of pedagogic settings which create the conditions for reflection and dialogue and “productive cognitive conflict”

since “Developing habits of mind that are questioning and critical is central to pedagogy” (Leach and Moon, 2008 p.168).

Alexander (2008 p.130) also espouses this view when he describes dialogic teaching in which there is an exchange of ideas which goes beyond a dialogue of voices to a “dialogue of *minds*” as participants engage in the kind of talk that presupposes that each participant is “genuinely interested in what the other is saying and thinking”. The greater reciprocity thus engendered in classroom talk and relationships, he claims, ensures that children ask questions as well as the teachers and ideas are exchanged rather than simply transmitted; “it is accepted that students sometimes know things that the teacher does not, and that the teacher wants to hear about them” (Alexander, 2008 p.130). He quotes Bakhtin’s sense of dialogue: “There is neither a first nor a last word. The contexts of dialogue are without limit. They extend into the deepest past and the most distant future” (Alexander, 2008 p.131).

In attempting to define philosophy, Taylor (2012 p.98) describes it as a method: “a means of enquiry, not a body of doctrines. It is the quest to make sense of fundamental ideas” and its purpose is to explore the meaning of ideas and to promote understanding (Taylor, 2012 p.101). He contrasts this with modern, assessment-oriented education which focuses on factual learning “at the expense of conceptual understanding” since the dominance of facts leads to less time for exploring the conceptual structure of the knowledge acquired (Taylor, 2012 p.101). This, he continues, requires time to allow students to think about what they are learning as a whole: “The name we give to thought which aims to perceive the logical relations between ideas and to reflect on the meaning of the whole – is philosophy” (Taylor, 2012 p.102). Students, he continues, require time to explore ideas, to enquire and to ask questions in order to promote a deeper level of understanding; the goal being to “enable a clearer appreciation of the meaning of things and

awareness of the limits of knowledge. Philosophy's contribution to knowledge lies in its contribution to understanding" (Taylor, 2012 p.138). Taylor (2012 p.137) contrasts this view of learning for its own sake with "teaching-to-the-test" which means that instead of putting outcome measures into context, "we end up allowing the system of measurement to determine the way in which we teach".

Stanley (2004 p.11) states that "We all philosophise at various times in our lives, and perhaps more so as we are growing up" as we want to know about our existence, relationships, place in society and the wider world and ask questions about the things that happen to us – what? how? why? Philosophy, she continues, is "about asking those important questions and trying to justify our answers. It is concerned with questions and theories that are relevant not only to our present life, but also to our past and our future" (Stanley, 2004 p.11). Although such questions may, she acknowledges, be seemingly unanswerable, "it is important that we don't just give up" (Stanley, 2004 p.11). This is the premise on which Stanley (2004 p.11) introduces Philosophy for Children (P4C) as a practical way of "getting children to unlock their curiosity."

P4C is a curriculum produced by Lipman and Sharp in the 1970s which was based on the belief "that children can and should be encouraged to philosophise" (Stanley, 2004 p.13). Stanley (2004 p.13) provides a brief history of P4C which was based on the Socratic method of systematic questioning and dialogue: "starting from the point of assuming that one knows nothing, an argument is built up through step-by-step reasoning and agreement, with any inconsistency being challenged." Through this programme children were encouraged to talk and listen to each other within a "community of enquiry" facilitated by the teacher. Lipman wrote a series of philosophical texts for use with children which explored, for example, morality, power, love, religion and the nature of our existence. His work was

developed by Karin Murrell. By using picture books, she enabled much younger children to access philosophy. Stanley (2004 p.14) claims that P4C enables children to “learn to ask questions and to think deeply about the things that are in front of their eyes” and that it is a “lifelong learning tool”.

The “community of enquiry” which is a central component of P4C, according to Stanley (2004 p.15), “takes away the emotional and intellectual fear of many children for whom answering questions is a high-threat occupation” since the community of enquiry welcomes all children’s opinions, focussing on the process rather than the product (the “right answer”). A context is created in which children know they will not be judged or forced to join the dialogue unless they want to and where the “dialogue supports young learners as they formulate their ideas and those of others, as they begin to make connections, and as they see and explore unsuspected possibilities and question their way towards understanding” (Stanley, 2004 p.15). Stanley (2004 p.15) summarises philosophical enquiry as a “process that encourages a sharing of views to reach a balanced, personal perspective, using a variety of tools from the thinking toolbox.” Stanley (2012 p.5) further asserts that philosophy allows children to make connections with real-life experiences and “gives them the confidence to test their ideas and questions about the complexities of the world in which we live. Philosophical teaching and learning requires curiosity about life’s big questions.”

Stanley (2012 p.60) describes philosophy as both unsettling and liberating since it brings freedom from the constraints of providing an expected answer; “You can change your mind or be the devil’s advocate in order to move your thinking forward. You do not know the route of the argument neither do you know the destination.” According to Stanley (2012 p.60), P4C encourages children to “listen to their own voices and those of their peers in a safe environment” where there is trust, where risks can be taken and mistakes made as ideas are explored. Adults too, she claims, must “learn to listen to

our own voices”; questioning assumptions and opinions in order to “become aware of what philosophical concepts or big issues mean to us” thus allowing the questions we ask ourselves to “develop the thinking of the group” (Stanley, 2012 pp.60-61).

Stanley (2012 p.159) makes a distinction between dialogue as a speaking and listening exercise and a true enquiry; “Enquiry comes from the desire to push for deeper understanding. Our ultimate aim as a facilitator is to allow the children to ask and think for themselves.” Hence, she continues, the children need to understand the importance of the skills involved in the enquiry if adult involvement in the interaction is ultimately to be kept to a minimum; “The children must first learn how to listen, clarify, expand upon and search together for deeper understanding” (Stanley, 2012 p.159). Through the process of P4C children, according to one facilitator whose comments Stanley (2012 p.212) recorded, are given the confidence to speak their ideas and share their questions; “Certain children who shine in these dialogues were not obviously academic and yet they are given the tools to express their amazing ideas.”

Haynes (2002 p.12) outlines approaches to P4C (or “philosophy with children”) in which discussion arises from the children’s questions to a stimulus and where such discussion gravitates towards the questions that are open-ended and have no immediate and obvious answer; there is a democratic process whereby the facilitator enables the children’s discussion to follow its own course rather than towards a planned outcome. Children, she continues, are encouraged to think “logically, critically and creatively, to reason and reflect, and to deliberate with an open-minded disposition” and the teacher “models the language of philosophical discourse and introduces conceptual tools to extend or to record the development of ideas” (Haynes, 2002 p.12). Ultimately, according to Haynes (2002 p.12), children collaborate “not towards unanimity, but towards shedding light from many different

angles on a particular question. The drive is towards truth-seeking, rather than towards resolution and convergence of opinion. Disagreement and divergence are normal and expected. Answers to questions are searched for but they are seen as provisional.”

An important aspect of P4C, in Haynes’ (2002 p.14) view, is the effect on the teacher of participating in the community of enquiry since teachers, she states, should not remain distant “from the well of being that is child.” It is also, she continues, “a location where the particular child of the teacher can not only safely appear, but enrich the adventure of doing philosophy” (Haynes, 2002 p.14). In order to achieve this depth and range of learning experience for all those involved, participants must, according to Haynes (2002 pp.21 and 23); “listen for the thought and feelings that lie between the words, suspending one’s own response and taking time to understand what is being said.” This process, she asserts, draws attention to “questions of power, freedom and control in relationships among adults and children” (Haynes, 2002 p.21).

The fact that answers in P4C are provisional is, comments Haynes (2002 p.35), at odds with a curriculum where there is an emphasis on precise learning objectives and outcomes. The focus of P4C is rather to move beyond a simple sharing of different opinions and experiences to a “shared dialogue concerning the key concepts embodied in the question, so as to generate new meaning and understanding” (Haynes, 2002 p.37). Haynes (2002 p.41) points out that children’s questions “take us away from these defined paths and beyond to bigger and deeper spaces of knowing and being, where the edges are blurred or beyond our reckoning” and that this challenge to “think otherwise” enhances the search for knowledge and understanding. However, she continues, making room in the classroom for “otherwiseness” produces a “curious tension, since it cannot be written into the official curriculum.”

Haynes (2002 p.46) discusses Lipman's view that "caring thinking" needs to be taught alongside critical and creative thinking. Haynes (2002 pp.46-47) cites the example of one child who spoke about philosophy club where she and her friends could share problems and get advice on what to do since the pupils made use of the community of enquiry to explore real-life problems in a philosophical way thus exemplifying the "caring thinking" espoused by Lipman which cares "enough to make the effort to hear what others are saying and developing the capacity to see the merits of each point of view." Haynes (2002 p.46) goes on to describe the community of enquiry as caring for the paths to truth and justice which includes caring for the imagination as well as for logic; "Philosophical thinking involves on the one hand passionate reasoning and on the other hand caring for self and others through learning detachment from the need to be right or certain about everything. It is a case of caring with others, sharing responsibility, rather than making decisions on behalf of others." She concludes, "Caring thinking can be much more democratic when we consult children for their points of view and give decisions to them to make whenever possible" (Haynes, 2002 p.46).

Haynes (2002 pp.48-52) stresses the need for philosophical enquiry to be tested and applied in daily life as children explore the gap between knowing what seems right and doing what seems right and as they engage in philosophy's interest in rearranging and reframing ideas and beliefs; attempting to exist "in places of uncertainty, exploration, possibility and imagination" since "Philosophising requires that assumed boundaries and freedoms should be questioned." According to Haynes (2002 pp.55 and 58), philosophy with children brings the development of thinking and values together as children inhabit a space between external life and inner reality which they negotiate through play (quoting Winnicott) and imaginative thinking. Philosophy, she states, "thrives on the capacity to re-describe, to imagine the possibility of things being otherwise" (Haynes, 2002 p.59).

The development of an “inner voice” occurs, according to Haynes (2002 p.65), as children engage in “intra-personal dialogue” which develops skills of introspection and reflection, in turn benefitting collaborative thinking and discussion with peers. Haynes (2002 p.79) considers whether silence can contribute to the development of children’s freedom of thought and general wellbeing as in the days when schools were more authoritarian and periods of enforced silence offered respite; “The imagination could remain at liberty. The mind itself had privacy.” In conclusion, Haynes (2002 p.80) suggests “that silence provides an opportunity to support the thinking process, reflection and personal expression.” She makes the point that often we expect a thoughtful response from children yet do not always promote the contemplation which makes such responses possible (Haynes, 2002 p.80).

Haynes (2002 p.95) claims that P4C offers a time and space for children where their questions matter and where they learn to put puzzling ideas, thoughts and feelings into words. However, she also quotes a teacher who states that P4C provided them with “a space in which to observe and experience the company of children in new ways” (Haynes, 2002 p.134) and advises that “teachers who are keen to see children develop as philosophers should work on the provision of an open space for questioning and dialogue, rather than over-planning and mentally rehearsing a session” (Haynes, 2002 p.137). In this secure atmosphere, Haynes (2002 p.151) claims, children can develop a sense of self and make contributions with confidence and she connects this development of self with pupils’ spiritual development which “includes the growth of a sense of self and entails the capacity to make responsible moral decisions” (Haynes, 2002 p.147).

In her paper on Gadamer, Weber (2009 p.311) discusses Gadamer’s view that a question is only meaningful if it is provoked by an inner yearning; “To be able to question means to want to know, and to want to know means to know what one doesn’t know.” Weber (2009 p.311) claims that children exist in a

state of not knowing things and often they “know that they don’t know”; they are “confronted by an openness of possibilities”. In contrast, she continues, the pedagogue “is traditionally and by definition the one who is supposed to know. Philosophising with children reverses these roles and challenges pedagogues to reflect their self-understanding in a community of inquiry” (Weber, 2009 p.311). Consequently, she states, children usually ask questions not because they want to be right “but because they genuinely want to *know*” (Weber, 2009 p.312). Listening attentively is, according to Gadamer (Weber, 2009 pp.313-314), crucial to the process of opening a space “in which to be reached by the other” so that it becomes possible to understand what another person has to say thus enabling deeper engagement with the ideas which are “thrown into the circle”. Like Haynes above, Weber (2009 p.314) argues that in P4C an attitude is required which cares deeply about what the other has to say; “an attitude that doesn’t focus solely on the search for potential inconsistencies in the other’s argument, but that tries to understand the other’s opinion in its completeness and uniqueness.” Weber (2009 p.319) concludes that what is important here “is neither certainty nor correctness, but the quest for truth which comes from meaning.”

Reflecting on the etymology of the word “pedagogue” (from the Greek *paid-agogos*, the one who leads the child towards its home), Weber (2009 p.321) argues that pedagogues should not be regarded as leaders who already know the truth:

but as experienced and trustworthy companions who encounter and accompany children on their path through life. Neither the philosopher nor the pedagogue nor the child knows this path in its entirety. Past, present and future generations are all pilgrims along this path. During this shared pilgrimage, the members of these generations can experience each moment of life with greater intensity and awareness.

2.5 BERNSTEIN'S PEDAGOGICAL THEORIES

Bernstein's pedagogical theories became increasingly important during the analysis stage of the research process as a lens through which to interpret the data. His inclusion in the literature review reflects this process and provides the background to the selection of theories from Bernstein that were relevant to this particular study.

Bernstein's purpose in *Pedagogy, Symbolic Control and Identity* is to develop a model to describe how the teaching which occurs in society is organised, discussed and passed on. In addition, he aims to show the ways in which the receivers of that teaching choose what to receive or learn. He uses examples from across the whole of society, not just within education. The pedagogic codes he describes are not only about direct teaching; they include all the relationships and ways of being in schools. Bernstein (2000 p.3) focuses on the underlying rules which govern the way teaching is shaped by society. In doing this, Bernstein (2000 p.3) is seeking to understand the way in which "knowledge systems become part of consciousness." His aim is to create a model from which more specific descriptions can be derived.

Bernstein (2000 p.4) states that he intends to delve beneath the theories which view education as the means of reproducing power relations external to the school, for example reproducing divides of gender, race or class. His intention is to examine the discourse or teaching itself (its structure and logic) to exemplify the way in which that teaching carries or conducts these "external power relations". In other words, Bernstein claims, the means of cultural (re)production is through the language – the control on language and the sorts of language it is desirable to use (Bernstein, 2000 p.4). Thus, Bernstein (2000 p.4) is seeking to explain "the inner logic of pedagogic discourse and its practices" by analysing the way in which a pedagogic text or teaching language has been composed through its rules of construction, circulation, acquisition and change.

Bernstein poses several questions; how does power and control translate (transform) into principles (rules) of communication (language)?; how do these principles of communication affect different people's views or ideas "with respect to their reproduction and the possibilities of change?" (Bernstein, 2000 p.4). In other words, do people simply accept and "reproduce" what they are told or are they awakened to the boundaries of possibilities?

Bernstein introduces his work by considering the conditions for an effective democracy. There are, he states, two conditions for such a democracy: people (in the case of schools these are the parents and pupils) must feel they have a stake in society (the school) through receiving and giving; people must have confidence that the political arrangements will deliver this stake (or explain why not) (Bernstein, 2000 p.xx). To achieve these conditions, Bernstein (2000 pp.xx-xxi) identifies three 'institutionalised rights' which need to be in place; enhancement (the right to the means of critical understanding and to new possibilities which provides the confidence to take action); inclusion (socially, intellectually, culturally and personally which creates *communitas* – the right to be included and to be separate); participation (discussion and practice with outcomes so that order is constructed, maintained and transformed – participation operates at the level of politics).

Reducing conflict between social groups within such a democracy is achieved, according to Bernstein (2000 p.xxiii), by creating a discourse "which emphasises what all groups share, their communality, their apparent interdependence." This discourse, he continues, generates "*horizontal solidarities*" which unite staff and pupils across social groups: "All schools make massive attempts to create horizontal solidarities among their staff and students, irrespective of the political ideology and social arrangement of the society" (Bernstein, 2000 p.xxiii). Bernstein calls this discourse a "mythological discourse" which, he states, consist of two pairs of elements: "One pair

celebrates and attempts to produce a united, integrated, apparently common national consciousness; the other pair work together to disconnect hierarchies within the school from a causal relation with social hierarchies outside the school” (Bernstein, 2000 p.xxiii).

However, these horizontal solidarities may, according to Bernstein (2000 p.xxiv), be threatened by the hierarchy in schools which is based on the success and failure of students. Bernstein claims that schools individualise failure and legitimise inequalities by blaming inborn facilities or cultural deficits from families: “Education preserves structural relations between social groups but changes structural relations between individuals” (Bernstein, 2000 p.xxiv).

Bernstein is concerned that social class is a “major regulator of the distribution of students to privileging discourses and institutions” and that we therefore need to consider “the constraints and grip of class-regulated realities” which can lead to “macro inequalities”, raising crucial issues “for the relation between democracy and education” (Bernstein, 2000 p.xxv). He seeks to understand the workers and workings of the pedagogic communication of the symbolic control which maintains the “intrinsic stratification features of modern educational systems and of the social groups upon whom these stratification features are likely to be inscribed” (Bernstein, 2000 p.xxv). Bernstein concludes that, “To know whose voice is speaking is the beginning of one’s own voice.”

2.5.1 Power and control

According to Bernstein (2000 p.5), power relations create, legitimise and reproduce boundaries between different categories of groups, gender, class, race, types of teaching, different teachers. Power, he continues, produces dislocations between these groups, operates on the relations between categories and establishes legitimate relations of order – power is in the

position or the difference between different people or different groups of people (Bernstein, 2000 p.5).

Control, Bernstein (2000 p.5) claims, establishes “different forms of communication appropriate to the different categories.” Control determines the type of language that can be used and can determine both what is reproduced and what may change (Bernstein, 2000 p.5).

Bernstein (2000 p.5) concludes that control establishes legitimate communications (the language to be used) whilst power establishes legitimate relations between categories (who speaks to whom); for example, Teacher – Student, Visitor – Teacher. Hence, power is in the boundary between categories (the difference between us) so that “power constructs relations *between*, and control relations *within* given forms of interaction” (Bernstein, 2000 p.5).

Bernstein (2000 p.5) is interested in the practice of teaching (power) and the language of teaching (control) and the need to develop a special language which derives “macro relations” (the bigger picture) from “micro interactions” (the local situation / example). Language, he states, needs to show “the process of interaction and the potential for change” in order to generate general principles from which specific descriptions can be derived (Bernstein, 2000 p.5).

2.5.2 Classification

Bernstein (2000 p.6) uses the term ‘classification’ to refer to a defining attribute (something which distinguishes) of the relations between categories, rather than the categories themselves. Therefore, French can only be French if it has a clear boundary or distinction from German – there is no French, unless it relates to other categories in the set. Power is carried in the full stop between one type of teaching and another.” Consequently, if the insulation between categories is broken then “a category is in danger of losing

its identity, because what it is, is the space between it and another category” (Bernstein, 2000 p.6).

Bernstein (2000 p.7) claims that the insulation between the categories is maintained through power; strong classification provides strong insulation between categories and each category has a unique identity, voice and rules of internal relations. In fact, he states, all classifications (whether strong or weak) carry power relations (Bernstein, 2000 p.7).

Bernstein (2000 p.8) identifies the Medieval University as the “first moment of pedagogic classification” where strong classification between the Trivium (logic, grammar and rhetoric – the Word) and the Quadrivium (astronomy, music, geometry and arithmetic – structure of the physical world) are “integrated through God” as “socialisation into the word makes the abstract exploration of the world safe.” The Trivium, he continues, comes first since it is concerned with the construction of inner consciousness (Bernstein, 2000 p.8). Bernstein argues that Christianity inserted a dislocation between the inner and outer consciousness “as a means of a possibility and transformation of total experience” and that this dislocation becomes “a fundamental problematic of all European philosophy and social science” (Bernstein, 2000 p.8). This, he concludes, “is an example of the use of classification, of strong classification, in the medieval period and the power on which it was based and relayed – the church” (Bernstein, 2000 p.9).

Contemporary examples of strong and weak classifications are, Bernstein (2000 pp.10-11) claims, found in secondary schools which tend to be strongly classified and very different (other) from home and primary schools which tend to be more weakly classified as there is more contact or interaction between school and home.

Bernstein goes on to consider classification of the distribution of knowledge in the school. He states that strong classification of discourse is likely to lead “to a dislocation in the transmission of knowledge because, with strong

classification, the progression will be from concrete local knowledge, to the mastery of simple operations, to more abstract general principles, which will only be available later in the transmission” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11). He concludes that there is “an internal classification and distribution of forms of knowledge” and that when children fail at school “they are likely to be positioned in a factual world tied to simple operations, where knowledge is impermeable” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11). Those who are successful have access, according to Bernstein (2000 p.11), to the general principle and a small number of these “will become aware that the mystery of the discourse is not order, but disorder, incoherence, the possibility of the unthinkable.” He warns that “the long socialisation into the pedagogic code can remove the danger of the unthinkable, and of alternative realities” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11).

Bernstein summarises this section of the model through two basic rules; strong classification means that things must be kept apart, whereas with weak classification things must be brought together: “But we have to ask, in whose interest is the apartness of things, and in whose interest is the new togetherness and the new integration?” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11).

2.5.3 Framing

According to Bernstein’s (2000 p.12) model, classification establishes voice (power, units and boundaries) and framing establishes the message (control, what is acquired or heard and the form it takes); classification refers to *what*, framing is concerned with *how* meanings are to be put together, the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it. Framing, he argues, can be used to analyse the different forms of acceptable language used in teaching and refers to the controls on communications in local interactional teaching relations: between parents and children, teacher and pupils (Bernstein, 2000 p.12).

Bernstein (2000 p.12) describes the ‘realisation rules’ of learning how to speak in a particular context and links this to framing which is about who

controls what, so that learners know how to speak “in the right way.” Where there is strong framing the teacher has control over the selection and sequencing of a lesson; where there is weak framing the learner or receiver has more apparent control (Bernstein, 2000 p.13).

2.5.4 Discourse

Bernstein (2000 p.13) describes two systems of rules which are regulated by framing – social order (regulative discourse or where the knowledge comes from) and discursive order (instructional discourse or what knowledge is explored). Instructional discourse, he continues, is embedded in regulative discourse hence where there is weak framing over instructional discourse there must be weak framing over regulative discourse (Bernstein, 2000 p.13). Where there is strong framing the rules of instructional and regulative discourse are explicit and pedagogic practice is visible or obvious; where there is weak framing the rules of instructional and regulative discourse are implicit and “largely unknown to the learner” (Bernstein, 2000 p.14). Bernstein (2000 p.14) describes a classroom with strong classification where there is a “specialisation of spaces” and he claims that “where external framing is strong it often means the images, voices and practices the school reflects make it difficult for children of marginalised classes to recognise themselves in the school.”

Recognition rules, according to Bernstein, enable a speaker to recognise what is expected in a particular context; where classification is strong recognition of the power relations in a context becomes easier and more obvious (Bernstein, 2000 p.17). However, Bernstein states that unless one has the realisation rule one cannot speak the legitimate text and it would be possible to acquire a place in the classificatory system (know your place) without learning the “legitimate pedagogic code” (Bernstein, 2000 p.17). Hence, the realisation rule determines how we put meanings together and how we make

them public (speak about them) so that a legitimate text or right language might be produced (Bernstein, 2000 p.17).

Bernstein speaks of the two basic classes of knowledge which exist in all societies – the esoteric and the mundane: “There is the knowledge of how it is (the knowledge of the possible), as against the possibility of the impossible” (Bernstein, 2000 p.29). According to Bernstein, in modern society control and management of the unthinkable is carried out by the higher agencies of education while the thinkable is managed by the secondary and primary systems (Bernstein, 2000 p.29). He identifies a potential discursive gap which “is the crucial site of the yet to be thought” which is both beneficial and dangerous at the same time (Bernstein, 2000 p.30).

In Bernstein’s view there is only one discourse in the classroom, not two – there should be no distinction made between ‘transmission of skills’ and ‘transmission of values’ (Bernstein, 2000 p.32). He points out that researchers talk about values on the one hand and competence on the other: “In my view there are not two discourses, there is only one” (Bernstein, 2000 p.32).

Regulative discourse is, according to Bernstein (2000 p.34), the dominant discourse. As it is the moral discourse it creates criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct, posture; it tells children in the school what to do, where they can go and creates the rules of social order (Bernstein, 2000 p.34). Regulative discourse, he continues, also creates the order in the instructional discourse: “There is no instructional discourse which is not regulated by the regulative discourse” (Bernstein, 2000 p.34). Therefore, the whole order within pedagogic discourse is “constituted by the regulative discourse” (Bernstein, 2000 p.34).

Bernstein claims that the purpose of the pedagogic device is to “provide a symbolic ruler for consciousness. Hence we can see the religious origins of the device: religion was the fundamental system for both creating and controlling the unthinkable, the fundamental principle for relating two different worlds,

the mundane and the transcendental” (Bernstein, 2000 p.36). He draws parallel positions between the religious and the educational fields whereby Prophets may be likened to Producers (of knowledge), Priests to Reproducers and Laity to Acquirers (Bernstein, 2000 p.37). For Bernstein, then; “The pedagogic device acts as a symbolic regulator of consciousness; the question is, whose regulator, what consciousness and for whom? It is a condition for the production, reproduction and transformation of culture” (Bernstein, 2000 pp.37-38).

2.5.5 Performance and competence

Bernstein defines competences as creative and tacitly acquired in informal interactions; “They are practical accomplishments” (Bernstein, 2000 p.42) and are based on the concept of empowerment (Bernstein, 2000 p.57) – what you can do or know. A performance model of pedagogic practice and context, however, places emphasis on “a specific output of the acquirer, upon a particular text the acquirer is expected to construct and upon the specialised skills necessary to the production of this specific output, text or product” (Bernstein, 2000 p.44). The performance mode is based on the concept of deficit (what you cannot do or do not know), upon an absence “and as a consequence place the emphasis upon the text to be acquired and so upon the transmitter” (Bernstein, 2000 p.57).

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 INTRODUCTION

The central purpose of my research was to develop an understanding of the spiritual dimension of a Church of England Primary School and the ways in which spirituality is developed and nurtured in this context. My overarching question was therefore:

- How can church schools nurture and develop children's spirituality?

This question was divided into three main research questions:

1. How does teaching and learning contribute to the development of children's spirituality?
2. How do the symbols and cultural life of the school contribute to the nurturing of spirituality?
3. How does the church contribute to the spiritual dimension of the school?

Each question covered a potentially large area of research. In order to focus my study further I divided each main research question into sub-questions.

1. To explore teaching and learning in the school I decided to investigate the curriculum of the school and the pedagogies being used, as well considering the impact of the philosophy and beliefs of the teacher:
 - a. Which aspects of the curriculum contribute to children's spiritual development?
 - b. Which pedagogies are being used and what impact do they have?
 - c. What impact do the philosophy and beliefs of the teacher have?

As a trained P4C practitioner, I was particularly interested in exploring the possible impact of Philosophy for Children on children's spiritual development by asking:

- d. Does the teaching of Philosophy for Children contribute to children's spiritual development?
2. There is an expectation that the culture of a church school will be predominantly Christian. I was therefore keen to discover what difference that culture could make to nurturing children's spirituality:
 - a. How do ethos and values contribute to children's spiritual development through formal situations (eg. collective worship) and informal situations (eg. language and relationships)?
3. A distinctive feature of church schools should be their links with the local church. I wanted to ascertain whether the influence of the local church extended to supporting the school in developing opportunities for spirituality to be explored:
 - a. Does the relationship between church and school support children's spiritual development?
 - b. Does church school distinctiveness contribute to children's spiritual development?

3.0.1 The school

The school, which I anonymised as St Saviour's Church of England Primary School, was selected as the site for my research for a number of reasons. This particular school was well known for having a creative approach to the curriculum and for its distinctive Christian ethos. Through initial discussions with the Headteacher it became apparent that he was especially keen to explore different approaches to thinking skills and welcomed the opportunity to introduce Philosophy for Children. He was also involved in developing a

variety of ways of exploring spirituality with the children and wanted to extend this further. It seemed, therefore, that this school could be a rich site for exploring my research questions (see also Chapter 1).

St Saviour's School is an average size Church of England primary school serving a rural community located ten miles from a Midlands city. At the time of the last full OFSTED inspection the school had 214 pupils on roll. A high proportion of children are from socially advantaged backgrounds. There are few pupils with learning difficulties and the children come from predominantly white backgrounds. The church is within walking distance of the school and there are strong links between the school and the church. Classrooms are light and spacious and there is a strong emphasis on displaying good quality work completed by the children. The school holds many awards, reflecting the creative nature of the learning environment, and has achieved "Outstanding" grades in both OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education) and SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections.

Although there were some changes in staffing during the period covered by this research, staffing levels generally have been stable with several staff having been in post for a number of years. The Headteacher joined the school in 1994.

I decided to take an ethnographic approach to my research and therefore inhabit the role of participant observer. As a Diocesan Schools Adviser I had access to the school in a supportive, advisory role; a position which could potentially influence what happened in the school. As a researcher in the school my role altered since I was there to observe what was happening. This participant observer role allowed me to be part of what was happening in the school whilst simultaneously watching and understanding how things worked in the context of this particular school; participating in people's daily lives for an extended period of time, gathering a variety of data in order to "throw

light on the issues that are the emerging focus of the inquiry” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.3); focussing on observational data to produce “a celebration of things as they are” which, according to Silverman (2013 p.3), is a hallmark of good ethnography.

The process I followed, therefore, produced data which was non-statistical and matched the description of qualitative research provided by Strauss and Corbin (1998 pp.10-11) which they defined as “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” and can refer to research about “person’s lives, lived experiences, behaviours, emotions, and feelings as well as about organisational functioning, ...” Some of the data collected, they continue, may be quantifiable but most of the analysis will be a nonmathematical process of interpretation, “carried out for the purpose of discovering concepts and relationships in raw data and then organising these into a theoretical explanatory scheme” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998 p.11).

3.1 THE ETHNOGRAPHIC APPROACH

For the sixteen month period of my data collection I was engaged in observing what was happening ‘in the field’ in actual situations as they arose for the members of St Saviour’s School at that particular time. My research included a variety of data collection methods such as observation, interviewing and document analysis which allowed me to consider various views of the school community and to focus on one particular class in the context of the school as a whole. This natural approach is a broadly ethnographic approach that reflects the four aspects of traditional ethnography outlined by Barton and Hamilton (1998 pp.57-58):

1. The study of real-world settings, focussing on a particular place at a particular point in time, dealing with people's real lives; "we never ask anyone to take a decontextualised test and we never stage a photograph."
2. A holistic approach which aims at whole phenomena.
3. Multi-method, drawing on a variety of research techniques such as interviewing, detailed observation and systematic collection of documents.
4. Interpretative – aims to represent the participants' perspectives by highlighting the actual words people use.

By participating in the lives of this particular group of people for an extended period of time, I was able to observe what happened, listen to what was said, ask questions, collect documents and take photographs. The process I followed, of studying people's actions in everyday contexts, gathering a range of mostly unstructured data, studying in-depth a single community of people and analysing the data through description and interpretation, broadly conformed to the five features of ethnographic work detailed by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.3):

1. People's actions are studied in everyday contexts, 'in the field'.
2. Data are gathered from a range of sources, including documentary evidence. Participant observation and/or informal conversations are usually the main data sources.
3. Data collection is mainly 'unstructured' in two senses. Firstly it does not involve following through a fixed and detailed research design specified at the start. Secondly, the categories used for interpreting what people say or do are not built into the data collection process through the use of observation schedules or questionnaires. Instead they are generated out of the process of data analysis.
4. To facilitate in-depth study, the focus is usually on a few cases, generally small-scale, perhaps a single setting or group of people.
5. Analysis of the data involves interpretation of the meanings, functions, and consequences of human actions and institutional practices, and how these are implicated in the local and wider contexts. Generally verbal descriptions, explanations and theories are produced rather than quantification and statistical analysis.

(Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.3)

I gained access to the school through teaching P4C sessions which became the focus of the first phase of the data collection process. I adopted an exploratory approach as I worked with a particular class over a series of eight P4C sessions, discovering the kinds of questions the children were asking and interested in discussing. This enabled me to redefine my initial interests so that my study became more clearly focussed on the specific set of research

questions detailed above (section 3.0) and enabled the strategic collection of data “to pursue answers to those questions more effectively, and to test these against evidence” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 pp.3-4).

This collection of data in a “natural” setting involved occupying a role in the field (the facilitator of P4C sessions) thereby becoming a participant observer, a distinctive characteristic of ethnographic work according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.4). Finding a role in the field required the negotiation of access, re-negotiating access when the initial contact (the class teacher) was absent on long-term sick leave and establishing working relations with different teachers. The initial exploratory nature of the research necessitated a relatively unstructured approach to gathering data as I decided how to record observations (with the help of the class teacher as well as my own field notes), who to interview (when and where) and what other data sources would be useful. Since the collection of data was relatively unstructured, processing and analysing the data was likely, in the words of Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.4), to take “a considerable amount of effort, and time ...” making ethnography “a demanding activity, requiring diverse skills, including the ability to make decisions in conditions of considerable uncertainty” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.4).

The ethnographic approach I adopted enabled me to attempt to observe, in Silverman’s (2013 p.9) words, “things being seen afresh”; seeing remarkable things in everyday situations and seeing “the *mundane* elements of *remarkable* events and contexts.” This resonated with the content of my study which came to focus on perceiving the spiritual in the everyday, echoing the words of Alfred Schutz’s description (quoted by Silverman, 2013 p.3) of ethnography which sets aside the habit of taking the everyday world for granted and Arbus’ ability to “see the divineness in ordinary things” (quoted by Silverman, 2013 p.3).

Through this ethnographic approach I aimed to illuminate the issues identified using data which was not easily open to measurement; asking questions and refining the areas of research as I proceeded, following a grounded theory methodology. This grounded theory method of discovering theory from data, as developed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) and outlined below, provided a helpful framework within which I could consider and carry out my research.

3.1.1 Grounded theory

Use of the term “grounded theory” was first made by Glaser and Strauss (1967 p.1) when they expounded the method of discovering theory from data; a theory which, they claimed, “fits empirical situations, and is understandable to sociologists and layman alike.” Rather than the verification of theory, Glaser and Strauss (1967 pp.1-2) emphasised the discovery of concepts and hypotheses that were relevant to the area of research undertaken. Hence they claim that this method of generating grounded theory “is a way of arriving at theory suited to its supposed uses” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p.3). According to Glaser and Strauss (1967 p.3), theory is a strategy for handling data in research which provides the means by which to describe and explain concepts; clear categories and hypotheses that can be verified in present and future research; is easily understandable to sociologists of any viewpoint, to students and to laypersons; “Theory that can meet these requirements must fit the situation being researched, and work when put into use.” In order to generate theory that meets these requirements, Glaser and Strauss (1967 p.3) suggest that the best approach is “an initial, systematic discovery of the theory from the data of social research.” In their view, theory based on data cannot be completely refuted by more data or replaced by another theory; “Since it is too intimately linked to data, it is destined to last despite its inevitable modification and reformulation” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p.4). Using this method of generating a theory from data means, they continue, that not only do the

hypotheses and concepts come from the data they are also systematically worked out in relation to the data as the research takes place (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p.6).

Glaser and Strauss (1967 p.23) comment that when discovering theory, conceptual categories or their properties are generated from evidence and that the evidence from which the category emerged is used to illustrate the concept; “The evidence may not necessarily be accurate beyond a doubt ... but the concept is undoubtedly a relevant theoretical abstraction about what is going on in the area studied.” The concept itself, they state, will not change even if the facts change since “concepts only have their meanings respecified at times because other theoretical and research purposes have evolved” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p.23).

As my initial phase of research continued I systematically coded my data (see section 3.3.1 below) and through this categorising process an initial analysis emerged through which I was able to begin to identify possible theories and further data needs. Glaser and Strauss (1967 p.43) maintain that the process required to generate a theory is likely to be untidy since the operations of collecting, coding and analysing of data should be done together as much as possible; “They should blur and intertwine continually, from the beginning of an investigation to its end.” The process of collecting, coding and analysing data determines, according to Glaser and Strauss (1967 p.45), what data to collect next and where to find them so that the theory can be developed as it emerges; initial decisions are not, therefore, based on a preconceived theoretical framework. This process, which they term “theoretical sampling”, provides direction, purpose and momentum as the researcher “develops strong confidence in his categories, since they have emerged from the data and are constantly being selectively reformulated by them” (Glaser and Strauss, 1967 p.76).

Both Silverman (2005 p.150) and Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.159) stress the importance of analysing data from the outset of the research process; “In ethnography the analysis of data is not a distinct stage of the research ... to one degree or another, the analysis of data feeds into research design and data collection (and) is central to the ‘grounded theorising’ promoted by Glaser and Strauss, in which theory is developed out of data analysis, and subsequent data collection is guided strategically by emergent theory” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.159).

This “grounded theory” methodology, was developed further by Strauss and Corbin (1998 p.12) as a theory “that was derived from data, systematically gathered and analysed through the research process.” Strauss and Corbin (1998 p.12) claim that in this method, data collection, analysis and eventual theory “stand in close relationship to one another.” I began my research without a preconceived theory in mind, preferring to (in Strauss and Corbin’s words) “allow the theory to emerge from the data” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998 p.12). They claim that “theory derived from data is more likely to resemble the ‘reality’ than is theory derived by putting together a series of concepts based on experience or solely through speculation” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998 p.12). Therefore, Strauss and Corbin (1998 p.12) conclude that because grounded theories are drawn from data, they are “likely to offer insight, enhance understanding, and provide a meaningful guide to action.” I became immersed in the life of St Saviour’s School, taking the stance of a participant observer, to collect a rich data set on which to base an ethnographic description of the school. By analysing the data through an appropriate lens I attempted to develop a theory which would offer insights into the spiritual dimension of St Saviour’s School.

3.1.2 The use of a case study

My decision to use a single school as the site for my study raised questions about what a single case study can or cannot illustrate. Some of the literature on case study research offered insights into the process of developing a single case study which were of particular relevance here. Stake (1995 p.xi) comments, for example, that in studying the complexity of a single case that is of special interest, “We look for the detail of interaction with its contexts. Case study is the study of the particularity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances.” Stake (1995 p.1) points out that cases are of interest “for both their uniqueness and their commonality” and that “We seek to understand them” as we are sincerely interested in “learning how they function in their ordinary pursuits and milieus” and we “put aside many presumptions while we learn.”

There is a tension here between understanding a single case and being able to generalise from it. Some of the features of my case study school were likely to be replicated in other church schools whilst many individuals and particular practices would be unique to this context. However, according to Stake (1995 p.7), case study research is not primarily concerned with producing generalisations since it is rare to reach an entirely new understanding; a refinement of understanding is more likely. Stake (1995 p.7) coins the phrase “*petite generalisations*” for the generalisations that occur throughout a case study which relate to a case or a few cases in a particular situation. “*Grand generalisations*”, he continues, can be modified by case study and whilst “We do not choose case study designs to optimise production of generalisations ... valid modification of generalisation can occur in case study” (Stake, 1995 pp.7-8). Yin (2014 p.21) also addresses the concern about this apparent inability to generalise from case study findings, stating that the case study does not represent a “sample”. Stake (1995 p.8) points out that case study is

about “particularisation, not generalisation”; “We take a particular case and come to know it well, not primarily as to how it is different from others but what it is, what it does. There is emphasis on uniqueness, and that implies knowledge of others that the case is different from, but the first emphasis is on understanding the case itself.”

This is a helpful comment since my aim was to understand this particular school at this particular time through discovering the ways in which teaching and learning, symbols and culture, and church involvement were contributing to the opportunities provided for children to engage with spirituality and from this study to see whether there were lessons to be learned concerning the development and nurture of children’s spirituality in other church schools.

I chose this school knowing that there was strong interest in children’s spirituality and in the introduction of P4C and that it was likely I would be able to “maximise what (I could) learn about (my) original purpose” (Stake, 1995 p.4) – to gain an understanding of the effect that introducing P4C might have on the development of children’s spirituality. Issues of accessibility were, according to Stake (1995 p.4), more important than being able to defend the “typicality” of the case. Stake (1995 p.4) also comments that sometimes a “typical” case works well but that often an unusual case “helps illustrate matters we overlook in typical cases.” My priority, therefore, was to understand and learn from this one case study. As Stake (1995 pp.6-7) points out, the opportunity to learn from the case study is of primary importance and often readers of case studies will recognise a great deal that is relevant to their own situations even though “in many ways the cases are different.”

Following the qualitative enquiry approach described by Stake (1995 pp.8-9), I became “an interpreter in the field”, attempting to record objectively what happened whilst simultaneously examining its meaning and redirecting observation “to refine or substantiate those meanings.” My initial research questions were modified during the study since my aim was, in Stake’s (1995

p.9) words, “To thoroughly understand (the case). If early questions are not working, if new issues become apparent, the design is changed.” Maintaining interpretation whilst gathering data was an important element of my early data collection, enabling me to draw some initial conclusions and modify the subsequent data collection process (see section 3.3.1 below). However, Stake strikes a cautionary note when he states that the assertions made by researchers are not always closely tied to what they have described as happening since “For assertions we draw from understandings deep within us, understandings whose derivation may be some hidden mix of personal experience, scholarship, assertions of other researchers” which could be helpfully labelled as “speculation” or “theory” (Stake, 1995 p.12). However, Stake (1995 p.12) urges patience and reflection rather than reaching the hasty conclusions which can result from drawing too much attention to interpretation.

The use of a case study approach provided links to the everyday, real world and the multiple realities experienced at St Saviour’s as identified in Yin’s (2014 p.16) definition which describes the scope of a case study as an empirical enquiry that “investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the “case”) in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident” (Yin, 2014 p.16). Case study research was appropriate in this context since I wanted to understand a real-world case where such an understanding involved investigating a church school context in which spirituality and children’s spiritual development was being taken seriously or, in Yin’s (2014 p.16) words, “where such an understanding involves important contextual conditions pertinent to your case.” Within the real-world situation of school life, however, it was not always possible to clearly distinguish between the phenomenon under investigation (spirituality) and the context of the school (its ethos and values) thus producing a feature of case study research in which “there is the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more

variables of interest than data points” (Yin, 2014 p.17). Consequently, he continues, case studies rely on multiple sources of evidence, with “data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (Yin, 2014 p.17).

By approaching my case study empathetically, I was able to see a “slice” of the everyday life of this school and provide one reading of a set of circumstances which was affected by my presence (see discussion in section 3.2.1 below). During the data collection period I attempted to be “noninterventive and empathetic” (Stake, 1995 p.12), avoiding disturbing the ordinary activity of the case, obtaining information through discrete observation or examination of records, attempting to understand how the people being studied saw things. Whilst he concedes that the interpretations of the researcher are more likely to be emphasised than those of the people studied, Stake (1995 p.12) claims that “the qualitative case researcher tries to preserve the *multiple realities*, the different and even contradictory views of what is happening”. I attempted to reflect these “multiple realities” by talking to a number of different members of the school community, including teaching and non-teaching staff, the Headteacher, pupils and the local vicar, whose experiences of the realities of school life varied. The ethnographic approach taken allowed for all of these realities to be reflected in the data collection and analysis process. The stance taken during the research inevitably affected this process and is discussed in the following section.

The research presented here is, therefore, a case of a school where spirituality is taken seriously such that it is explored and nurtured within the context of a church school through a particular style of leadership that also strives to maintain ‘outstanding’ grades for both OFSTED and SIAMS inspections. The way in which the school defines spirituality is explored in Chapter 4 followed by a description in Chapter 5 of where opportunities for spiritual development are provided in the daily life of the school. The tension created by the requirement to perform according to inspection criteria at the

same time as nurturing children's spirituality is explored in the analysis of findings in Chapter 6.

3.2 THE RESEARCH

3.2.1 Access

The Headteacher of St Saviour's had a strong commitment to the establishment of a creative curriculum which, in his words, "allows children to not only be the best that they can be but to explore who they might become." He was actively seeking to engage with and explore the possibilities of introducing Philosophy for Children in the school as well as being interested in the questions I was asking. The school offered a dynamic learning environment where both staff and pupils were encouraged to try new things within the context of a distinctively Christian education, making this school an ideal site to carry out a single-site ethnographic case study of the spiritual dimension of a Church of England Primary School.

Access to St Saviour's was readily established since I was already known professionally to the Headteacher and staff in my role as Diocesan Schools Adviser.

3.2.2 Ethical approval

Since my research would include interviewing both adults and children I had to ensure that appropriate consent was sought. This included informing (by letter) parents of children in the class which was to be the focus of the research about the research; sending a letter and consent form to parents of the children to be interviewed which they were asked to complete and return; asking the Rector and staff who were interviewed to sign a participant consent form. In the final thesis I have maintained the anonymity of both the school and all the participants in the research. Ethical approval was received from the University's Research Ethics Committee (see Appendix 1) and the

research was conducted in accordance with guidelines issued by the British Educational Research Association.

3.2.3 Stance and reflexivity

The alteration of my role from an adviser to that of a researcher was not always easy to inhabit. It was necessary to identify and consider carefully the multiple roles and, therefore, the multiple perspectives with which I approached the research. My role in the Diocese as an Adviser and also as a Church School Inspector predisposed me towards certain views about the school. My first instinct was to apply judgements to what I was observing. St Saviour's was an "outstanding" school (according to both OFSTED and SIAMS criteria) which presented me with some difficulties in gaining and maintaining distance and perspective. In addition, I was viewing this church school from a Christian perspective and therefore through a Christian lens thereby giving a particular bias to my view of the school's values and ethos.

Recognition of my stance within the research process enabled me to reflect on my place in the research process; to develop an understanding of self, my impact on the research experience and relationship to research participants. Fox, Martin and Green (2007 p.186) helpfully distinguish between reflection (the process of monitoring or thinking about research as a way of understanding and changing future research practice) and reflexivity (understanding how research is affected, in terms of outcomes and process, by one's own position as a researcher). Reflexivity, they argue, is central to interpretative qualitative research as it refers to the observer / observed dynamic; "Reflexivity proposes that one's identity and lived reality reflect one another, that is, that they are co-constructed. In other words the beliefs of researchers affect the world that they research. Conversely, the world that they research affects their thoughts and beliefs. The two are interdependent – the observer and the observed" (Fox, Martin and Green, 2007 p.186). By participating in the life of the school I was contributing to the curriculum and

developing pedagogy of the school whilst simultaneously observing and being influenced by other members of the school community. My stance and the extended period of time I spent in the school allowed trust to develop with pupils and staff which enabled an honest exchange of views to take place.

Denzin and Lincoln (2008 p.140) state that the researcher has to deal with the reflexive, problematic nature of data and the “tremendous, if unspoken, influence of the researcher as author”; telling what happens is not enough because the “what” depends on the negotiations and other interactive elements between the researcher and the respondent. By discovering reflexivity, Denzin and Lincoln (2008 p.141) claim, it is possible to develop a deeper understanding as the researcher relates the subject of the study to their own experience.

Recognising and acknowledging this “fundamental reflexivity” relies, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.18), on the researcher employing commonsense knowledge and methods of investigation since, “All social research is founded on the human capacity for participant observation.” The researcher is able, they continue, to not only act in the world but is also able to reflect upon themselves and their actions “as objects in that world” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.18). The researcher, therefore, is able to include their role within the research focus thus producing and justifying accounts of the social world (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.18). Reflexivity is, they claim, “an aspect of all social research” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.19). Thus my role within the school (to introduce the use of P4C at the request of the Headteacher) was successfully combined with that of a researcher.

3.2.4 Reliability and validity

According to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 pp.15-16), it is impossible for the ethnographer to avoid having an effect on the social phenomena being studied since we cannot escape the social world in order to study it. However,

they continue, from a realist viewpoint it is unnecessary to do so since it is possible to describe phenomena “how they are and not merely how we perceive them or how we would like them to be” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.16). In their view, “We need only reflect on what seems – or can be shown to be – problematic, while leaving open the possibility that what currently is not problematic may in the future become so” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.16). Although reactivity can be minimised and/or monitored, the fact that researchers are likely to have an effect on the people they study could, they continue, be “as informative as how they react to other situations” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.16). They advocate abandoning the idea that “the social character of the research can be standardised out” thus enabling the role of the active participant in the research process to become clear (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.17). Consequently, they maintain, “The fact that behaviour and attitudes are not often stable across contexts and that the researcher may influence the context becomes central to the analysis” and can actually be exploited (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.17). Data should not, therefore, be taken at face value, rather “Interpretations need to be made explicit and full advantage should be taken of any opportunity to test their limits and to assess alternatives” so that the researcher (like the people being studied) is “actively making sense of the world, yet without undermining the commitment of research to realism” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.17). Having an awareness of these possible effects enabled me to attempt to analyse and interpret what was happening through the lens of a participant in the life of the school as well as that of the researcher, thus providing a rich assessment of the spiritual dimension of the school.

By becoming involved in the life of the school, as the facilitator of P4C sessions, I was able to establish “considerable rapport” (Denzin and Lincoln, 2008 p.165) with staff and pupils that went beyond my previous relationship with the host school as a Diocesan Adviser and allowed me to engage in the

three levels of specificity identified by Denzin and Lincoln (2008 p.165) in relation to participant observation; descriptive observation (annotation and description of all details by the observer who takes nothing for granted, producing large amounts of data some of which may be irrelevant); focussed observation (researcher looks only at material pertinent to the issue at hand eg. religious rituals); selective observation (focussing on a specific form of a more general category eg. initiation rites). According to Denzin and Lincoln (2008 p.167), this view of the ethnographic researcher allows a greater consciousness of “situational identities and perception of relative power” to develop.

In order to mitigate some of the risks of developing a partial view of the school, I employed the technique of respondent validation whereby interviewees saw transcripts of their interviews and were given the opportunity to comment on and validate the content. In Hammersley and Atkinson’s (2007 p.182) view; “The value of respondent validation lies in the fact that the participants involved in the events documented in the data may have access to additional knowledge of the context ... that is not available to the ethnographer.” However, I received no additional information from this process although each of the interviewees concurred that the transcripts represented an accurate record of the conversations between us. Through this process of validation I was allowing participants to be “well-placed informants on their own actions” whose accounts “must be analysed in the same way as any other data, with close consideration being given to possible threats to validity” (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.182). In addition the Headteacher was re-interviewed, to ensure that he had the opportunity to offer further views and reflections which reinforced and extended his initial responses to questions; avoiding the possible difficulties of trying to ensure a fair representation of views from just one interview.

This process of respondent validation is one kind of triangulation, defined by Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.183) as “the checking of inferences drawn from one set of data sources by collecting data from others.” By considering the spoken words of the Headteacher, his actions in the school, the documentation available, my own systematic field notes and the views of different members of the school community at different stages in the research process, I ensured that I was not simply recording my own views. Rather, I was concurring with Hammersley and Atkinson’s (2007 p.183) assertion that “data-source triangulation involves the comparison of data relating to the same phenomenon but deriving from different phases of the fieldwork, different points in the temporal cycles occurring in the setting, or the accounts of different participants (including the ethnographer) differentially located in the setting.”

The request to introduce P4C sessions came from the Headteacher who already had an interest in children’s spirituality and was keen to promote this aspect of school life. Although there was some impact on the situation in the school, the intention was not to conduct an experiment. Rather it was an attempt to identify what factors were contributing to the spiritual dimension of the school and to discover where P4C might enhance the developments that were already taking place in relation to children’s spirituality.

My study of the spiritual dimension of St Saviour’s School was informed by my own awareness, experience and understanding of spirituality in a variety of contexts – personal, interaction with my own children, observation in other schools. Denzin and Lincoln (2008 p.141) observe that in trying to “understand the ‘other’ we learn about (our) ‘selves’, reaching the hermeneutic circle, ie, the circle of understanding.” The methodology in this case reflected the subject of the research, where an understanding of spirituality included understanding the self in relation to others.

3.2.5 Data collection

My initial point of entry to the school was through my role as Diocesan Schools Adviser and through offering to introduce Philosophy for Children (see section 3.1), a curriculum development area which could potentially open up questions related to children's spirituality. Research has been carried out into the cognitive benefits of P4C (most famously the Clackmannanshire Project of 2003) but there has been little research specifically considering the effects of P4C on spiritual development. The contribution of P4C to spiritual development was to be the initial focus of my research.

The first phase of fieldwork began as I worked with a Year 3 class whose teacher (also the RE Co-ordinator) had an interest in Philosophy for Children and was keen to use the community of enquiry approach with her class. The teacher concerned had an extended period of illness which meant that she was unable to participate in these introductory sessions. However, the sessions continued during the remainder of Year 3 (with cover and supply teachers) and into Year 4 with a new class teacher. During these sessions, which lasted for an hour and generally happened weekly, I would lead the lesson whilst the teacher made notes of the children's discussion. The exploration of children's spirituality was developed further with a sub-set of children from this class. Initially a group of eight pupils was chosen, although one pupil left during the course of the study, leaving a group of three boys and four girls, representing 25% of the class. A set of twins was included in the group in order to see how similar (or not) their thoughts and ideas might be, along with one boy whose comments seemed to reflect a depth of thinking he found difficult to express in writing. The pupils were in Year 3, aged 7 – 8, at the beginning of the research period. By the end of the period they were in Year 4, aged 8 – 9. The children were chosen to represent a cross-section of the class – a mix of gender and academic ability. The Y3 class teacher was also the RE co-ordinator and therefore it would be reasonable to

suppose that there might be a relatively high level of religious and/or spiritual literacy within the class.

Access to the school extended over a sixteen month period, comprising Phase 1 (summer term 2010) and Phase 2 (autumn term 2010 to summer term 2011). This period spanned two academic years which allowed me to observe the life of the school for a full academic year and to share in significant moments during that time. I worked with one class (as outlined above) during that time to introduce Philosophy for Children and to observe its impact on the children's thinking and exploration of ideas. Being involved in the life of the school for such a significant period of time allowed me to gather a rich data set which included: interviews with staff, children and the local Rector; teaching and planning notes; notes of pupil discussions in P4C sessions; field observation notes made whilst being part of the life of the school; photos; video; children's written work; school data from self-evaluation documents produced for OFSTED, SIAS and SIAMS; OFSTED, SIAS and SIAMS inspection reports. As well as having a single-class focus, I also attended significant whole-school events such as a welcome service, an assembly and a performance of the Easter Play in the local church. This range of activities and varying degrees of involvement in the life of the school necessitated the adoption of a variety of roles and stances which were discussed in section 3.2.1 above.

The table below identifies the types of data collected, the source of the data and the phases of data collection:

Table of Data Sets

Phase 1	Datatype	Source	Date
Summer term 2010	Observation notes on P4C taught by researcher	Supply/cover teachers (Y3)	
	Planning & evaluation notes on P4C sessions	Researcher	
	Field notes	School visits	
	Photographs	School visits	
	Pupil writing . P4C evaluation	Y3 class(30 pupils)	

Phase 2	Datatype	Source	Date
Autumn term 2010, Spring term 2011, Summer term 2011	Interviews	Headteacher Rector RE Co-ordinator Class teacher 1 Class teacher 2 Y4 (7 pupils) Y6 (6 pupils) Deputy Headteacher Foundation Stage Teacher Teaching Assistant	10/9/10 & 7/10/10 13/9/10 10/3/11 20/1/11 & 27/1/11 6/4/11 Nov 2010 . Jan 2011 17/6/11 14/7/11 14/7/11
	Field notes	School visits	
	Photographs	Schools visits Spiritual art	
	Documents	SEF SIAS Toolkit HT papers	
	Observation notes on P4C sessions taught by researcher	Class teacher 1 (Y4)	
	Planning & evaluation notes re P4C sessions	Researcher	
	Film		
	P4C evaluation Spiritualtree	Y4 (6 pupils) Y6 (6 pupils)	April 2011 14/6/11
	Pupil writing · P4C evaluation · Written response to researcher prompts	Y4 (28 pupils) Small groups of pupils from Y6, Y4 and Reception	April 2011 April, June, July 2011
	Records of specific events	Collective worship Y5 Passion Play	April 2011 Easter 2011

Structured interviews were conducted with staff, the Headteacher and the Rector using the following questions:

- How long have you been at this school? Where were you before? Have you always worked in a church school? Is it important to you?
- What does spirituality mean to you?
- What does the 'spiritual dimension' of education mean to you?
- Was there anything in your training which helped you consider this dimension of education?
- Is there anything you have read or any person who has influenced your thinking on this?

- In what ways do you think the development of spirituality is encouraged in this school?
- What support do you receive in developing opportunities for children's spiritual development?
- How do you see children developing in these ways?
- What might help further development of children's spirituality?
- In what ways might Philosophy for Children help in developing children's spirituality?

Interviews with the children were semi-structured, using the following prompts to stimulate conversation:

- Tell me about philosophy – what is it about / what is it like?
- Tell me about a question you have discussed in philosophy – what do you think about that question?
- Do you ever think about 'big ideas or questions'? (The sort of ideas that make your brain go 'ouch' or that grown-ups answer by saying 'I don't know' or 'ask your teacher')
- Describe some of those 'big ideas or questions' to me.
- Tell me about collective worship / assemblies – what happens?
- What do you think about during worship time?
- Are there other times in the school day when you get the chance to have a quiet think?
- [think for yourself / are there any times when you don't have to write or read or 'do' something?] What do you like to think about then? Use of the tepee / sacred space?
- Tell me about other times outside school when you get a chance to have a good think.
- What sorts of things do you like to think about?
- Do you have a special / safe place to do this? (Describe if you want to)
- Can you tell me about something you've put in your 'up to' book recently?

3.3 ANALYSIS OF DATA

3.3.1 Coding and thematising

The initial phase of my research allowed me to gain access to one class and to develop a good working relationship with the children and with staff. During this first phase I focussed on exploring the impact of the first eight lessons of P4C on the Y3 class I was working with. I was particularly interested in establishing whether the teaching of P4C could contribute to developing children's spirituality.

I read through the multiple sources of data collected and noted the emerging themes. These were grouped around three major areas which enabled me to thematise the data:

- Beliefs about God.
- Spirituality / deeper thinking.
- Contribution of P4C to nurturing spirituality.

Miles and Huberman (1984 p.21) suggest that data analysis consists of "three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display and conclusion drawing / verification." There is a danger, they continue, in getting overwhelmed with "the flood of particulars" since "fieldwork can be so fascinating and coding usually so energy-absorbing" (Miles and Huberman, 1984 p.69). According to Silverman (2005 p.178), therefore, qualitative researchers are not satisfied with a simple coding of data; "coding your data should only be the first stage of your data analysis." These elements, he continues, should then be examined to see how they are linked together as better data analysis is achieved by "a steadily more narrow focus" (Silverman, 2005 p.178).

Having identified these themes I analysed the children's comments and realised that there was a bigger question to be asked concerning the spiritual

dimension of the school: How can church schools nurture and develop children's spirituality? In the context of this church school, the children responded positively to the community of enquiry approach which allowed them to explore questions of belief and spirituality. This led me to ask what factors were contributing to this environment in which children felt safe to discuss spiritual issues and questions.

Through the P4C sessions it became apparent that the children were comfortable with the concept of exploring "big" or "deep" questions. I therefore wanted to discover how teaching and learning might be facilitating this practice. As this was a church school it seemed reasonable to ask how the symbolic and cultural life of the school and its links to the local church might be making a contribution to the spiritual dimension of the school.

During the second phase of my research, from autumn term 2010 until summer term 2011, I continued to facilitate P4C sessions, carried out interviews, gathered appropriate documentation and took photographs (see Table of Data Sets in section 3.2.2 for more details). As I gathered data during this second phase of research and continued to read relevant literature (see Chapter 2), I began to see emerging categories relating to my research questions. In order to begin to recognise and understand the spiritual dimension of the school I had to first consider the ways in which the school community defined spirituality. I therefore divided the data into main two sections (A and B), the first of which related to the way spirituality was being defined at St Saviour's. This category was then sub-divided to reflect different aspects of spirituality which could be identified in the data sources. These categories provided the context in which to consider my overarching research question: How can church schools nurture and develop children's spirituality?

SECTION A:	DEFINING SPIRITUALITY
Sub-sections	
A1	Spirituality (general)
A2	Spirituality and faith
A3	Spirituality and morality
A4	Spirituality and religion
A5	Beliefs
A6	Values

I then grouped data in a second section that identified factors influencing spiritual development in the school which related to my three main research questions. These were teaching and learning (Q1), symbols and culture (Q2) and the church (Q3) and were sub-divided as shown below:

SECTION B	FACTORS INFLUENCING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT
Sub-sections:	
B1	Curriculum
B2	Pedagogy
B3	Church school status / distinctiveness / ethos and values
B4	Religion
B5	Local church
B6	Relationships
B7	Age and stage development
B8	Events / celebrations
B9	Symbols
BB1	Morals / ethics
BB2	Language
BB3	Displays / visual material

Within some of these sub-sections there were large amounts of data which required further categorising and could then be related to the sub-questions as shown:

Sub-section:	
B1	Curriculum (Q1a: <i>Which aspects of the curriculum contribute to children's spiritual development?</i>)
Category:	
B11	General
B12	Religious Education
B13	P4C
B14	Godly Play
B15	Creativity / art
B16	Literacy
B17	Cross-curricular
B18	Dance / drama
B19	Extra-curricular
B20	Big questions / thoughts / reflective time
B21	Up toqbooks

Sub-section:	
B6	Relationships (<i>Q2a: How do ethos and values contribute to children's spiritual development through formal situations, eg. collective worship, and informal situations, eg. language and relationships?</i>)
Category:	
B61	Family
B62	Friends
B63	Teachers
B64	Teaching Assistants
B65	Support staff
B66	Vicar
B67	Headteacher

The textual data was coded in this way whilst some of the photographic evidence was used as a means of remembering certain incidents. Photographs of display work around the school were analysed separately since they illustrated a particular aspect of the school's portrayal of itself. This process enabled me to think "not only *about* one's data, but also *with and through* the data, in order to produce fruitful ideas" (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007 p.168).

During the course of my research I decided to focus on certain key events or "critical incidents" (Tripp, 2012 p.8) which had significance in identifying the contribution of symbols and culture in formal settings to spiritual development in the school (research question 2a). The central place which these events occupied in the life of the school reflected the status of the school as a church school thus providing important data in relation to research questions 3a and 3b concerning the contribution of the church's relationship with the school and the school's church school distinctiveness to children's spiritual development. Data collected from these key events was coded within the sub-section **B8 Events / celebrations** using the categories below:

Sub-section:	
B8	Events/ celebrations
Category:	
B81	Collective worship
B82	Easter Passion Play
B83	Rock Challenge
B84	Leavers Service
B85	Welcome Service (Reception children and parents)
B86	Diocesan Bishop's visit

As Tripp (2012 p.8) states, "Incidents happen, but critical incidents are produced by the way we look at a situation: a critical incident is an interpretation of the significance of an event. To take something as a critical incident is a value judgement we make, and the basis of that judgement is the significance we attach to the meaning of the incident." In Tripp's (2012 p.13) view, by deciding what we are focussing on it is possible to deliberately question and change things; "This control is empowering because it enables us to take responsibility for developing our own awareness." Tripp (2012 p.18) advocates the use of a "critical incident file" in which teachers can record incidents and ideas which become a starting point for further or action research, enabling teachers to "identify, articulate and examine their professional awareness and problematic, not to direct what they do." There are two major uses of critical incidents, according to Tripp (2012 p.24); firstly they develop "an increasing understanding of and control over professional judgement, and thereby over practice; and they are also a means of finding a focus for classroom action research."

Some of these critical incidents were annual occasions or one-off events which had a particular significance in the life of the school while others were regular weekly events which could lose their significance through familiarity. Tripp (2012 pp.24-25) distinguishes between highly significant events that have important consequences which should be reflected on professionally, and the vast majority of critical incidents which are not dramatic or obvious; "they are mostly straightforward accounts of very commonplace events that occur in routine professional practice which are critical in the rather different

sense that they are indicative of underlying trends, motives and structures.” Although these incidents appear to be “typical” rather than “critical” they are, claims Tripp (2012 p.25), “rendered critical through analysis.” Tripp (2012 p.25), therefore, identifies two stages in the creation of a critical incident; firstly a phenomenon which is observed, noted and described (the production of an incident which can then be explained); “The critical incident is created by seeing the incident as an example of a category in a wider, usually social, context.” Saying what the incident means, continues Tripp (2012 p.25), involves moving out of the immediate context in which the incident occurred having first discovered “what it means in its specific context.” Critical incidents, Tripp (2012 p.27) asserts, are not “simply observed, they are literally created” since incidents only become critical when someone sees them as such.

Each key event was selected for its particular contribution to the spiritual dimension of school life. These events illuminated aspects of spirituality within the school through established routines and expectations, the symbolism inherent in each occasion and the reinforcement of values and beliefs. The events were observed, recorded and subsequently analysed, providing some of the descriptions and explanations which Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.190) claim are as important a product of ethnographic work as the theories produced by ethnography.

By focussing on these particular events in the life of the school I was able to move beyond the incidents themselves to consider their significance within the wider context of the school and its relationship with the local church, the Diocese and ultimately with the Anglican church school family. Tripp (2012 p.111) claims that the recall and historical analysis of critical incidents should be the beginning rather than the end of reflection and understanding since working on professional practice “is always and necessarily a matter of working on the values in the practice, rather than working on the practice

itself ... it is only by attending to the values that are exposed by the incident that it is possible to achieve a sufficiently deep diagnosis to move beyond the practical problematic and into other kinds of professional judgement.” Tripp (2012 p.112) advocates both the primacy of practice and the value of knowing (holistically) about ourselves, “of understanding how and why we have become the kinds of people and teachers that we are.” In examining incidents and taking account of the values held, professional teachers are, claims Tripp (2012 p.112), seeking “the presence of the past as a way of illuminating, articulating, understanding and gaining control over our professional development, judgement and practice.”

3.3.2 Bernsteinian analysis of the data

According to Silverman (2005 p.171), qualitative research provides the opportunity to view everyday reality “through a new analytic lens”. Similarly, Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.189) point out that ethnography is not simply about generating accounts of particular settings and circumstances and that whilst the “ethnographic imagination” is grounded in the practicalities of everyday life in a particular context, “the analytic gaze does not have to remain fixed on local circumstances.” The question for ethnographers is always, according to Hammersley and Atkinson (2007 p.189), how to make sense of local cultures and actions “in terms that relate to wider analytic perspectives.” This, they continue, means “making sense of local action in terms that are applicable across a wider – a generic – range of phenomena” which involves making connections within the “conceptual categories” of the local data whilst “relating them explicitly to generic ideas that transcend them.”

As I analysed the data, theories began to emerge that were related to the importance of particular ways of speaking, the types of pedagogy being used, the way that spirituality was being defined and the control of language. These emerging ideas led me to Bernstein’s pedagogical theories which offer a

model to describe how teaching is organised, discussed and passed on (see section 2.5 for background details on aspects of Bernstein's theories that are relevant to this study). Bernstein (2000 p.3) focuses on the underlying rules which govern the way teaching is shaped by society. In doing this, he is seeking to understand the way in which "knowledge systems become part of consciousness" (Bernstein, 2000 p.3). His aim is to create a model from which more specific descriptions can be derived; his general theory can be tested by "precise descriptions of how things are and why they are that way" (Edwards, 2002 p.530).

Bernstein's model provided a lens through which to consider power and control, classification and framing, performance and competence, regulative and instructional discourse, the selection and transmission of knowledge in this particular church school context and relate these considerations to the process whereby opportunities were provided for children's spiritual development. Thus, as Edwards (2002 p.530) states, the pedagogy of the school could be considered as more than a transmitter of a curriculum.

Bernstein's theories provided a particularly appropriate lens through which to analyse the contribution of pedagogy to children's spiritual development in a church school context since he argued that there are two basic classes of knowledge which exist in all societies – the esoteric and the mundane: "There is the knowledge of how it is (the knowledge of the possible), as against the possibility of the impossible" (Bernstein, 2000 p.29). According to Singh (2002 p.574), Bernstein used the terms common / mundane (horizontal discourses) and esoteric / sacred (vertical discourses) to describe "the two types of knowledge that relate the material and immaterial worlds." Both, he continues, are concerned with the search for meanings; mundane knowledge referring to the meanings that arise directly out of encounters with the world, other people and reality whilst esoteric knowledge is more concerned with the symbolic nature of relating in community and making connections

between different disciplines (Singh, 2002 p.575). According to Bernstein, in modern society control and management of the unthinkable is carried out by the higher agencies of education while the thinkable is managed by the secondary and primary systems (Bernstein, 2000 p.29). He identifies a potential discursive gap which “is the crucial site of the yet to be thought” which is both beneficial and dangerous at the same time (Bernstein, 2000 p.30).

A particular focus of my analysis was the language used by the Headteacher, especially the aphorisms adopted within the school which affected the pedagogy. By applying Bernstein’s model, I examined the discourse itself to exemplify the way in which that discourse conducted “power relations”. Bernstein claims that the means of cultural (re)production is through the language – the control on language and the sorts of language it is desirable to use (Bernstein, 2000 p.4). Bernstein (2000 p.4) seeks to explain “the inner logic of pedagogic discourse and its practices” by analysing the way in which a pedagogic text or teaching language has been composed through its rules of construction, circulation, acquisition and change.

As my analysis progressed I used Bernstein’s questions concerning power and control to examine how space was created to explore spirituality within the curriculum; how does power and control translate (transform) into principles (rules) of communication (language)?; how do these principles of communication affect different people’s views or ideas “with respect to their reproduction and the possibilities of change?” (Bernstein, 2000 p.4). In other words, do people simply accept and “reproduce” what they are told or are they able to recognise where it might be possible to go beyond these boundaries?

I used Bernstein’s model to analyse relationships between the Headteacher and the teaching staff. According to Bernstein (2000 p.5), power relations create, legitimise and reproduce boundaries between different categories of

groups, gender, class, race, types of teaching, different teachers. Power, he argues, produces dislocations between these groups, operates on the relations between categories and establishes legitimate relations of order – power is in the position or the difference between different people or different groups of people (Bernstein, 2000 p.5). Control, Bernstein (2000 p.5) claims, establishes “different forms of communication appropriate to the different categories.” Control determines the type of language that can be used and can determine both what is reproduced and what may change (Bernstein, 2000 p.5). Bernstein (2000 p.5) concludes that control establishes legitimate communications (the language to be used) whilst power establishes legitimate relations between categories (who speaks to whom), for example, Teacher – Student, Visitor – Teacher. Hence, power is in the boundary between categories (the difference between us) so that “power constructs relations *between*, and control relations *within* given forms of interaction” (Bernstein, 2000 p.5).

Examining the pedagogy of the school using Bernstein’s model focussed attention on the way that knowledge is “classified and framed – eg., the boundaries which separate or join curricular areas and the forms of pedagogy that direct its ‘acquisition’- (and thus) embodies ideological messages” (Apple and Wexler, 1978 p.42). Bernstein (2000 p.6) uses the term “classification” to refer to a defining attribute (something which distinguishes) of the relations between categories, rather than the categories themselves. Therefore, French can only be French if it has a clear boundary or distinction from German – there is no French, unless it relates to other categories in the set. Power is carried in the full stop between one type of teaching and another.” Consequently, if the insulation between categories is broken then “a category is in danger of losing its identity, because what it is, is the space between it and another category” (Bernstein, 2000 p.6). Where, for example, would the exploration of spirituality sit within a strongly classified curriculum since it is not easily categorised in this way?

Bernstein (2000 p.8) traces the origins of pedagogic classification back to the Medieval University where strong classification between the Trivium (logic, grammar and rhetoric – the Word) and the Quadrivium (astronomy, music, geometry and arithmetic – structure of the physical world) are “integrated through God” as “socialisation into the word makes the abstract exploration of the world safe.” The Trivium, he continues, comes first since it is concerned with the construction of inner consciousness (Bernstein, 2000 p.8). Bernstein argues that Christianity created a separation between the inner and outer consciousness which, he claims, “is an example of the use of classification, of strong classification, in the medieval period and the power on which it was based and relayed – the church” (Bernstein, 2000 pp.8-9). Historically, therefore, it was the demands of church teaching that made strong classification of subjects necessary.

I examined the ways in which this particular church school maintained the strong classifications required by both the church and the state whilst allowing children and staff to explore the questions of faith (and doubt) which could arise when asking deep questions in an environment where spirituality could be explored; an environment which would, at times, require weaker classification to exist. Through the lens offered by Bernstein, I analysed the idea that at St Saviour’s the exploration of spirituality potentially crossed boundaries even though the subjects were strongly classified. Bernstein states that strong classification of discourse is likely to lead “to a dislocation in the transmission of knowledge because, with strong classification, the progression will be from concrete local knowledge, to the mastery of simple operations, to more abstract general principles, which will only be available later in the transmission” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11). He concludes that there is “an internal classification and distribution of forms of knowledge” and that when children fail at school “they are likely to be positioned in a factual world tied to simple operations, where knowledge is impermeable” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11). Those who are successful have access, according to Bernstein (2000

p.11), to the general principle and a small number of these “will become aware that the mystery of the discourse is not order, but disorder, incoherence, the possibility of the unthinkable.” He warns that “the long socialisation into the pedagogic code can remove the danger of the unthinkable, and of alternative realities” (Bernstein, 2000 p.11).

It seemed to me that at St Saviour’s there were two very different pedagogical approaches. Firstly, a step on step approach to acquiring skills which requires learners to master one set of skills before progressing to the next set. Secondly, the community of enquiry based approach to learning which allows all children to participate at a level appropriate to them as exemplified in Philosophy for Children sessions. Both had the ultimate aim of exploring spirituality whilst maintaining strongly classified subjects. This is discussed in more detail in Chapter 6.

It is interesting to note that Bernstein (2000 p.12) refers to the transmission of knowledge through pedagogic practices as “Framing” and is concerned with *how* meanings are to be put together, the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it. Framing, he argues, can be used to analyse the different forms of acceptable language used in teaching and refers to the controls on communications in local interactional teaching relations: between parents and children, teacher and pupils (Bernstein, 2000 p.12). Using this theory I analysed the different kinds of language used in both formal (collective worship, services, Easter play) and informal situations. I also used Bernstein’s (2000 p.13) theories of “realisation rules” (learning how to speak in a particular context) and linked this to framing (who controls what) to examine ways in which learners knew how to speak “in the right way.” Where there is strong framing the teacher has control over the selection and sequencing of a lesson; where there is weak framing the learner or receiver has more apparent control (Bernstein, 2000 p.13). For example, there was a difference in the pedagogic discourse

when P4C was being used since learners had more control over what happened in the lessons. Sadovnik (1991 p.52) helpfully summarises this aspect of Bernstein's theory; "Therefore, strong framing refers to a limited degree of options between teacher and students; weak framing implies more freedom."

The concepts of framing and classification were also useful when considering the effect of external demands on the school to offer its pupils opportunities for spiritual development. Grace (2008) uses Bernstein's theories of framing to explain the changes in the relationship between the state and education which took place between the 1950s and the 2000s. According to Grace (2008 p.216) the major change which occurred during this period was the transformation of the "framing relationships governing the selection, pacing and timing of the knowledge transmitted in the pedagogical relationship" so that the state became "the power source for the strong framing of these educational processes." This practice of strong framing was, continues Grace (2008 p.216), enforced directly through OFSTED and executive headteachers and indirectly through the "consumers of education" (empowered governors and parents). Grace (2008 p.217) uses Bernsteinian terms to indicate the situation which pertained to the climate in which St Saviour's was operating and the context in which the school offered opportunities for spiritual development; "if the Thatcherite settlement had weakened the insulating boundaries and classifications between education and corporate enterprise, the New Labour settlement did not reverse this process ... but ... accelerated it." This shift, according to Grace (2008 p.214), meant that teachers were not trusted with determining the curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and that framing (the degree of control over these issues) must be exercised by the state and its inspection agencies; "In effect, a culture and practice of constant surveillance and measurement of prescribed outcomes replaced a culture of relative professional autonomy in schools." In the context of my particular

study this raised the question: How could a school meet such demands whilst also creating space for spiritual development?

Bernstein's performance and competence models of pedagogic practice offered a means of considering the way in which opportunities for spiritual development were being provided within the curriculum at St Saviour's. Bernstein defines "competences" as creative and tacitly acquired in informal interactions; "They are practical accomplishments" (Bernstein, 2000 p.42) and are based on the concept of empowerment (Bernstein, 2000 p.57) – what you can do or know. A performance model of pedagogic practice and context, however, places emphasis on "a specific output of the acquirer, upon a particular text the acquirer is expected to construct and upon the specialised skills necessary to the production of this specific output, text or product" (Bernstein, 2000 p.44). The performance model is based on the concept of deficit (what you cannot do or do not know), upon an absence "and as a consequence place the emphasis upon the text to be acquired and so upon the transmitter" (Bernstein, 2000 p.57).

Moss (2002 pp.553-555) relates Bernstein's performance and competence models to the changes wrought by the introduction of the National Curriculum, particularly in English, illustrating the movement from a competence model in the early days of the National Curriculum to the increasingly performance-based model currently operating. Moss (2002 p.555) argues that the competence model places more emphasis on pupil learning and is largely invisible to the learner whilst the performance model is more explicit about what is to be learned and therefore more visible to the learner. The debate, Moss (2002 p.555) continues, is over which approach produces the better outcomes whereas she points out that for Bernstein, "neither visible nor invisible pedagogies are an absolute good, capable of being judged by their instrumental efficacy alone. Instead, he characterises them as opposing modalities of pedagogic practice, which either way still do

their work in the field of symbolic control ...” At St Saviour’s these different approaches could be seen in the pedagogies operating within the school – notably the step on step approach to literacy and the introduction of P4C – both of which appeared to be contributing to the development of children’s spirituality within the school. These contrasting approaches illustrated Sadovnik’s (1991 p.54) description of explicit criteria (when the child knows what is expected of them since “the rules of legitimate expectations are made clearly available to the acquirer by the transmitter”) and implicit criteria (where the child has “more freedom to create his or her individualised criteria for evaluation”). In the latter situation (as in P4C sessions), “the criteria rules are more numerous and diffuse, and the teacher takes on the role of a facilitator, rather than of a transmitter” (Sadovnik, 1991 p.54).

Examining the pedagogic discourse of the school using Bernstein’s model required not only a consideration of the content of the curriculum and the competences to be transmitted but also their transmission and evaluation; “*the what* that is transmitted, *how* it is transmitted, and also which student realisations are considered legitimate” (Morais, 2002 p.560). According to Bernstein’s (2000 p.13) theory, pedagogic discourse is made up of two discourses: regulative discourse (RD) and instructional discourse (ID). Morais (2002 p.560) describes RD as “a discourse of order which translates the dominant values of society and regulates the form of *how* knowledge is transmitted.” In the church school context, how the knowledge is transmitted and where it comes from was explored in order to ascertain whether these are likely to be influenced by the church and Christian teaching as well as by the demands of the state. ID refers to *what* knowledge is explored and will, Bernstein (2000 p.13) explains, be embedded in RD.

Regulative discourse is, according to Bernstein (2000 p.34), the dominant discourse. As it is the moral discourse it creates criteria which give rise to character, manner, conduct, posture; it tells children in the school what to do,

where they can go and creates the rules of social order (Bernstein, 2000 p.34). Regulative discourse, he continues, also creates the order in the instructional discourse: "There is no instructional discourse which is not regulated by the regulative discourse" (Bernstein, 2000 p.34). Therefore, the whole order within pedagogic discourse is "constituted by the regulative discourse" (Bernstein, 2000 p.34). This theory emphasises the importance of the RD of the school for establishing a visible framework in which teachers and children can operate with confidence, as Singh (2002 p.576) asserts; "the moral order of the classroom is constituted prior to, and is a necessary condition for, the transmission of instructional discourses." Using these ideas I could analyse the relationship between what happens in the classroom and elsewhere in the school (including the opportunities to explore spirituality), and the Christian values of the school.

In my analysis I sought to examine the relationship between the RD (the school's Christian values and ethos) and the ID (what ideas and concepts could be explored). This was particularly pertinent in a church school context since, according to Bernstein (2000 p.36), there is a religious origin to "the pedagogic device": "religion was the fundamental system for both creating and controlling the unthinkable, the fundamental principle for relating two different worlds, the mundane and the transcendental." He draws parallel positions between the religious and the educational fields whereby Prophets may be likened to Producers (of knowledge), Priests to Reproducers and Laity to Acquirers (Bernstein, 2000 p.37). Bernstein's analogy could be used in this particular context to analyse the roles of the Headteacher, pupils and teaching staff.

Bernstein (2000 p.17) uses the terms "recognition" and "realisation" for the rules which govern whether a learner can recognise what is expected in a particular context and also speak the legitimate text; where classification is strong, recognition of the power relations in a context becomes easier and

more obvious. My analysis considers whether in the church school context it is possible to explore questions not only of faith (recognising the “correct” Christian doctrine and using the “correct” Christian language to express those teachings) but also of doubt (where recognition may not always be followed by realisation) or whether learners are always expected to “select the relevant meanings and to produce the text according to those meanings” (Morais, 2002 p.560).

From a Bernsteinian perspective, according to Grace (2002 p.50), there is an invisible pedagogy at work in schools the key attribute of which is “that it is concerned with a holistic process of personal formation rather than with the production of graded performance.” It seemed to me that within a church school context consideration of this invisible pedagogy could be central to the core purposes of church school education. Bernstein’s pedagogical theories therefore provided an appropriate analytical lens through which to examine the relationship between pedagogy and spirituality at St Saviour’s School.

CHAPTER 4: DEFINING SPIRITUALITY AT ST SAVIOUR'S SCHOOL

4.0 THE SCHOOL CONTEXT

As stated in Chapter 3, St Saviour's is an average sized school in a rural location serving three villages. Pupils enter the school with levels of attainment generally above those expected for children of this age. Many are from socially and economically advantaged backgrounds. The school is a voluntary controlled Church of England primary school which has strong links with the local church and the Anglican Diocese to which it belongs. It has received outstanding reports from both OFSTED and Church School (SIAMS) inspectors. St Saviour's holds the Investor in People award and has achieved the Artsmark Gold standard, the ECO standard, Activemark Gold and the Quality in Study standard at established level. It has also attained the Healthy School Award.

4.1 DEFINING SPIRITUALITY

Although the school has received several prizes and awards, there is a sense that it is the desire to ensure that the spiritual aspect of school life is both demonstrable and manifest which contributes to St Saviour's distinctiveness as a church school. St Saviour's foundation as a church school is evident in the school's mission statement:

Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and Diocesan level. The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values and respect for other religions to all its pupils.

From this statement has been developed the school's core purpose, that of "Profound Personal Development"; along with the ethos or guiding principles

(the values that define and drive the school and which are key to delivering the core purpose). These guiding principles have been articulated in a document entitled: St Saviour's: Key aspects which define and drive our school. The principles define St Saviour's as a "Take Care School" where "we take care of our self, each other, the world and with our work" and is based on the ethos and Christian foundation of the school, includes all five strands of Every Child Matters and is at the heart of the school's approach and message to all stakeholders. The Headteacher in his interview expands on what this means in relation to the development of children's spirituality (see section 4.1.1 below).

The Headteacher claimed in his interview that, "A clear definition of spirituality is at the heart of who we are." This is reflected in the school's self-evaluation Toolkit (the church school equivalent of the Self-Evaluation Form or SEF) which clearly articulates a sense of the school as a community in which spirituality is at the core of its meaning and purpose: "St Saviour's is a community that genuinely believes in the power of spirit, both in terms of the school's personality and the spirituality which is at its heart, spirituality which sees itself fundamentally as about who we are and who we can become and which is defined within the special God given, Christ defined, bonds we share with those who are most precious to us – here, if anywhere, is the awe and wonder (the **W**orld of **W**onder factor) of St Saviour's Church of England Primary School." In this school, according to the Toolkit, they believe that each person is created in God's image "but with an understanding that this is about the gift of 'spirit', in terms of spirituality that defines who we are and who we belong to." Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) is at the heart of the school's "personality", claims the Toolkit, since it is the foundation they build on and the "spirit" that drives them: "It has the potential to take us from the ordinary to the extra-ordinary and is something exemplified not by any one thing, but by the school itself."

The Toolkit states that it is a strength of St Saviour's that children of no faith as well as those of faith participate in RE, worship and the ethos of the school "with the same enthusiasm". The document clearly states the belief that it is not necessary to be a child of faith / belief to experience "the importance of spirituality in our lives – a profound awareness of self, others and belonging that is the x-factor which differentiates humans from all other creatures."

An update of the Toolkit in 2012 further clarifies the school's definition of spirituality. Here there is a renewed emphasis on "spiro" ("breathe life into") as it points to "understanding the activity based school we are striving for." The definition goes on to identify creativity and relationships as the heart of spirituality at St Saviour's; "Our spirit is, therefore, an expression of the relationships we form, the creative energy we share and the support we provide for each other. It is what keeps our leadership real and us, as leaders, always up to something. More than anything, though, St. Saviour's spirit comes from the people who shape it and who breathe life into it, as it breathes life into them." This is distilled into one sentence which defines spirituality as; "Who we are at our deepest level and the feeling we have towards those we are closest to." Since this message is given in a church school context, the Toolkit claims that a religious connection will often be made "in a natural and meaningful way."

The importance of spirituality in the learning experience of the children is explored in the 'Active Curriculum' Rationale taken from the school's SEF (2010) where the sense of spirit and spirituality "genuinely connect in the life of St Saviour's". The document uses the Latin derivation of spirit ("spiro" which translates as "breathe life into") to describe "this breathing of life into energy which we want to define and drive our school." This concept is explored further in the Headteacher's interview below (section 4.1.1).

The essence of St Saviour's, as defined in the 'Active Curriculum' Rationale, is that staff have been encouraged not simply to stay within given strategies, as

long as they are striving for excellence and willing to be judged by their outcomes. Over time this approach “liberated the creative heart of the school, yet in a well considered, disciplined and qualitative way.” The underlying principle is to be a “take care” approach, holding the needs of the children at its core, offering not just personalised education but “education with personality” where both child and adult “is allowed to touch their work with who they are.”

4.1.1 The Headteacher’s definition of spirituality

The Headteacher, Mr Middleton, speaks articulately about his definition of spirituality and the spiritual dimension of education. For him, the spiritual dimension of education has to do with thinking about things and living them out. There are, he says, two aspects to consider – “spirit” and “spirituality” – which are linked but different. “Spiriter”, he maintains, means “to breathe life into” and is to do with the way you breathe life into a school and its curriculum. He uses the example of an empty book in which we are all about to achieve – we have rubbers which enable us to put right any mistakes we may make. This approach links to creativity where the feelings, emotions and sense of what happened (emotional intelligence) are experienced, explored and articulated. Hence, Mr Middleton claims, children can explore spirituality – who we are at the deepest level. This, he goes on, does not have to come through church or religion (it can but not necessarily) which means that they can connect with non-church parents in a way that reaches them as this spirituality is also the feeling we have for those people we think most of: “Spirituality is an awareness of self (who am I?) at a very deep level plus it’s to do with a relationship with those I care most deeply about. It’s accessible to all, not necessarily tied to or restricted by religion.”

Mr Middleton continually strives to define spirituality in a way that others can “get”. He is not saying that “you have to believe in God.” Rather he asks, “Where is your spiritual place? Who is your spiritual person? Figure it out for

yourself.” Love, he continues, is a spiritual thing because God is love – the essence of who we are. He states that everyone knows the things you love when they are gone therefore he puts children in positions where they can explore this using words such as “forgiveness” and “resurrection” which might be described as “spiritual”; using language to express something deeper, a sense of something external (awe and wonder) and internal. This approach, he says, avoids defining spirituality as simply anything to do with God.

Exploring “who we are at our deepest level” is, according to the Headteacher, the core principle of the school and is partly delivered through the “take care” philosophy defined earlier in this chapter. Mr Middleton claims that the more we understand who we are and who others are through our relationships and our empathy with one another, the more chance we have of developing spiritually. He continues: “I mean spirituality for us is about who we are at our deepest level and that sense of feeling we have for those who are most important to us ... Actually when we take care of each other, we take care of the world we give ourselves the opportunity to find more of that and become closer to people and things that are important and of course in a church school context, closer to God if that’s where you choose to go but that’s not our purpose, that’s just a question we might ask, another level of possibility that we might offer to a child.” In practical terms the “Take care person” does things to help. Such activities are recognised, acknowledged and valued through a “take care” award given by school and church together. This, according to the Headteacher is the essence, that church and school share the giving of the award – they are both part of the village and are doing this as a village. The link between spirituality and the values of the school is explored in greater detail in section 4.2 below.

Mr Middleton defines spirituality within the climate of participation which characterises the school, speaking in terms of what it is to have a school of

spirit and what it is to be a child who is “spirited”, returning to his use of the definition of “spirit” as “breathing life into” or “spirit energy”, so that; “you get a sense of a school that’s thought about itself and its purpose over an extended period of time. How gradually different aspects of it are articulated and modelled but how the different pieces of the different models also integrate with each other to create the whole and that’s for us where we begin, what sustains us and what takes us forward.”

The Headteacher illustrates his view of developing spirituality within the school through an example of nine-year olds participating in a drama activity. They are working in small mixed groups of boys and girls, having been asked to create an image of “guilt”. According to Mr Middleton’s observations, “their interaction goes beyond ordinary PSHE.” They are not just playing a game, it’s something they are actively involved in creating. They are not fussing about boys and girls working together and they are not being silly because they are able to work on their own ideas in a group; “and when it’s time to create the image it’s quite profound – all different and very clever and with some children clearly expressing in a physical, facial way – real emotion and a real story that people can unpick.” He then asks the question, “Now is that spirituality?” His response is that he’s not sure “but it’s certainly about children in a community that is able to work together and get on with each other that has a sense of creating something good and profound together and I do think that does give us that energy and sense of breathing life into that we want because there’s every opportunity both to achieve but also to explore” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

In his paper Essay for Able and Talented Course, Mr Middleton describes a project he undertook with gifted and talented nine to eleven-year-old children in which he challenged the children to write using “emotional and spiritual language.” He used as his stimulus for the project an interpretation

of the definition of spirituality given by John Hull and explored in Chapter 2 above, who states:

The formation of personhood implies the development of a set of potentials which are latent within the biological nature of the infant and are only gradually developed. When they are mature, these potentials transcend the biological. They include language, symbolic functioning, conscience, self-awareness, inter-personal relationships and creativity. That which transcends the biological may be described as the spiritual (Hull, 2002 p.171).

Mr Middleton explores the idea that this means defining spiritual and emotional language as something that encourages children to tap into deeper feelings and express “through the manipulation of the written word and ideas, within the context of experience and perception, that which was personal, engaging, creative, bright, intellectually challenging and needed to be shared.” He also wanted to test Barry Teare’s assertion that gifted children are “deep thinkers” who take a strong interest in areas of “philosophy, fairness and (perceptive) questioning including about life and death.” Through this piece of work, therefore, the Headteacher was seeking to answer the questions: Was there really such a thing as language which combined the emotional and spiritual? Could it exist? Could it be understood by 9 to 11 year olds? Would it progress their learning and self awareness or simply confuse?

When evaluating the children’s work on this project, Mr Middleton concludes that the stunning reflections and imagery produced by many of the children involved are the result of “high challenge, within a rigorous culture, which supports them towards excellence.” However, he claims that it also shows that “gifted children, placed in the right circumstances, are indeed capable of language, symbolic functioning, conscience, self-awareness, interpersonal relationships and creativity which takes them beyond their biological self to achieve what Hull rightly describes as spiritual.” The challenge of this activity, he continues, has not only broadened but has also deepened the children’s learning, showing that children “are capable of levels and layers of thinking that goes far beyond age related expectation.” When children are given

“permission to feel” within their creativity the outcomes can be profound he maintains; such that “when we are able to add perception to creativity (within a high standard qualitative and disciplined culture) something may be achieved that is not just independent, but deeply personal, goes way beyond expectation and is, on occasions, quite moving. This then is not just education but education with personality!” Finally Mr Middleton claims that the achievement of this work “proves that there is an emotional and spiritual dimension that does exist and if made properly available to gifted children, can help them get there.”

In his interviews, Mr Middleton expresses a strong desire to discover what spirituality means in the context of what he does as a Christian – relating his Christian experience to the world of education. He has been strongly influenced by his upbringing. His parents had a religion and spirituality which was not pushy, rather it was “a thoughtful belief and Christianity that challenged you – you experienced life in all its fullness and were then asked what will you believe?” As a teenager he was offered experiences of personal development in a religious context which challenged him to ask the questions: Who are you? Who do you want to be? Is that appropriate? What will you do about that? He has brought these beliefs into the school context so that “profound personal development is at the core of what we do” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10).

By encouraging children to develop maturity in their thinking, the Headteacher maintains that they gain a capacity for informed choice in all areas of life, from food to spirituality and considering whether God exists. He is not telling them that God exists, rather he invites them to “think about” things for themselves so that the concept of spirituality becomes real. According to Mr Middleton, the discovery of who we can be becomes the school’s spiritual dimension as an awareness of the spiritual dimension allows teachers to challenge children at a deeper level, enabling the children to

communicate a sense of “something else” in their work (Headteacher interviews, 10.9.10 and 7.10.10).

The idea of “spirit energy” breathing life into the creative and innovative activities taking place in the school has also informed the Headteacher’s thinking about spirituality in relation to leadership within the school. He has developed Steve Radcliff’s concept of Future Engage Deliver and the four energies (intellectual, emotional, spirit energy, physical energy) to help him think about positions of leadership in the school and how to go about leadership (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

4.1.2 Other adults defining spirituality

Responses to questions about spirituality and the spiritual dimension of education from the other adults interviewed during my research varied from “A sense of awe and wonder” to “The idea of personal spirituality; of space being allowed and being given permission to think.”

The local Rector, Reverend Smith, claimed that spirituality should be about keeping things simple and uncomplicated by man-made rules. He wanted to develop the idea of a personal spirituality with the children – allowing the space and time and permission to think through the Fun Club he organised. During the last fifteen minutes of this weekly after-school club he would sit with the children in a circle with a candle in the middle. There would then be an opportunity to discuss the theme they had explored earlier through the activities they had participated in and they would have the time to think and pray about this. According to Reverend Smith, the children have responded positively to this; “They are searching and asking questions and are hungry for development. They know it is okay to say that they want to pray for someone or something during this time” (Interview, 13.9.10).

When asked about the relationship between religion and spirituality, Reverend Smith explained his view that positive religion provides structure

and resource and a level of experience to enable spiritual development to take place. To illustrate his point he referred to the experience of standing in church and realising that people have been here for the last eight hundred years trying to understand God. He continued, "If you can enable people to unpack 'religion' and 'liturgy' they can realise in a positive way that it's healthy and it helps, although negative experiences can hinder. It's important to get back to basics." For Reverend Smith it is possible to share personal spirituality with others in a religious sense through teaching and by giving permission to think and ask questions about spiritual issues.

Although none of the teaching staff interviewed had received any opportunity to consider spirituality as part of their teacher training, each of them had subsequently developed their own understanding of spirituality which influenced the way they approached this area of development in the classroom.

For the RE Co-ordinator, Mrs Scott, spirituality is to do with the awareness of a greater being which can be expressed in different ways – through an inner peace, calm and reassurance from your faith. It is to do with thoughtfulness and, for this teacher, faith gives a base for spirituality. She described the spiritual dimension of education as "a sense of awe and wonder" which "involves teaching Christianity as a base, exploring why things happen, providing a sense of community and belonging." Since Christianity is not a new faith, she continued, children can be enabled to consider why people believe. In her view it is also important to consider links with other faiths; for example there is light in all faiths in some way. At St Saviour's, stated Mrs Scott, spirituality is encouraged in an "all-encompassing" way through poetry and literacy and in cross-curricular activities which encourage the children to think about why we feel the way we do. This, she says, can also be related to faith.

The two Class 4 teachers both spoke about the spiritual dimension of education being the journey children go through in their education at St Saviour's. For Mrs Jones, spirituality is not necessarily religious; it is not just about Religious Education, "it's about the journey children go through in this school where they develop values such as respect, listening, valuing each other's opinions, self-esteem, confidence and caring which in turn enables development of the whole child." It is, she continued, everything they do with the children and is difficult to put into words; "It's what it's all about at St Saviour's" (Interview, 27.1.11). Mrs Tate also expressed the view that the spiritual dimension is about the journey of children through their education; "it comes from within and comes through everything we do in school." Mrs Tate went on to explain that, for her, spirituality is part of who she is as a Christian; "My values come from within and are seen by the children in what I do" (Interview, 6.4.11). The Deputy Headteacher, Mr Wood, also linked his view of spirituality with his beliefs and values, stating that, "My own beliefs and values have gradually evolved through being in a church school so that I can share my beliefs in appropriate ways so that now there's a different significance to taking assemblies" (Interview, 6.4.11).

The Foundation Stage Manager and Reception teacher, Mrs Cook, expressed her view of spirituality as a sense of awe and wonder; a sense that someone must have made all this; "a feeling of spirituality – there's got to be something behind all the beauty. Like going to the top of a mountain and going 'wow!' It's a sense of reverence – you look and drink it all in. A feeling of being in the right place." She went on to explain that she could identify more with the Neil Armstrong experience of calmness and serenity rather than the Billy Graham-type hysteria; "For me it's serenity, reverence and wow!" She recognised that the term "spirituality" can be woolly and not very useful when working out how to provide "spiritual" opportunities for the majority of children since spirituality can already be there or with you; "The question is how to create and manage opportunities for spirituality in the

classroom for all.” She also expressed the view that it is important to balance wanting the children to feel spirituality but without necessarily saying that God is behind it; “It’s tricky to get it morally right. We want to give the children a choice whether or not to believe. When we find bugs there’s a ‘wow’ and a sense of spirituality” (Interview, 14.7.11).

4.2 SPIRITUALITY AND THE VALUES OF THE SCHOOL

According to Mr Middleton, values and principles are the driving force in the school rather than aims. These principles are, he claims, straightforward but the underlying values are profound at different levels. The profound personal development of the children is at the core – not just discovering who a child is but who they might be. In order to achieve this children are given opportunities to discover what they are good at within a climate of participation.

Mr Middleton explained that it is important not just to be a value-driven school but to know what those values are – they should be written down and thought through. It is especially important that the key people who are involved in delivering excellence in the school have a view on what the values stand for so that views can be expressed and then synthesised into “short, memorable almost obvious statements because if we don’t write them down how do we know? In writing them what we then get is both statements of what we stand for, statements of what drives us, statements that challenge. They have aims and aspirations in them but they’re what we do today not just what we do tomorrow but also in that sense they allow us to be judged.” These, he continues, provide the foundation for continued success where everyone who comes to the school who wants to know about the school or who has to work within the school “knows where we start from and what the challenges of delivery are here” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

The Headteacher went on to explain in further detail: “We have therefore a core purpose at the centre which integrates all our practice and in a sense our

core purpose is the profound personal development of young people. It's profound because it's not just about watching them grow, about discovering not just what they can do but what they might be able to do, discovering not just who they are but also discovering who they might become. This links to our model for teaching, a beyond expectation model which looks to how we take children to a place beyond ordinary" (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

The core purpose, Mr Middleton continued, is delivered through the principles that guide them; "They're the statements that have in them aspirations but they're about what we do not just what we hope to do. The key one is that we are a 'take care' school. On the surface they're understandable by anybody. It's only as we begin to understand them as professional practitioners that we can go to the deeper level we want" (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Mr Middleton expanded on what it means to be a 'take care' school:

- Self –from washing hands when you've been to the toilet to not doing drugs to not being bullied.
- Each other – the glue that holds us together but also the challenge for all of us to form the right kinds of relationship to enrich our own lives and the lives of those around us, the life of the school.
- Take care of the world – which is certainly about community cohesion, diversity, but also about the positive action towards sustaining our environment and to helping other people who are like us but not as fortunate.
- The last part is take care with your work – presentation is important – how we present ourselves, our work, our attitudes, the discipline we bring to that is absolutely crucial. So let's make sure we know that and that we're showing children what that means through examples and demanding it from them. But significantly once I have taught you what I want you to learn, I have modelled and shown you what is possible how are you going to use that? And therefore 'take care work' is the way we define and describe the importance of creative work, thinking and achieving your own ideas in your own way (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

By having this simple statement Mr Middleton claimed that not only do all the teachers "sing from the same song sheet" but also "our children can begin to articulate what the school stands for as well and the values within the 'take care' statement is a challenge to them as much as it's a challenge to staff."

Parents and governors can also understand and the community can share in the concept which is “the core of the value system which we share with the church.” Mr Middleton added that within this statement are all the elements of “Every Child Matters” although the St Saviour’s statement was written before the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda was introduced. Whilst ECM is a good value – driven statement of intent, “it’s not ours, what you need we believe as a school is something that you own. But if you think about it – take care of yourself, be safe be healthy; take care of each other, which one isn’t that?; take care of the world, make a positive contribution; take care with your work, enjoy and achieve; and also what is to make economic well being possible is to show you how to be successful and confident in life not whether you’ve been on a banking course while you’ve been at primary school. In other words if I want to be economically successful I’ve got to be able to do all those things well” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). When asked whether he thought that his ‘take care’ school brought in a spiritual side in a way that ECM perhaps does not, the Headteacher replied:

I don’t know whether it does or it doesn’t because if I took ECM as my principles and I owned them then clearly I’d bring to them whatever I wanted because the key to any simple definition of value is that it can seem very obvious on the surface but can be defined in all manner of ways as we need to underneath. I mean spirituality for us is about who we are at the deepest level and that sense of feeling we have for those who are most important to us. That’s all in there isn’t it? Actually when we take care of each other, we take care of the world we give ourselves the opportunity to find more of that and become closer to people and things that are important and of course in a church school context, closer to God if that’s where you choose to go but that’s not our purpose, that’s just a question we might ask, another level of possibility that we might offer to a child
(Headteacher Interview, 7.10.10).

During a visit to the school by the Diocesan Bishop, Mr Middleton (as part of the collective worship time) invited the children to tell the Bishop what makes this school. Answers from the children included: “We take care”; “Friendship”; “Bricks”; “Us”. At every opportunity the Headteacher emphasises that they are a “take care” school where they try different things in order to enable the children and staff to “be the best we can be.”

CHAPTER 5: DISCOVERING SPIRITUALITY IN THE DAILY LIFE OF THE SCHOOL

5.0 THE CURRICULUM

The definitions of spirituality discussed in Chapter 4 underpin the curriculum of the school – the “beyond expectation” model which asks; “Where can we go if we don’t limit you?” To make this discovery, explains the Headteacher, requires that foundations be laid first (Provide) followed by giving the children every opportunity to “be” thereby discovering what they are capable of. This was recognised by OFSTED inspectors in their 2003 report on the school: “The spiritual dimension of all pupils is at the centre of all the school’s activities and permeates the whole curriculum.” OFSTED’s interim assessment of 2007 continued to grade the extent of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as outstanding, commenting that “the innovative curriculum is outstanding. It promotes excellence because activities offer challenging situations, and tasks are personalised to meet the varying needs of pupils.” The report goes on to state that the main strength of the curriculum is the provision for pupils to learn specific skills “so that learning is most of all relevant and often exciting.” The report recognises that whilst English, mathematics and ICT form the basis of the curriculum, activities are often cross-curricular, “involve the wider community and strengthen the pupils’ creative abilities.” According to the report, the fact that every aspect of learning is interlinked is a significant factor in the school’s success; consequently “the outstanding personal development of pupils is sustained and nurtured by the excellent curriculum and by exceptional care, guidance and support.” Initiatives which further personal development and well-being, states the report, contribute to “pupils’ great enjoyment of school.”

The Church School Inspection (SIAS) of 2007 reported that a strength of the school is “the dynamic, holistic spiritual vision lived out in every aspect of the life of the school.” The report also identified that the spiritual dimension “is

very cleverly brought to the fore in the excellent cross curricular work undertaken." Examples of where this was happening included; a project in Year 5 involving older members of the community; science in Year 3 which led to "turning over a new leaf"; the World War II project in Year 2. These were just a few examples of "the level to which the school is committed to driving the spiritual throughout the curriculum."

The SIAS report verified the school's own self-evaluation of itself as a church school as recorded in the Toolkit. The Toolkit states that the spiritual dimension to St Saviour's is "key" and "allows pupils and adults the chance to discover and feel who they are..." However, they do not see spirituality as something that needs to be overt in relation to all areas of the curriculum "lest it becomes something contrived, rather than something real." Therefore, "the curriculum is used to challenge children (at an appropriate age) to think what spirituality might mean for them..." In this way children can experience awe and wonder and also be challenged to think what it might mean for them. A group of older pupils, for example, was given the opportunity to work with a professional artist to create a "spiritual space". The artist had asked the Headteacher what he meant by a "spiritual space," to which he replied, "I don't know, ask them!" (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). The result is a dome-shaped "spiritual space" or "prayer pod" situated in the entrance to the school.

As a further example the Toolkit describes the "real dimension" that is given to work in the area of Citizenship where young and old are brought together "in real and mutually respectful circumstances. This is done in several ways, including having a weekly Luncheon Club and by linking technology to projects that get young and old working together. An example of such a project is to make a picture frame for a senior citizen who the pupil has written to as a "penpal". The frame is made to reflect the older person's interests. They are then invited into school to receive the frame and evaluate

it: “When we get this right something very profound, with a genuine spirituality about it, takes place” (Toolkit, p.14).

The school, as stated in the 2012 SIAS report, has continued to offer “high quality experiences and opportunities (offered) to pupils in collective worship and religious education [RE], nurturing their spiritual development.” The report also states that pupils display “a good level of theological literacy and welcome the opportunity to discuss the deep questions of life and faith with the clergy” and that pupils’ spiritual development is greatly enhanced by the use of “bright, prominent displays as well as quiet areas for reflection both inside school and in the grounds.” The positive attitude of pupils to collective worship, according to the report, can be attributed to “the quality of worship offered to them (which) contributes greatly to their spiritual development.”

The school’s updated Toolkit (2012) states that the vision of St Saviour’s is to create an active culture in which pupils are invited to participate, thus developing “a sense of spirit through which they will be both known and come to know themselves.”

The philosophy which underpins the curriculum at St Saviour’s has been expounded most recently in a document entitled Vision for an ‘Active’ Curriculum. In this document it is claimed that pupils should be given the chance to “show off” their achievements through a creative and valued curriculum delivered within the parameters of quality and discipline: “When achieved this is ‘take care’ work at its finest and something which has gone a long way over the years to inspire and define us.” The term “active curriculum” sums up an approach which offers pupils not just learning but experiences that are “relevant, meaningful, engaging and potentially life enriching.” Children are given opportunities to develop the skills and knowledge needed to shape their own ideas; they are involved in the love of knowledge itself so that “they became both more interested and interesting as people”; they are, wherever possible, offered high challenge, opportunity

and ownership; the approach is disciplined and qualitative (“take care” work). This is achieved not just through academic study or creativity but also through experience.

This curriculum, the document claims, also attempts to provide “stickability” (quoting Malcolm Gladwell) as it gives relevant information and learning (often over an extended period of time) a chance to be remembered and effective, coining the phrase “sticky learning”: “Children leaving St Saviour’s, after up to 7 years of step on step learning, with enough knowledge to make informed choices about healthier eating and lifestyle is a good example of this.”

The document describes what has happened as this creative curriculum has taken shape and provided new levels of stimulus and challenge that teachers and teaching partners have responded to. Staff have realised that the possibilities of this approach are endless and that whilst it is beneficial to share good practice it would not necessarily be helpful to write everything they do and every idea they have into a curriculum framework: “Rather it should be seen more as a state of mind, a way of thinking and approach and a challenge to innovation, all of which aims to get the very best from ourselves and the children we serve, whilst enhancing and enriching the spirit that is St Saviour’s.”

In one of his interviews, Mr Middleton explained that it is through the integration of Skills, Knowledge, Experience and Creativity that a creative curriculum operates. In the Early Years Foundation Stage this is evident in the use of structured imagination and the development of social and emotional learning. In Year 1 children continue to experience opportunities to develop in this way but with more rigour and formality, through inter-personal skills work. In Year 2 there is more academic rigour using the junior teaching model. Year 3 has a strong creative theme in which creative approaches are explored within the “take care” ethos, producing high quality results. In Year 4

the children move towards more mature disciplines and understanding as this is the beginning of the age of self-awareness when children connect with their emotions and who they are in a different way. They are developing a sense of self but have not yet learnt what it means. This stage, claims Mr Middleton, needs managing by schools as the children develop emotional maturity not just “growing up” maturity. Frequently girls, he continues, are deeper thinkers when they are younger because their thoughts are often about how they are feeling (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11).

The culture of the school is described by Mr Middleton as a culture of opportunity which allows children to enjoy school, to grow, to find things they can show off about and feel good about, to be healthy and to be participators. This culture, he continues, could be to achieve academically or it could be the culture to find out what you like and what is worthwhile, making children more motivated to do all the other things. There is, he says, an emphasis in the school on multiple intelligence where they discover through opportunity what children like to do, are good at and want to do and “use those to take them positively back to other disciplines that we also need them to engage in, for example literacy and numeracy.” Therefore, “it’s not just things for themselves it’s things that holistically go into profound personal development.” Mr Middleton states that it is the “cleverness” of the “right kind of teacher” that can spot the simplest of things which “opens a door on that child’s psyche, on their emotions, which lifts them and allows all the other things.” He talked about the example of one seven-year old girl who was not participating in activities. She was not keen on playing things with balls and bats so the Headteacher suggested archery. Having responded positively to this, the girl went on to achieve the highest score with six arrows that anyone had ever achieved in the school. Consequently “the girl now skips out of school and is as happy as Larry doing other things as well. Not just because of that but because we used the whole moment to bring other things out and our whole belief of what’s in that child to the fore.” He acknowledged

that with other children it can take much longer and be more subtle (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Mr Middleton explained that around the culture of opportunity is the climate of the school – the day to day sense of what is in the school that says “we have a climate of participation” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). With all these opportunities on offer they need to encourage all the children to take part. OFSTED reported (in 2003) on the wide range of clubs held during and after school each week with most staff running a club and pupils often attending more than one club. OFSTED reported that the children’s enjoyment of and enthusiasm for these clubs was clear and cited the example of the table tennis club where the result of running the club was “not only an amazing level of enjoyment from a large number of pupils, but also national success in the All-England Championship this year where the boys’ team won the title outright.”

Mr Middleton stressed the importance of laying the foundations before doing the creative and inventive things. At the bottom, he explained, the model says “provide”. In the middle of “provide,” he continued, the I and D stick out as capital letters because the model is “provide, identify, provide” – provide opportunities, identify successes and provide more opportunities: “The more we provide for a child the more we will see and they will see what their potential is, what they may be capable of. Because the other model is ‘define, identify, provide’ which says ‘we will test you and then we will define you’ and there’s far more to profound personal development than that simplistic and often damaging model” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

5.0.1 Supporting children's spiritual development through the curriculum

In Mr Middleton's view, schools should not try to touch on spirituality overtly through every area of the curriculum instead "we need to actually challenge children to create a sense of spirituality or use spiritual language or think what that might be within their work particularly within literacy and actually what we've discovered is if we know how to approach that you can achieve." As a result, he claims, "it can surprise you as to the sense of the spiritual that a child's piece of work offers you." He acknowledges that often the child is not sure how they did it but "because they went at it the right way they got somewhere" (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

It is crucial, states Mr Middleton, that we spend time talking with young teachers about the sort of basic questions that challenge children at all levels. It is important, he continues, to think through and work out these sorts of questions with young teachers, giving them a "creative sense of what the spiritual might bring to our work, our teaching. How to create 'spirited schools' with spirited children ..." The danger if we do not do this, he claims, is that we will create "the best ever body of teachers at assessing mediocrity." Instead of just teaching people how to monitor and set targets, Mr Middleton wants young teachers' minds to be opened to how they can teach and what is possible, what it all means (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

At St Saviour's staff are expected to deliver the "beyond expectation" model which provides opportunity to enhance and enrich the children's experience of school and in so doing opens the possibility for spiritual development. In order to support staff, the Headteacher provides key definitions and marks of what they are aiming for; "Everything from when and how we intervene with children to show them what's possible, to the discipline and rigour we need to bring, to the quality that is so important to frame everything around, to the

leadership which must take the whole thing forward, 'cos the model is provide, enhance, enrich to take children beyond expectation." Everything within the model, Mr Middleton claims, has its place; it is not just added because it was thought of that day. Within the model, he continues, is the "take care" ethos which challenges teachers themselves to constantly be aware of what they should be aiming for. In order to help staff with this, the Headteacher has introduced "work sharing" as well as "work scrutiny". Mr Middleton explains that the difference between the two is that work scrutiny might allow him to say of a teacher, "Yes, you're meeting the expectation of the school with these children." Work sharing, however, is "today we're all gonna go round each other's classrooms and we're each gonna talk about the literacy you do, which might involve the history you do, the geography you do, the RE you do, so we exemplify to each other and then can have a broader discussion of whether we're achieving what our aims are at that top end." Sometimes, he continues, people show brilliant outcomes from a child which allows other people into a discussion and insight into what they are aiming for which is not always obvious. Even some very capable teachers, Mr Middleton maintains, are not great at knowing where a piece of literacy can be taken; how to make a piece of maths work amazing; how to do great and engaging history; how to offer something extra to the brightest writers or most talented artists. By sharing examples or by sharing expertise directly in the classroom with the children, the Headteacher is aiming to give all teachers the opportunity to achieve these outcomes (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Mr Middleton acknowledges that this can be a difficult process for some teachers when they look at other teachers' work who have "got it" and realise that they have not "got it", "but if they're then willing to get it and have a go at it and develop then the whole thing moves on. So it's not all a smooth ride. It's not all a fast journey." For some teachers, he continues, it takes years of work to "get the drip, drip, drip of what might be possible, of how they can change their view of what can happen." In order to avoid the process

becoming too onerous, the Headteacher encourages the practice of “tweak to transform” rather than trying to get people to move immediately from A to Z which would be “too big a journey.” Sometimes, he says, it is about getting staff to press the “pause” button in order to “ask that question today and see what happens, ‘cos once you know the question you know the question for ever and then you find other ways to bring it in.” Mr Middleton describes a practical example of this philosophy: “...ask young children to ‘build me a building’ is a decent thing to ask but tell them to build a building that means something to you is the tweak that transforms the activity ‘cos now the child can articulate what they’ve built and why it’s important to them – even young children can talk symbolically, potentially, in that context.” Another example is given where Year 1 children do weaving but they are asked not only to weave something “and tell me what it means. Weave me something that means something, that stands for something.” He recognises that for some children a chicken will remain a chicken because they have no symbolic concept. However, another child who has used golds, reds and browns in their weaving when asked “what’s that?” might respond “it’s the king’s blanket” – they, according to the Headteacher, “have got it.” In this way the whole concept can be built up bit by bit since “you can’t possibly do that all the time but you need to do it some of the time and the more we do it the more we can show each other.” Continually learning from each other as teachers is, Mr Middleton claims, essential; along with being open to new ideas.

Mr Middleton explains the importance of using quality work from the children to exemplify to other children “and then they get it and go off and do their own stuff. That’s their reward and the reward of the teachers as well ‘cos it’s work we all want to show off about which makes us feel good.”

As part of developing the active curriculum, Mr Middleton is encouraging staff to move away from the phrase “learning objectives” to the more child-

friendly language of “this is what I want you to be up to today.” This, he explains, gives a sense of doing something or getting somewhere and creates a sense of wanting to be part of an organisation that they are all helping to build, where children are bothered about children and the older children help the younger children. As part of this strategy, children in Key Stage 2 have been given special “up to” books. Mr Middleton describes these books as being different from the “learning journals” which have become popular in recent times since they are to be used by the children to stick things in, write things, jot things down, use as a diary and a book of ideas. It is an experiment which, he acknowledges, may or may not work but “I think we gotta give it a chance” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Mr Middleton explained that these “up to” books are part of a model for leadership that they want to use in the school – the future, engage, deliver (FED) model. Leaders, according to this model, always have one eye on the future and they are always up to something. The Headteacher illustrates using this model with the children by taking the idea of having one eye on the future and saying to a child, “Well you want to do that take care activity where you’re saying you want to raise money for cancer with your friends well then, what’s the future you want then? What’s that thing you want to be up to? ‘Cos that’s what leaders do you know.” The Headteacher is keen to develop the knowledge curriculum, therefore children could be asked to find an interesting fact that they do not think many people know and jot it in their “up to” books. He acknowledges, however, that these books may work for some children while those belonging to other children remain empty “but I think we’ve got to take some of that on board and see what we can do with it not to deny those that really will get the benefit and see if it galvanises the system” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

In a later interview, Mr Middleton reflected that the concept of the “Up to” books had not worked largely because three members of staff had not been

present and so had not been able to drive the idea with consistency, giving value to the books and exemplifying what sorts of things could go into them. The children needed to be aware that these were special books not just exercise books since some children were just filling them in randomly. The Headteacher recognised that more definition was required, along with more teacher involvement on when to use the books; for example “Now put what you want to be ‘up to’ in your book. It could include ideas, memories, thoughts, questions from Philosophy for Children.” Mr Middleton intended to re-shape the idea of “Up to” books based on his evaluation of the initial process; activities such as the writers workshop could be included, along with a reflection on the week which could include both the children’s learning and their emotions (whether they felt good or bad). The children should, he now maintained, be guided in their use of the books until they were familiar with the concepts behind them and the practical application of the idea (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11).

5.0.2 Religious Education

According to the self-evaluation Toolkit, Religious Education (RE) at St Saviour’s is a critical element in pupils addressing what spirituality might be and what it means to them. At the heart of the RE taught in the school is personal development, starting from where the child is and taking them to the story; “Spirituality and RE genuinely meet in partnership when we ‘Learn from Religion ... about ourselves.’” This requires a more profound understanding on the part of teachers “but when they get it we get some very exciting and creative ideas ...” The Toolkit states that the Headteacher encourages teachers to ‘Do good RE!’ which is part of “what we term, ‘Stop and BE excellent’ where the ‘stop’ is the Head’s permission and encouragement not just to follow published materials and strategies, but to take the best from these and then have the courage to think creatively, but always with the challenge to ‘BE excellent’” (Toolkit, p.14).

The challenge, acknowledges the Toolkit, is to be open to ideas and thinking whilst maintaining outcomes. Pupil progress in RE is recorded in the Toolkit as being good or better, reflecting the high standards seen in other subjects. However, the Toolkit states that RE should be viewed in a slightly different way since it is used in a cross-curricular way and many skills are taught through it but at St Saviour's they try to make RE distinctive "by addressing thinking skills, personal development and positive action within it." Consequently, level descriptors are seen in terms of assessment as a place to plan and set targets from the beginning, rather than simply a tool for evaluation at the end, making assessment more active, formative and useful. The Toolkit claims that as a result "we are also able to assess on a more perceptual level the way pupils respond, relate and care (ie. the personal development that is key to the character and impact of our RE and the spiritual dimension of the school)." St Saviour's is offering, according to the Toolkit, not only personalised education but also education with personality; "After all God's world is a created and creative one that we all should feel confident enough to participate in and add our own unique contribution to." The Toolkit concludes that this results in attitudes, actions and work which illustrate children's growing ability to articulate their own understanding of religion, belief and spirituality (Toolkit, p.23).

The Toolkit claims that teaching of RE in the school is "never less than good and often outstanding" and that learning about religion is good whilst learning from religion "and about ourselves, together with opportunity to think about , express views on and sometimes experience spirituality, is a strength of the school." This is exemplified, states the Toolkit, through work scrutiny (which also illustrates the understanding and creative thinking of teachers) and through meeting pupils and sharing in the life of the school (Toolkit, p.25).

Work in RE, states the Toolkit, is appropriately differentiated and “exemplifies our Beyond Expectation (BE all that you can be) model for achieving excellence.” Therefore, the challenge to think what spirituality might mean for you and to try to express this in words and other forms “is part of the high challenge we offer to our brightest children, often with stunning results, illustrating a depth of understanding and potential in young children that thrills, encourages and re-challenges us as teachers and adults.” This, the Toolkit continues, gives credibility to the “gifted and talented” indicator which states that bright children are often “deep thinkers who like to address big questions, such as those about death and the meaning of life” (Toolkit, p.25).

The Toolkit states that at St Saviour’s “there is a healthy and natural respect for faith, religion and belief, together with an acknowledgement of those with none” and that RE is not just a subject taught “but part of growing within our ethos” (Toolkit, p.26).

Teaching staff also speak about the importance of teaching RE. The Deputy Headteacher stated that children learn about different festivals and different interpretations (Interview, 6.4.11) while Mrs Scott (Class 3 teacher and RE Co-ordinator) claimed that “if teachers haven’t been inspired to teach RE this gets transferred to students and has a knock-on effect for teaching RE” (interview, 10.3.11). In interviews with teaching staff it was clear that initial training in teaching RE had been minimal whilst considering the spiritual dimension of education had been non-existent for each of them. Mrs Cook (Reception teacher and Foundation Stage Manager) stated that even though she did RE as a main subject “It was mostly about other religions. Be careful not to upset people was the main message. We looked at cultures and beliefs rather than teaching concepts.” However, at St Saviour’s there is plenty of opportunity to develop appropriate strategies for teaching RE and for enabling pupils to think about their spirituality. In Mrs Cook’s view, there is a need for “stepping stones” to questions about faith and belief (like the steps

in literacy) since the levels in the RE Agreed Syllabus start too high; “We’re laying foundations but what are they?” She claims that the RE materials (in the Agreed Syllabus) are too compartmentalised with not enough about spirituality; “we do about taking care. It’s difficult to bring spirituality into Noah’s Ark; much easier to bring it into the creation story” (Interview, 14.7.11).

The Headteacher’s summary of RE “the St Saviour’s way” states that it “must include a ‘real’ and ‘personal’ element, a ‘caring response to the world’ which makes a difference” (Headteacher article).

5.0.3 Creative and performing arts

Creativity and art play a central role in the active curriculum discussed earlier in this chapter. Mrs Jones (Class 4 teacher) commented that: “Creativity is important in the school and can enable children and staff to talk about their beliefs” (Interview, 20.1.11). Mr Wood (Deputy Headteacher) emphasised that the spiritual dimension of education is important, “It can be interpreted in different ways and expressed in different ways – especially through art, music, performance etc” (Interview, 6.4.11). Mrs Scott (Class 3 teacher and RE co-ordinator) expressed the view that poetry, play, dance and the creative curriculum all help develop children’s spirituality since children are enabled to relate what they are doing to their own thoughts and feelings – it becomes meaningful and deep as they “relate to the bigger picture” (Interview, 10.3.11).

Specific artistic projects aimed at providing opportunities for pupils to express spiritual ideas have included creating a spiritual space outside (in addition to the “prayer pod” in the school entrance described earlier in this chapter). The Headteacher described the way in which they asked an artist who specialises in using willow and making dens to “make a spiritual space with them (the children).” Mr Middleton did not simply want them to create a den, rather he wanted them to explore what it might mean to create a spiritual space –

instead of telling them what to make he was asking them the creative questions, the high challenge questions: “Can you find a way? What will you do and in that sense what does it mean?” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

For Mr Middleton, children’s spirituality is summed up in the Klimt-style picture of a mother and child hanging in the school entrance. This was a collaborative piece of work between a local artist and 10 gifted and talented children in art. The children did their own studies of a Klimt piece and then took it in turns to collaborate with the artist on the finished piece. According to the Headteacher this type of activity “starts with awe and wonder but goes beyond this” (Field notes, 15.4.10). The SIAS report of 2007 commented that this “spiritual art” project exemplified the spiritual dimension of the school curriculum, concluding that; “The depth of thought, language and artistic development shows how the pupils here undertake a seven year journey alongside and deeply involved in the creative Christian dimension of the school.”

A more recent project has been the creation of “spiritualtrees” by a group of Year 6 pupils. This involved the Headteacher, a Learning Assistant and a local artist working with the pupils to create pictures of trees which express something of the children’s own spirituality. Mrs Wray (Teaching Assistant) explained that they had talked about the idea of a life journal and the concept of a tree which could enable the children to express both their aspirations and things in life that have already happened. They talked about expectations, aspirations and beliefs and thought about “how our family and beliefs affect us now – how we are grounded” (Interview, 14.7.11). They considered who they are to begin with, what a St Saviour’s tree would look like and “extended into spirituality.” The branches of the tree were to show the type of people they are, their aspirations or dreams of the people they would like to become and something in life such as family and friends. The roots represented values and beliefs – the things that ground them and together help them develop as

people. The pupils involved in the project were members of the art group plus some others. Some work was completed in class and some after school. Mr Middleton described his involvement in the project as dealing with the conceptual work; asking the children questions such as “What is important to me?”, “Who is special or important to me?”, “What makes me special?” He spoke about the project enabling the children to consider who they are and their feelings for those people who are most important to them which in turn leads to a sense of awe and wonder. In Mr Middleton’s view this capacity is what defines us as human beings made in the image of God. For him, relationships are the key; “God delivers through relationships. Developing empathy and self-empathy can lead to a sense of spirituality.” Mr Middleton summarised the four questions explored in the “spiritualitree” project: “Who am I?; What is important to me?; Who is important to me?; What aspirations or hopes do I have for the future?” (Field notes, 3.2.11). Staff were considering extending this project to a wider group next time with the possibility of creating a St Saviour’s “spiritualitree.”

Mrs Wray also described the spiritual art competition in which younger children participate. Most recently this had taken the form of a prayer to God which they articulated and then drew a picture. According to Mrs Wray, this takes art to a different level, enabling the children to consider the question “Who is God?” They learn, she continued, to “articulate deeper steps” as they talked about the belief that the same God looks after us; that God is all around us and there is a sense of God all around; “they can draw a picture but can also articulate what they mean in words.” She described one pupil who drew a picture of a brick wall and a bully fighting; “A man was trying to climb over the wall to get away. The pupil said that you could get to be a better person through beliefs and values not just more money.” Mrs Wray expressed the view that they are facilitating the opportunity for children to brainstorm ideas, hone these ideas and produce art work which they can also articulate in words (Interview, 14.7.11). Mr Middleton claimed that the spiritual art

produced in the school gives a real sense of what spirituality means to these children. The art projects are intended to be “deep and challenging” as children are asked to both create pictorially what spirituality means to them and to express in writing what that means (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

The performing arts are also an important means of encouraging opportunities for children to express their spirituality. Mrs Scott described her involvement in the Rock Challenge where primary schools enter a team to produce an eight minute dance or drama. Having chosen the music they had to use sixty words to describe why they had chosen to do Noah’s Ark. The reasons they gave included; reflecting on the earthquake and flood in Japan (which had recently happened), being a church school, new hopes and beginnings. Lots of different roles were involved, including film, lights and stage crew as well as dancers, and there were strict rules to be followed. Pupils signed contracts of commitment to the project which was open to all – anyone who was committed could take part. The children chose the dances they wanted to participate in and there was a mix of years working together. A total of 53 children were involved in the production which, explained Mrs Scott, included both dance and the interpretation of a new beginning – the idea that terrible things can happen but there can be a new beginning; “there is a price to pay but there is always light” (Interview, 5.7.11).

5.0.4 Literacy

OFSTED reported in 2003 that pupils at St Saviour’s learn to read quickly and that “by the age of seven, most have good strategies for tackling unfamiliar words and show a good awareness of how to read aloud, with expression, in order to help others to understand the meaning of a book or story.” Year 6 pupils spoke of their enjoyment of reading and their use of the library to research information they needed in their history, geography and RE lessons; “Throughout the school pupils take the opportunities for researching information and using reference books with great enthusiasm and skill.”

However, for Mr Middleton literacy should go further than developing these skills, although he does acknowledge how important they are. He is keen to encourage self-belief and confidence in all pupils and challenges all the children to extend their thinking and writing. He acknowledges that he is using creative writing to improve the pupils' SATs levels but for him the real "driver" is the development of spirituality and the use of spiritual and emotional language. In his view imagery and symbolism need to be developed in order to move on to a more "spiritual" level (Field notes, 15.4.10).

The Headteacher is passionate about creative writing and language, challenging all children to move on to a different level of thinking, writing and expression to ultimately consider "spirituality" as indicated through use of emotional language and use of the unusual. This process is exemplified through a writing project in Year 5 which is continued in Year 6 "on a different level." In Year 5 pupils study *The Magic Box* by Kit Wright. They extend their use of language through the structure provided by the poem in describing what they would put in their own magic box. In Year 6 pupils are enabled to develop their use of spiritual and emotional language as they describe what they would put in a spiritual box. In Year 6 Mr Middleton gives the children the work they did in Year 5 and challenges them to go further by thinking on an emotional and spiritual level. He tells them; "Everyone has done something great. Everyone has a bit that could be better. Just putting in 'God' and 'Jesus' doesn't mean you've done the 'spiritual bit'." He then goes on to explain what he wants them to do, giving examples of "moving above the ordinary." For example, where a pupil has the phrase "the colours of a rainbow", they are challenged to think about what emotions they could symbolise. The phrase "warmth of the sun" is, he says, obvious and ordinary whereas "the value of friendship" has a spiritual dimension. The children were encouraged to think about how they feel deep down and to consider who they care about deeply. Mr Middleton provided a sheet of "Emotional and Spiritual Words and Images", explained some "religious" words such as

“repentance”, “grace” and “salvation” and then challenged pupils to suggest other images or ideas. Pupil examples which Mr Middleton read out included: “The joy of a family united”; “A sad smile and a joyful frown” (opposites together); “I will sleep in my box on the seventh day of creation.” Throughout the process, Mr Middleton encourages the pupils to “believe in yourself and prove how good you are. If you don’t know how can you believe?” (Field notes, 15.4.10).

In his paper, Extending the ‘Gifted’ Writer: The Challenge to Spiritual and Emotional Language, Mr Middleton explains the process of taking children who had already achieved English Level 5 (“vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are used precisely”) to “experiment with language beyond the ordinary use of metaphor and simile” (Literacy Strategy, Y6 Term 3). He decided to use poetry “which would allow the challenge and thinking to be tested without the requirement for excessive writing.” The Headteacher defined emotional and spiritual language to the children “in the context of feelings and words / ideas that might have religious overtones (eg love, faith, hope, hate, anger) but also in terms of images such as smiles, rain, sunshine ...” However, he states that “I didn’t over define what I wanted, as I was keen to see how pupils themselves would interpret the concept (if at all!) in their own and creative way.”

The ideas outlined above were explored through four poetry lessons, each lesson defined by a structure provided by the Headteacher. Although provided with a structure, the children were allowed to manipulate any frame they were given, reflecting Mr Middleton’s belief that “even creativity must be based on a foundation of properly taught skills if pupils are to be able to make appropriate choices and take appropriate risks.” Once again the poem *The Magic Box* was used to challenge the pupils to use “emotional and spiritual” language and imagery. Secondly, *Hallowed be thy name* offered a similar challenge but in a more overtly religious context, “also introducing on

an RE level the theme of awe and wonder, whilst looking in terms of literacy for a degree of sensitivity towards language.” The third lesson used the poem *Beware Goliath Comes!* to consolidate previous learning. This included a brainstorming of “spiritual and emotional” words and ideas as a catalyst to discussion, “whilst also asking children to think more deeply about their relationship to the world they live in and are a part of.” The Headteacher was also attempting to make RE more meaningful by relating Bible stories back to a child’s own experiences. Hence, he asked the children to imagine Goliath stood for the bad things in our world and that the stones in David’s sling represented what we could do to defeat him and, therefore, make our world a better place, rather than simply re-writing the story. Mr Middleton described *The Magic Box* as a “door-opener” on “the idea of emotional and spiritual language” whilst *Hallowed Be Thy Name* had asked the children to consider it in a different context (whilst also considering the natural world). “*Beware Goliath Comes!*”, he explains, “challenged them to think more deeply about their world on a more personal level, not just having to talk about it, however, but also having to express their feelings and views in writing” (Headteacher paper).

The final stimulus was the poem *Who Am I?*, a poem written by a nine-year-old and published in a Bible based book called *Writing and Poetry Tool Kit* by Margaret Cooling. This time the children were asked to look “not to the wider world, but into their own inner world and think deeply about themselves on a personal level.” The results, claim the Headteacher, varied within this gifted and talented focus group between very good and breathtaking. Participation and outcomes from each session were “not just fascinating, but also personally rewarding for both the pupils and myself.” Mr Middleton observed that as the children became more engaged by their work “they began to sense success in terms of high achievement” and “the depth and perceptiveness of some of the thinking went far beyond my expectation,

together with a comparably high ability to manipulate language and imagery to give expression to their ideas and insight” (Headteacher paper).

In his evaluation of the project, Mr Middleton recognised that there was evidence that shared ideas repeated themselves in some children’s work (eg the idea of dreams). However, after initially engaging with the structure, he states that the children’s confidence grew and they “began to go off in more individual directions, genuinely trying to engage with the idea of emotion and spirituality, more often than not achieving its communication.” Mr Middleton claims that examples of the work produced by the children support Teare’s view that gifted children are capable of deep philosophical thinking. He continues; “although we might try to dismiss some of the children’s work as merely the clever use of language, rather than something personal to them, when challenged each could justify and talk about what they had written and why, especially in the context of the ‘Who Am I?’ poems, something which in itself led to excellent discussion opportunities” (Headteacher paper).

Mr Middleton quotes several examples of children’s work to justify the claims he makes. He describes the work of one ten year-old boy who “takes his idea of spirituality, linked to his Biblical knowledge and attaches it to his ability to write and comes up with, ‘I will put in my box ... an eagle’s claw, fashioned from the wood of Eden ... a touch of awe and wonder, with a sprinkle of miracles ...’” The Headteacher continues; “If ever there was an argument for never patronising young children, both in terms of their academic capabilities and their ability to think, this child makes it in this piece.” Pupils, he says, touch the spiritual in their “Hallowed Be Thy Name” poems as well as capturing the mood with their sensitive use of language, “from the power of ‘Forests of freedom, echoing friendship ...’ to ‘The mystery of Heaven, like a board game of skies and sea, muttering...’” Mr Middleton claims these pupils “show a closer connection and empathy with their world than perhaps we would give them credit, as 9 year old D.H. shows in his Goliath poem as he

expresses loneliness as ‘the strength of independence faded...’ whilst others are confronted by ‘terror’ which is ‘like an iceberg wrapped around them...’ only challenged by stones of ‘sunshine (to) evaporate their grief’” (Headteacher paper). Writer’s workshops have continued to offer opportunities for children to develop and extend their use of emotional and spiritual language into prose.

5.0.5 Philosophy for Children

In Mr Middleton’s view, the introduction of Philosophy for Children (P4C) to children in Year 3 /4 could provide a framework for helping teachers to develop with children the kinds of skills and insights required to create not only “clever thinkers” but “clever doers”. According to Mr Middleton, “the journey from good to excellent is often one of energy. Two of us may have clever ideas but the one who achieves is the one who makes the idea happen, doesn’t just talk about it.” Therefore, he is looking for not only clever thinkers “but I also want children, adults who have the energy to deliver on their thinking. But without the ability to think cleverly without the ability to think deep thoughts how can we fulfil all that purpose, all those principles? The answer is we’re not going to be able to because we won’t be able to think in a unique way. We won’t be able to develop empathy to start to try and develop our informed choice because we won’t be people who’ve thought about anything and actually at its deepest level thinking is a marker of those children that have aptitude that have gifts and talents and we need to show them the wondering in that and the sense that things can mean things at so many different levels and I believe philosophy for children gives a structure to that” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

The shape and structure of P4C, he argues, enables different teachers at different levels of understanding and commitment to deliver it consistently through the school so that “drip by drip by drip from Reception through to Year 6 children are building their capacity to think deeply...” Ultimately, he

claims, this will make them better people, “more able to cope with life, more able to understand what’s around them, more able to do the right things by themselves and by each other. That’s my belief and I think in general around the school you’ll get a sense of that.” P4C therefore provides a framework for children to develop these skills and insights; “It’s like much of what we do we show children what’s possible then they can ‘get it’ and then they can ‘go’. If we don’t show them how are they going to ‘get it’?” According to Mr Middleton, this should not just be left to chance (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Mr Middleton takes the view that children should be encouraged to ask really interesting questions and the introduction of the “Up to” books (discussed in section 5.0.1) was intended to provide children with a place to record any interesting ideas or questions they may have come across, for example in a book; “Whatever it is it can be an active thing if we can find time and encouragement to make them belong to children so children don’t lose them” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). The Headteacher in one of his interviews also linked P4C to emotional intelligence, claiming that one becomes more relevant if you have the other. This involves a questioning of self and therefore a questioning of others and of the world. Personal development, he states, takes place as an adult talks to a child about why she might be feeling how she is feeling (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11).

Several teachers expressed positive views about P4C in their interviews. Mrs Scott (Class 3 teacher and RE Co-ordinator) claimed that “Philosophy for Children has the potential to enable children to think differently and to inspire others.” In her view, P4C gives children permission to think and explore. It is a safe way to think since everyone is valued and has the chance to discuss; things are not necessarily written down, “There isn’t a blank piece of paper on which they are expected to write or do – in P4C there’s time to let your mind unfold. It’s an opportunity to express thoughts. It’s ok to have

‘random thoughts’.” With P4C, she continues, you are never sure where the discussion is going to go, “you don’t know what they will think or say!” Mrs Scott concludes that, “P4C gives an opportunity to ‘go deeper’. Such opportunities are limited by time in other lessons” (Interview, 10.3.11).

Mrs Jones (Class 4 teacher involved in the P4C sessions) commented that P4C had made her think about the way she asks questions. For her, observing P4C sessions had been helpful since she could see how difficult it is for some children to contribute and she had seen the positive effect of the sessions on the less confident children, helped largely in her view by the non-judgemental approach observed. P4C, she stated, could be seen as part of and contributing to literacy – especially speaking and listening. Mrs Jones held the view that the spiritual dimension of education could be enhanced by P4C and she had become more interested in spirituality herself since being involved in P4C sessions. She had observed the children expressing “big” questions in general conversation, using skills she had not seen in this age group before; “it’s affecting the way they think.” She had also noticed that less “academic” children were “coming out with ‘strong’ thoughts” and she had seen different aspects to the children which she may not have seen otherwise (Interview, 20.1.11).

Mrs Jones perceived several benefits emanating from the P4C sessions. These included the fact that children listened to each other better – there was less interrupting or talking across one another generally in class. The less confident children, she stated, now had confidence to speak in other subjects and P4C was supporting the philosophy of not “telling off” for “wrong” answers which they already had in Class 4. Mrs Jones also commented that all children felt able to contribute as a result of being listened to and not laughed at. In Mrs Jones’ view, P4C can assist in developing children’s spirituality by helping children to listen to each other, respect each other’s opinions which

in turn means they have confidence to give their own views and not getting upset if they have different views from each other (Interview, 20.1.11).

Mrs Tate (Class 4 teacher not involved in P4C sessions) valued the fact that there had been a recognised time for philosophy – the children knew it was all right to talk and think because it had been timetabled, children and staff knew the time was there to do this. In her view, P4C had enabled the children to communicate better and to have more confidence; “those who weren’t very confident about writing things down have gained more confidence generally through doing more talking.” She had observed that the responses of this class to the spiritual dimension of education had been very good, better than the responses of classes in previous years; “This may be linked to the skills being developed through the philosophy sessions” (interview, 6.4.11).

Having taught P4C in a previous school, Mr Wood (Class 6 teacher and Deputy Headteacher) held the view that P4C has the potential to support spiritual development, although different classes will respond in different ways. He stated that it is beneficial to have time to discuss; “They get to develop thinking skills and I include philosophical questions to get the children thinking. They can think about their own beliefs and values. P4C is open-ended – children can interpret in their own way and learn to think for themselves” (Interview, 6.4.11). A cautionary note was sounded by Mrs Cook (Foundation Stage Manager and Reception teacher) who stated that teachers needed to look at how P4C can be sensibly managed and organised. In her view, the teacher needs to have an understanding themselves of where they are going with it (Interview, 14.7.11).

5.1 PEDAGOGY

In the 2003 OFSTED report, the quality of teaching was judged to be “very good throughout the school” and “a strength overall.” The report goes on to state that teachers expected pupils to attain high levels of achievement and behaviour and that they “instill very good work attitudes in all lessons.” As a result pupils are enabled to learn effectively “because they concentrate well, work and research independently and listen carefully to their teacher and each other.” Teachers, says the report, match the work to the individual needs of the pupils and extra work at a higher level challenges the brightest pupils. OFSTED inspectors observed that; “A significant strength is the way teachers ask questions that encourage pupils and challenge their thinking. Pupils’ responses are valued and this raises their self-esteem.” The report identified that the language development of most children was above average when they entered the Reception class. Carefully planned opportunities for discussion were observed which enabled children to extend their vocabulary “as well as to reflect on what they already knew.”

A feature of the school, according to the OFSTED report, was the teachers’ high expectations and secure knowledge and understanding of subjects which allowed them to provide clear explanations and challenging tasks, “and questions that extend the pupils’ knowledge and understanding.” The report goes on to state that; “These questions ranged from the very encouraging in the Reception class to the probing in Year 3 and the searching in Year 6.”

According to the 2007 OFSTED report, teaching was “often outstanding and never less than good, ...” Pupils were enabled to achieve exceptionally high standards and “In the best lessons, pupils are actively involved in their learning and know precisely what they are to learn” leading all pupils to make “outstanding progress through the school with the 2006 and 2007 test results being the best in the school’s history.” The report identified the effectiveness of the system used across the school for assessing pupils’ progress as a

contributing factor to the “outstanding academic care, guidance and support for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties and/or disabilities and those who are gifted or talented.”

The report identified the contribution of the strong leadership and management of the Foundation Unit as a significant factor in the children developing an enjoyment of learning as soon as they start school. The routines and procedures, the report continues, make the children feel safe and happy and is “strengthened by the time that they spend with the infant children who regularly support and guide them in their learning.” Inspectors stated that the school’s commitment to developing the whole child was evidenced by the fact that “Personal, social and health education, and spiritual and cultural development, are an integral part of all lessons ...”

In interviews with the staff it was evident that children are being enabled to develop the skills of thinking and questioning throughout their time at St Saviour’s. Mrs Cook (Foundation Stage Manager and Reception teacher) spoke about the importance of thinking and of the need “to have quality in what we do.” With the younger children role-play enables the exploration of difficult concepts to take place; “We imagine if you were God and you were creating a butterfly what would you want your butterfly to look like? This helps us to think about God as creator.” Mrs Cook explained the importance of having well-structured ways of helping the children to develop; “We need to make things positive and constructive – it’s difficult with little ones.” The “Take care” idea, she claimed, applies to everyone, “it can be understood from the start and changes and develops as the children grow older. ‘Take care’ can mean different things but they can understand the concept and that it’s important” (Interview, 14.7.11).

In Mrs Scott’s view, as Class 3 teacher and RE Co-ordinator, thinking skills should be related to the children’s own lives. This starts, she continued, lower down the school and gradually develops through to Year 6; “So, for example,

in Year 1 they think of questions to ask God. In Year 3 they do an activity to do with colours – I feel blue, why? What might God say about it? In Year 4 they do the Pandora’s box activity and in Year 6 they explore poetry with a spiritual dimension” (Interview, 10.3.11).

Mrs Tate (Class 4 teacher) claimed that the children like thinking and questioning; “especially open-ended questions where they can express an opinion or view and then explore this together.” According to Mrs Tate, “Some classes explore this more than others. A lot depends on the confidence of the teacher to allow things to happen or go off in a different direction.” At the time of the interview, Mrs Tate was exploring the last days of Jesus’ life with Class 4; “The children imagine themselves there at the time. They think about what their feelings would be, what they would do – they put themselves in the picture. They are encouraged to be self-questioning. They ask questions and talk and become involved in the story” (Interview, 6.4.11).

Mr Wood (Class 6 teacher) claimed that Year 6 children get to develop thinking skills, “and I include philosophical questions to get the children thinking” (Interview, 6.4.11). This is extended in Year 6 through the “Spiritualitree” project (see also above, section 5.0.3) described by Mrs Wray (Teaching Assistant). During this project pupils mind-mapped lots of words and then extended their ideas. They were encouraged to think about questions such as “I wonder what will be or happen if I take that path. I wonder who God is.” This, Mrs Wray stated, generated lots of discussion (Interview, 14.7.11).

At times the development of thinking skills is linked overtly to spiritual development when children are encouraged to reflect on an activity; “Children are developing spirituality through the things that are done in school – I’ve done that and it made me think of ...” (Mrs Scott, Interview, 10.3.11). Mr Middleton summarised this approach when he spoke of the challenge in doing practical things to help children learn, for example in

science and RE; “We’re not preaching to children. It’s a non-patronising approach which says ‘Think about this’ that leads to informed choice. We develop this into practical areas where we don’t dictate thinking but develop children’s thinking so that, for example, children can share respectfully in the atmosphere of prayer even if they don’t want to pray themselves.” There is a prayer wall “which is a free choice to use or not.” The prayer wall acknowledges that “prayer is important to some people and we need to think about this.” In Mr Middleton’s view, none of the children are too young to consider difficult questions for themselves (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Reverend Smith also commented on the development of the children’s spirituality and prayer life through the St Saviour’s Fun Club (described in section 4.1.2); “The silent times at the end of the Fun Club gives a special atmosphere and there’s a spiritual energy. We have seen tremendous spiritual development to be able to get to the stage of doing this. Towards the end when parents come to collect their children they now come in and stand around the sides to be part of what is happening.” Reverend Smith drew a parallel between “progression” in spirituality and a developing prayer life; “Shopping list prayers become ‘tsp’ (thanks, sorry, please) prayers. As spirituality develops so does the depth of prayers. You can see from the depth of their questions and the things they want to do, the way that spirituality is developing. The ability to share with a friend and having the confidence to answer questions is a big step on the child or young person’s spiritual journey.” Reverend Smith commented that during the primary stage he saw children wanting to know more and becoming more challenging in a positive way; “they want to know more about Christian or spiritual things rather than denying it.” “Children,” he continued, “help me remember the basics. Adults get too complicated in their thinking. Children make things clear, though not necessarily simple” (Interview, 13.9.10).

According to Mrs Jones, the Headteacher will often give examples of children and the ways in which they have grown in different ways, not just academically. She gave as an example a girl in her class who had recently gained a distinction in a poetry competition in which the children had been encouraged to stand up and present their work in a positive way (Interview, 20.1.11).

5.2 CHURCH SCHOOL STATUS

The OFSTED report of 2003 describes the ethos of St Saviour's as "positive", stating that staff promote "a very good school ethos for learning through the very broad curriculum, the very good resources and the outstanding range of additional activities." According to the report, staff have maintained the "very good pupil attitudes and ethos of the school that made such a positive impact on the quality of education provided at the time of the last inspection." The report comments that "this is a very caring school" and that the school's emphasis on "Take Care" is "particularly evident in the work produced in English. The many different ways that pupils are enabled to present their work is very impressive."

By the time of the 2007 OFSTED inspection, inspectors judged that: "This is an outstanding school ... It is strengthened by the Christian values it promotes which permeate every aspect of school life. This has resulted in a school where every pupil really does matter ..." This, according to the school's self-evaluation Toolkit, provides the evidence that "we have a school that is genuinely sustained not just by its people, but by its Christian values, guiding principles which define and drive a mission statement which all stakeholders seek to understand, at least in part, and achieve on behalf of the children, community and God we serve." In the view of the Toolkit, therefore, St Saviour's "is a school that has moved from mere aims to a set of principles..." The Toolkit describes the way in which "we try to make our religious education and worship 'real' and therefore distinctive from other subjects,

challenging pupils and staff on both an individual and 'society' (citizenship) level to make a difference." This, continues the Toolkit, requires learning about religion (and who we are) and to learn from religion about ourselves "and who we can become."

The Toolkit claims that the Christian ethos of the school is present in all its policies and is reflected in the fact that the RE policy also includes statements on their approach to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education and Citizenship. According to the Toolkit, everything from work on citizenship to school meals is key to "creating a positive and effective culture – nothing is separate or tacked on ..." Although the school achieves high results, the Toolkit claims that this is not just about having clever children or about being a "SATs factory", "it is about touching potential in every way possible, having rigorous targets / aspirations for our pupils, but supporting and empowering them to reach them."

Examples of ways in which the school ethos has practical implications are given in the Toolkit. One example cited is a concern for the wider world which is a strong element of the school's curriculum and ethos. This commitment to "...take care of the world..." results in the children being encouraged to take action – anything from being nice to your Mum to planning a charitable act as part of RE to any Act of Random Kindness which will improve our world (ARK theme for collective worship). Charitable events may be organised by the school council or by individual pupils.

According to the Toolkit, families from other faiths and cultures respond positively to the school and its ethos, "with no one asking for their child to be withdrawn from worship." The example is given of a Jewish family who have had children at St Saviour's for over eleven years. The family has provided input to both RE and collective worship and when asked if there was an alternative to a Bible which could be given to their child at the Year 6 Leavers' Service, "they said they would prefer her to be given a Bible as it was an

important book they should be aware of.” Faiths such as Judaism and Hinduism (as well as atheism), claims the Toolkit, are respected through RE and collective worship.

There is an emphasis in the Toolkit on getting to know pupils “in a deep and profound way” so that responses to unwanted behaviour can be dealt with appropriately, “taking into account any particular circumstances (ie. family difficulties), something we see as genuinely Christ-like in its approach ...”

Pupils, the Toolkit continues, are enabled to develop their emotional intelligence “through the way we treat each other and through pupil teacher dialogue.” Adults too are equally respected and valued and the care and support provided for each other has allowed the development of “an outstanding and spirited school ...”

The Toolkit provides evidence that this is a church school by pointing to “the way it behaves, through newsletters and overtly as part of its environment ...” Examples given include, a “spiritual space” within the RE area, a “Take Care Tree” in the hall (around which the Worship Centre is based), crosses around the school, a “Prayer Wall”, the Mission Statement and Guiding Principles and posters proclaiming “The Golden Rule”. The Toolkit concludes; “We are a school that likes to discuss the importance of symbolism with children and we are always looking for other ways of positively adding to ways of showing the important and relevant Christian foundation we are built upon, but without risking going ‘over the top’.” This statement of the importance of its Christian foundation and distinctiveness is seen in school documentation and is summarised in the Toolkit; “this is about sustaining and exemplifying a positive Christian ethos, within a positive Christian balance.”

The Toolkit states that while some staff are practising Christians who bring a “profound understanding and experience of faith, together with an ambition to make it real and relevant in our 21st century school”, other staff “also understand the spiritual essence of our school and cleverly create work and

activity which enhances this..." The Toolkit goes on to claim that children's spiritual and moral development "in the context of both teaching and the Christian value driven ethos of St Saviour's is a strength of our Church school and can be seen and felt by anyone who visits or talks with the pupils." The Toolkit concludes that there is a link between the "vibrant, spirit led" quality of the school and the positive, confident attitudes that "lead to consistently high achievement and attainment. Only when the personal and academic are genuinely integrated can we begin to have any chance of real success and the 'learning and growing' school experience we properly strive for."

The Toolkit comments on the close working relationship between the church and the school exemplified at the time by the Rector's comments on the theme for worship for the New Year in which the Headteacher was keen to focus on Jesus; "Only if it begins from where the children are." The Headteacher's response in the Toolkit was "we know we can do business and we know that we will continue to develop as both a Church and School and Church School together."

The school's self-evaluation as contained in the Toolkit was verified by the Church School Inspection (SIAS) which was carried out in 2007. The summary judgement in this report states that, "The distinctiveness and effectiveness of St Saviour's Church of England Primary School are outstanding." This is expanded in the following paragraph:

Christian values underpin every aspect and dimension of the life of the school and are making a significant impact on learners. The 'take care' ethos is lived out by all members of the school community. It is demonstrated in the quality of relationships, the quality of the spiritual dimension and the level to which all involved feel respected and loved. Pupils are happy, confident and caring for each other, the wider school and church community. A deep spirituality based on awe, wonder and a sense of God's mystery permeates the school. Its Christian stance is articulated in all documentation and is clear in the 'spirit' of the school.

The report acknowledges the Christian foundation of the school which, it states, is deepened and strengthened by the commitment and hard work of

all those involved in the school. The first of the established strengths listed in the report is the school vision which is “firmly rooted in Christian values that are active throughout this outstandingly well led establishment.” This spiritual vision, it is claimed, is holistic and dynamic and is “lived out in every aspect of the life of the school.” Pupils, says the report, demonstrate their pride in themselves and their school through their attitude and behaviour. The “excellent and continually developing links with the local church and community” (identified above) are also considered an established strength of the school in the report.

The SIAS report considered the fact that “The school is aware of the need to continue to grow, develop and change” to be another strength of the school. The Headteacher is continually updating the “BE” Excellence Model which was introduced to the school in 2005 and strives to take children “Beyond Expectation”. Through articulating and integrating practice within “a sustaining / defining set of values and a clear model for how we will achieve excellence” staff are challenged to “take children further than we would have previously thought to do, to both show them, and gain from them, what might be possible.” This has been articulated most recently in the Active Curriculum document discussed in section 5.0 above which illustrates the Headteacher’s desire to provide children (and staff) with moments when work and achievement “thrills, satisfies and brings the happy refrain: ‘Look what I’ve done!’” The document claims that; “Only in these moments does confidence, self esteem and motivation truly have a chance to grow.”

Mr Middleton, in one of his interviews, clearly articulated that being in a church school provides a specific context for these moments to take place. In a Church of England school, he stated, “you have ‘permission’ to consider things around religion, so that prayers or hymns can be part of what is happening but the children still need to think things through for themselves” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). This context is also one in which children

can develop their spirituality as evidenced, according to the Headteacher, through both a “databased word-based way” and through “a kind of people data, a data of experience.” Work scrutiny, he claimed, gives a certain degree of evidence as to what is going on but “on another level it’s a kind of people data, a data of experience – you’ve got to go round and sense it because the people who come into this school (remember we’ve been working at this culture for the last 16 years) would in general come in and say ‘there’s something happening here, your children are really up for it.’” He went on to quote the OFSTED report which commented on “the real spirit of the school” and concluded; “Most people who come here do say there’s a sense of something going on” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Teaching staff commented in their interviews on the importance of church school status in encouraging children’s spiritual development. For Mrs Cook (Foundation Stage Manager and Reception teacher) the development of spirituality in the school is “encouraged by the firm belief that school is run on Christian principles and built up from there.” According to Mrs Cook, the Headteacher does not patronise the children since complex things are spoken about in collective worship (for example Easter) because “It’s part of the school community and adds to the feeling that it’s a good thing and it’s positive.” She commented that they are “building foundations but it’s not overt. I like the way we do church school and I like going to the church.” Mrs Cook explained that in her view “Parents have a right to bring up their children as they wish but children also have the right to be given a choice.” Consequently, in the school she says “children talk about God and Jesus and know they’re important.” For her being part of a church school is not about indoctrinating since “Christianity is part of the heritage. We celebrate other religions but we need a sense of our own identity as well” (Interview, 14.7.11).

Mrs Scott (Class 3 teacher and RE Co-ordinator) stated that she preferred working in a church school where there was a sense of belonging and of a “higher being”; “knowing where our values come from – who we are and where we come from is reinforced. There is a reason for life.” This, she continued, brings responsibility and a desire to care for others which is rooted in Christian values (Interview, 10.3.11). Mrs Scott described the Rock Challenge (discussed in section 5.0.3) as “a real community effort” which reflected a sense of team and pride in their achievement. For her it was important that they chose to do Noah’s Ark (the first time it had been performed at Rock Challenge); reinforcing the significance of being a church school (Interview, 5.7.11).

In Mrs Tate’s view, being a church school “underpins everything”, with the development of spirituality being encouraged in the school through its “take care” ethos. The church school ethos, she continued, is driven by the Headteacher and through the involvement of the church (Interview, 6.4.11). Having taught at a community school previously, Mrs Jones expressed the view that a Church of England school is different, “though not as different as I expected.” According to Mrs Jones, it is not very obvious when you walk in the building that St Saviour’s is a church school since there are not that many signs or signals. However, she continued, “worship is different. Extensive use is made of the local church for services and more references are made to church services.” She also stated that Christian beliefs are talked about in collective worship and that RE has a high profile (Interview, 20.1.11). Her job-share partner, Mrs Tate, taught RE to their class and put significant time into planning the subject. The church school status, in her view, enables spirituality to be encouraged through everything; “through the approach to everything not just what is being taught.” She concluded by saying that, “People work here because they support the ethos of the school and the leadership – they buy into that” (Interview, 27.1.11).

Having recently joined St Saviour's from another church school, Mr Wood was able to comment on differences between church schools in their approach to spirituality; "In two of the church schools I have taught in, spirituality could be seen in designated areas. In one it was very evident in the school ethos." He described his previous church school where there was a "spirituality corner" in each classroom and there was freedom for each corner to be different; "the children were involved in choosing symbols and giving reasons for their choices." In Mr Wood's opinion classroom assemblies are important as they "allow children to bring their own spirituality to it" (Interview, 6.4.11).

For Reverend Smith, a Church of England School should be a place "where children can understand the message of the Gospel and how it can be relevant in their lives." Having permission to run something like the St Peter's Fun Club, he continued, is the key to providing opportunities for spiritual development in a church school. Reverend Smith stated that church and school are seen as one community by parents when they attend services in the church and "the idea of the church being in the school as a church community is developing slowly." Similarly, he went on, the school is seen as part of the church too, with a special noticeboard in the church being used to display school related items produced by the children (Interview, 13.9.10).

Mrs Wray (Teaching Assistant) expressed her view of the importance of St Saviour's as a church school, not just in terms of the children's spiritual development but in relation to herself: "I've been on a journey myself in terms of beliefs and values since coming to St Saviour's ten years ago and I'm just finishing an Open University degree in Early Years education" (Interview, 14.7.11).

5.3 THE LOCAL CHURCH

Both the OFSTED report of 2003 and the SIAS report of 2007 comment on the strong links between the school and the local church. According to OFSTED; “The school plays a prominent role in the life of the village and has a strong relationship with the local church.” The SIAS report commented on “The excellent and continually developing links with the local church and community” which “are due to the commitment and dedication of all involved.”

The SIAS self-evaluation Toolkit details the ways in which church and school have worked together in various aspects of school and community life. Church information, for example, is sent out in the head’s newsletters “or more recently in a Church School newsletter” and important Christian events are celebrated in the church whenever possible. Parents are given a “greater sense that they are part of a Christian School Family that goes beyond mere ‘sending your child to school’” through the Reception Celebration Service and the Year 6 Leavers Service. Within these services each child receives a relevant Christian book from the church, “which is both appreciated by the child/parent(s) and stands as a symbol of our special Church School relationship.” The Rector and Headteacher lead these services together. In Reverend Smith’s view the Reception Service shows parents and children that they are coming into a family; “church and school together as the family of God – it’s a big family with lots of houses in it!” The parents, he continued, are in a new situation and a different environment and are included as well as the children in the service; “In these services children are being valued and shown the importance Jesus placed on children. Each child has been given gifts which should be valued and developed as God-given” (Interview, 13.9.10).

For Mr Middleton, the service also provided an opportunity for him to explain to parents the central philosophy of the school, that of developing the child’s

profound personal development; “It’s not just about discovering who they are but who they could become in a church school context where we do things beyond the ordinary. We aim for infinity and beyond!” (Field notes, 14.7.11).

The emphasis at the Leavers Service, explained Reverend Smith, is on the child’s development, both personal and spiritual, which they are encouraged to take with them on the next stage of their journey. Each Year 6 pupil reflects on their own personal story in school which they bring to the service.

Reverend Smith then incorporates some of these fun things in his talk later in the service when he talks about the ways in which they have grown and developed since joining the school; “it’s not just about physical development but what is inside is also growing and developing. Year 6 questions are generally more difficult to answer than Year 1 questions!” Reverend Smith gave an example of a question asked by a Year 3 pupil on a visit to the church: “Where’s God’s grave?” (Interview, 13.9.10).

The school also worships in the church at Harvest, Christmas and Easter which provides the opportunity, in the words of the Toolkit, to make “the importance of our Church School partnership clearer to both children and parents.”

According to the Toolkit, collective worship in school focuses on ensuring that this is a positive experience for the children which is “linked to our Church of England heritage, partnership and culture.” This is emphasised by the regular involvement of the Rector, “who is seen not as a visitor, but a significant part of the school and as this relationship grows so does the connection children make between an enriching school and a positive and welcoming church.”

The Toolkit goes on to state that the way the Headteacher recognises church attendance and Christian belief plus the relationship the Rector forms with children and parents “is key to this.” This is enhanced by church visits for RE and church attendance at times such as Christingle.

The Toolkit claims that children and parents (even those who do not attend church regularly) in general see the church as their church and as a significant part of the village life and culture. This is demonstrated at times such as Christingle when large numbers of families attend church. Hence, states the Toolkit, children through school and other experiences “reflect the values of the Church and see belief as important ...” The Toolkit concludes that through these clear links with the church, “Children and staff have a sense of being part of their Church...”

In his interview, Reverend Smith claimed that the interest in personal spirituality is as high now as it has ever been and, in his view, “The church needs to engage with this spirituality in adults and children.” Ideally, he continued, there should be organised groups for children and young people in the church to encourage the development of spirituality from the age of five to twenty. The strategy adopted by Reverend Smith has been one of small steps which lead to “organic” growth. For example, the Good Friday “happening” took place from 10am until 2pm, included workshops and activities and ended with a service. This was all part of the same event which was also promoted by the school. During the previous three years, Reverend Smith explained that he had let things grow organically; beginning with a crèche, then as those children grew they provided for KS1 children followed by KS2 and a new group for Year 6 upwards. At the time of the interview, plans were in place to extend the church, building another aisle with separate access specifically for the youth work of the church (Interview, 13.9.10).

Reverend Smith’s aim was to provide a safe, non-threatening environment where children could explore the idea of a personal spirituality; “it’s on their terms and it’s about being valued.” The church, he continued, gives books (not necessarily Bibles) to the children to help them on their journey; “The church is seen to be journeying with the children.” Servers and choir members “will discuss difficult situations and ask questions they wouldn’t ask

at home ... the children feel they have space to discuss such issues in church” (Interview, 13.9.10).

Reverend Smith often talked to classes about projects to do with the buildings and symbolism in church, encouraging inter-action so that “children feel that coming into church is like coming to another part of the school.” His aim was to encourage school and church to be part of the same community. Reverend Smith had introduced a pet service which became an annual event. The intention, he explained, was to reflect spirituality and the care of God’s creatures; “We could do this in church and have fun!” The church, in his view, helps spiritual growth through the building and the ethos. Classes go to the church to look at the building and its symbolism – why things are used and why they are relevant today. The children are encouraged to explore, touch and feel things like the candles and the cross in order to understand the building and what it means in their lives. In addition, he explained, the church is open “24/7” and Reverend Smith often finds youngsters there in the crèche or in the porch because “they feel comfortable and welcome and okay to be there” (Interview, 13.9.10).

Reverend Smith described the prayer boxes which are sited all around the village where prayers can be written and requests prayed for in church in the week. Often, he commented, the prayers are in a child’s handwriting; “they’ve written about real stuff, things that are important to them, like family bereavement, pet bereavement and family break-up” (Interview, 13.9.10).

The church congregation, according to Reverend Smith, is generally open to involvement with children and young people and a regular “worship for all” service is advertised in school. The church music group includes children and adults and school is part of the Youth Policy in church. The school is on the agenda at Parish Church Council meetings when the church receives a report from the school and provides some financial support to the school. The

church, for example, has provided the “take care” awards presented at the annual Village Show for this joint church / school initiative where parents sign to confirm that a child has done something for someone.

The local church had a strong influence on Reverend Smith, particularly through the youth leader who made the youth group feel it was their group and that they set the parameters. Reverend Smith finds that the approach of that youth leader still works today; “The leader made you feel you were the most important person in the world and had the skill of making youngsters feel they’d made the decisions about things. She valued you as a person and helped you develop.” He recalled youth club evenings as being Bible-based but fun too; “What you were doing was important for you – there was a spiritual dimension there driving you forward and helping you develop. It didn’t seem ‘freaky’ but seemed right. Peer pressure worked in a positive way.” Through his attendance at Sunday Club and Youth Fellowship, Reverend Smith felt valued and was moulded in terms of his personal development. This, he concluded, has affected the rest of his life and his own experience has been a major driver for him; “I had fun! My family background had its difficulties but we were supported by the church” (Interview, 13.9.10).

During Mr Middleton’s interview, he talked about a thinking group which had been set up and run by the Rector which enabled children to have a choice of preparing for confirmation; “in this group children are offered the chance to talk about things in a deeper way.” This exploration of belief in order to make informed choices is, in Mr Middleton’s view, an important indicator of mature thinking at Year 6. In addition, once a month a story cafe was held with breakfast and a theme (for example, “The boy who lives forever”, discussing the question “Do you really want to live forever?”) with philosophy and story books being combined (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10).

A Bible Explorers group for Year 2 children also contributes to this process of developing “deep thinking.” This group meets at lunch-times and is run by a local Methodist Church Youth and Children’s Worker.

Mrs Cook (Foundation Stage Manager and Reception teacher) summarised the relationship between the school and the church; “The difference here is that it’s the underlying base. The community is linked to the church and we go to the church, it’s a nice feeling. Physically we’re close to the church and part of the community. Parents are happy to be in church and feel comfortable there” (Interview, 14.7.11).

5.4 RELATIONSHIPS

When asked what makes spirituality grow or wither, Reverend Smith spoke about the importance of who is walking with you since at the beginning of the journey both children and adults are vulnerable; “school and church are both there, together with family so that children are being nurtured and being allowed to grow as part of a big group.” Conversely, he claimed, when youngsters are left on their own their spiritual development is vulnerable since negative peer pressure or issues can have a negative effect whereas “being valued and walking with others has a positive effect on developing spirituality.” In difficult times, he continued, there is a need to share suffering as well as fun; “Youngsters especially need this in a materialistic world where there is something different going on at home. They want to get closer to the idea of being valued and that there is someone out there for them and someone to shout at when it goes wrong” (Interview, 13.9.10).

5.4.1 Family

The importance of family influence on spiritual development was expressed by several of the adults interviewed. Reverend Smith commented that he came from a church-going family which influenced his thinking (Interview, 13.9.10) and Mrs Tate explained that her family upbringing (and particularly

her father) influenced her thinking on spirituality (Interview, 6.4.11). Mrs Cook had a good experience of church when growing up and knew lots of people with positive experience and belief in what Christianity meant to them. In particular she spoke of her mother-in-law who “has a strong belief which is shown in the way she acts and behaves. She’s not evangelical – you know she’s a Christian by the way she acts not what she says.” She concluded; “I’ve been influenced by people rather than by things I’ve read” (Interview, 14.7.11).

During the Welcome Service, Mr Middleton used a shepherd’s crook which had belonged to his father to illustrate the way in which within the school they would get to know the children and the parents so that they could love, care and lead the children as a shepherd loves and cares for his sheep. This crook belonged to Mr Middleton’s father who was “the greatest man I know, a preacher who spoke about Jesus as the shepherd.” In knowing and caring for the children, Mr Middleton continued, “we are charged to lead them, set out the future for them and help them along the way. We offer them an understanding of the world and society so that they can become loving and caring themselves.” In order to do this, he explained, they learn Bible stories but “you don’t have to believe in Jesus. They are beautiful stories that show us things about our society’s heritage” (Field notes, 14.7.11).

5.4.2 Teachers

Each of the teachers interviewed stated that there had been little, if any, input or consideration given to children’s spiritual development in their initial teacher training. Mrs Scott commented that she had “learned more through working in schools, from other people” than from her initial teacher training (Interview, 10.3.11). This was echoed by Mr Wood; “It’s ‘on the job’ training – seeing other teachers and the Headteacher” (Interview, 6.4.11).

In order to further develop children’s spirituality, Mrs Cook spoke of the need to have teachers with secure knowledge; “Knowing what it’s right to deal

with. Getting the right concepts for the younger children and exploring pre-level 1 things. We need to have confidence and flexibility; knowing that we can't plan for everything." She also expressed a sense of insecurity and responsibility about what she should or should not be doing; "I'm worried about 'mucking up' things in relation to beliefs. It's so important and you can get it wrong ... I struggle with this. I'm worried about making children think what I think." Mrs Cook described the "drip effect" whereby they begin with the Bible with the younger children and explain that it is "an important book"; "this is the start of everything" (Interview, 14.7.11).

5.4.3 The Headteacher

The 2003 OFSTED report states that "The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher are excellent. He has an outstanding commitment to the school and constantly strives for improvement. The atmosphere created by the very good teamwork of adults ensures that the children make very good progress." The report goes on to talk about the Headteacher's "extremely clear educational vision" which he "works tirelessly" to bring about. The key factor in the success of St Saviour's, according to the report, "is the manner in which the headteacher, deputy headteacher and all staff work as a team complementing each other and sharing responsibilities very effectively."

Many of these statements are repeated in the 2007 OFSTED report which states: "The excellent performance of the school owes much to the exceptional leadership and management of the headteacher who knows the school very well and has a very clear vision to develop the whole child." According to the report, staff work effectively as a team under the Headteacher's strong lead, moving the school forward "by constantly questioning and evaluating its performance." The SIAS report of 2007 summarises the role of the Headteacher; "The headteacher is giving inspirational leadership and is instrumental in promoting the spiritual,

creative, Christian ethos demonstrated in every aspect of the life of the school.”

The role of the Headteacher in supporting staff to further develop children’s spirituality is central, according to staff in their interviews. Mrs Jones spoke of the need to take on board new developments in the area of children’s spirituality – either through individuals doing this or the Headteacher instigating new ideas. Support for developing children’s spirituality comes, she continued, through the Headteacher’s modelling of examples of children’s achievements and his approach to them, “staff then model what they do on the head’s example.” According to Mrs Jones, “The Headteacher’s philosophy is that children should be encouraged to stand up for their beliefs and make their own decisions. He encourages freedom of thinking; thinking ‘outside the box’ and presenting ideas in different ways.” She spoke of Mr Middleton “bringing out the best in children – it’s what he’s about and what he stands for. It means that staff think in this way when they listen to the positive way he speaks to the children, making them feel good about themselves and finding their talent (Interviews, 20.1.11 and 27.1.11)

Mrs Cook’s thinking on spirituality has also been influenced by Mr Middleton; “He (the Headteacher) brings Christianity into the school context without it being too ‘in your face.’ My thinking has developed (not changed) through the ‘drip, drip’ effect – through the head’s influence though not overtly. I’ve not changed my inner beliefs but my perspective on it.” Support for developing spirituality is also evident, she went on, in the way that the Headteacher talks about spirituality generally and in staff meetings in a more specific way. She pointed out that the “Take care” idea is based on the Mr Middleton’s beliefs; “It’s ‘Goddy’ and the thread runs right through school but it’s not ‘in your face’” (Interview, 14.7.11). Mrs Tate also commented on the Headteacher’s influence on her thinking about children’s spirituality and the support she received in developing opportunities for children’s spiritual development;

“The Head encourages the idea of taking time to allow the children to succeed and think in different ways” (Interview, 6.4.11).

Mrs Scott commented on the influence of the Headteacher on the development of spirituality through the teaching of RE; “The Head’s RE is for people who are scared of teaching RE – it’s not threatening so you can do it!” She described Mr Middleton’s approach when teaching RE; “For example, the Muslim faith is central to a Muslim’s life so he would get the children talking about this and thinking about how they live their own lives and what is important to them in their lives. He helps them relate faith to themselves, like when a Muslim prays three times a day, so then what is important to the children to do?” Mrs Scott also spoke of the Headteacher’s support for developing spirituality through spiritual poetry, dance and drama, “making spirituality easier and more accessible for people. It’s obviously important to him and I feel on the same wavelength” (Interview, 10.3.11).

Having worked in other church schools besides St Saviour’s, Mr Wood stated that his thinking on children’s spirituality had been mainly influenced by “the different headteachers I’ve worked with who recognised spirituality as being part of the core purpose of the school.” Each headteacher, he continued, was different, “for example in my previous church school there were three services each year in the largest church in the town. These services were a priority and were a central expression of spirituality in the school” (Interview, 6.4.11).

5.4.4 The Rector

The Rector explained his role in the daily life of the school. He visited the school in different roles wherever possible, including as an adult helper on school outings, and often stood in the playground to chat to staff; “I am generally in school once a week in different forms.” He described the St Saviour’s Fun Club, “like a key stage 2 Sunday school”, which he ran on Monday evenings in school and was attended by thirty children (see section

4.1.2 for more details). Reverend Smith wanted “to provide a bridge and link for people to make the step between an informal environment and the more organised stuff. I want to make sure everyone engages and understands what it’s about” (Interview, 13.9.10).

Reverend Smith’s view was that he contributed to the development of children’s spirituality in the school by “helping the children to understand that God values each person.” Sometimes, in his view, “it needs the ordained person there to open the door further (to children’s spirituality).” His tag-line was “Fun, faith and fellowship in life” and believed in “valuing each other, identifying the gifts each has been given and recognising where these gifts have come from.” He also spoke about his role as chaplain to the whole community of the school – whether people lived in his parish or not. Adults in particular, he commented, have taken up this service; “For example, during a time of bereavement for a member of staff the pastoral care I offered led to me taking the funeral service, in the place of a parish priest. I am known and trusted by the staff” (Interview, 13.9.10).

Mrs Cook, at the Welcome Service for Reception children commented that the presence of a vicar is important at such services, “we missed that this morning” (Interview, 14.7.11). This service took place after the Reverend Smith had left the parish for a new incumbency and the church was in interregnum.

Mrs Tate’s thinking on spirituality had, she stated, been influenced by a previous incumbent who was very involved in the life of the school; “His spirituality came from within – he was living it out. The children all knew who he was. They always knew he was the priest as he always wore his priestly robes. He took regular assemblies and knew the children by name” (Interview, 6.4.11).

5.5 EVENTS AND CELEBRATIONS

5.5.1 Collective worship

The self-evaluation Toolkit states that collective worship (or assembly) is an event which is not an entity in itself “but a contributing part to a whole school ethos ...” where “take care” attitudes are encouraged in many different forms. The 2003 OFSTED report commented on an assembly where pupils played their guitars led by the Year 6 teacher and all who were present were “moved” by what they heard. The report continued, “It is evident that pupils respond very well to the commitment and enthusiasm shown by the teachers. These activities promote respect between teachers and pupils that helps develop the excellent relationships that exist within the school and make a significant contribution to pupils’ learning throughout the school.” In the inspector’s letter to the children, they spoke of the highlight of their visit being the assembly; “You worked wonderfully as a team, sharing your talents in drama, dance and singing to give the message that everyone is valued and wanted in your school – a message that all of you in the audience clearly supported.”

The SIAS report of 2007 judged the impact of collective worship on the school community as “outstanding” and summarised the inspection’s findings on collective worship in the following paragraph:

Worship plays a central part in the life of the school. Pupils demonstrate a clear understanding of many ideas and concepts experienced within it. A wonderful atmosphere is created with pupils actively participating on a very regular basis, either in role play or music. The pupils say that they enjoy this level of participation and clearly appreciate the contribution that worship makes to their school lives. They say that worship is ‘*one of the best bits*’ about being at St. Peter’s’ and ‘*we really like the worship – especially acting, singing and time for thinking*’. There are periods of quiet reflection and prayer within worship. Pupils respond in a very positive way, sitting still and then speaking confidently about their thoughts afterwards. Worship within the school is positively impacted by the spiritual work undertaken in the wider school environment. The levels of response and the language used by pupils when discussing either worship or the spiritual dimension reveal an understanding many adults would envy. There are very good links between worship and religious education, each benefiting from the learning and experiences within the other. In the questionnaires used, to great effect, by the

school, the impact of worship on pupils was questioned and found to be very positive.

According to the self-evaluation Toolkit, worship is planned across the year, taking in the key Christian festivals. Planning would be discussed between the Rector and the Headteacher, with the Rector also leading worship on a regular basis; “The Headteacher ... is the Worship Co-ordinator and sees it as his role to provide the impetus / ideas / resources and lead and shape Worship / Assembly whenever possible. Other staff and outside providers also lead, thus ensuring variety.” Links are made from “Worship” to RE curriculum work where possible. Pupils, claims the Toolkit, have “good opportunities to participate in worship, both when formally invited to join in by the Worship Leader, or when rehearsed for participation.”

The Toolkit records that children, “enjoy singing, especially when songs are lively and include actions ...” and the Headteacher and the Leader for Music met to discuss new songs, “especially new ones which can be sung easily on entering and leaving the hall, to create the right atmosphere.” In the Headteacher’s view, as expressed in the Toolkit, “the current Year 6 are sufficiently developed in terms of their skills, capability and spiritual awareness to be challenged to run their own worship.” Mr Middleton expressed the benefits to the pupils in engaging them more and enabling them to consider what is involved in worship on a deeper level “and act as evaluative insight into both their own understanding and what they see as positive elements to include.” In addition, the Toolkit concludes; “This will also form part of our challenge to our gifted and talented children and against the ‘deep thinking’ criteria within the gifted and talented identification spectrum.” When asked in a more recent interview about the involvement of the new Year 6 pupils, Mr Middleton expressed the view that they too were capable of leading worship although they had not yet been offered the opportunity, “it’s good to be reminded of this. We must provide an opportunity soon” (Interview, 6.10.11).

The Toolkit records that adults also participate in worship and have a positive view of it; “There are always staff in attendance, but not all staff attend all the time, except on a Friday for Achievement Assembly.” The Headteacher provides the overall continuity but other staff are regularly involved and, the Toolkit explains, “Assemblies and worship themes are discussed with teachers, often within the context of RE.” In addition, the Rector is involved in the planning and delivery of worship, “providing a very strong and clear link between Church and School.” The Leader of another local church also leads worship and parents, governors and other visitors are welcome to attend worship.

The weekly Achievement Assembly is, states the Toolkit, “set in the context of worship.” Within these Achievement Assemblies, children are allowed to perform dances they have made up “and recently through the introduction of a ‘spiritual arts group’ some older children have begun to create their own spiritual dances.” The Toolkit explains that the Achievement Assembly takes place within a culture “that tries to get all pupils to see that we all share, ‘as the living stones’ of St Saviour’s, in each other’s successes.” In addition, displays, newsletters and the school website also help with this, “whilst we also make a point of recognising Church attendance or achievement (eg becoming a server, achieving confirmation, attending a special service) as much as we would a sporting or other success.”

The Toolkit describes prayer as “an integral part of Worship.” However, prayer would not appear as part of an assembly of a non-religious nature “so the waters aren’t muddied.” Worship at St Saviour’s seeks to portray Christianity and worship in as positive and relevant a way as possible. However, claims the Toolkit, “we feel it would be an abuse of our position to openly try to evangelise or indoctrinate the children.” Therefore, when prayers are said “we always recognise the fact that some may not believe or

believe something differently and therefore ask them to respectfully think what is important to them.”

In order to make prayer “real and relevant” there is a Prayer Wall onto which children can place post-its with issues they would like praying for. The Toolkit comments that, “Not only does this remind us of the depth of thinking and concern primary children can have for their world ... it also allows us a positive way in to addressing ‘Big Questions’ such as death and suffering ... and also allows pupils to reveal what’s on their mind ...”

The Lord’s Prayer is seen as an important part of worship “and central to our Christian faith.” The Toolkit also states that the Headteacher “tries to ensure that children understand what it means, with links back into the classroom.” Within the planning cycle for worship, the Lord’s Prayer is taken as the key theme for the year once every four years.

According to the Toolkit, a wide variety of worship materials, symbols and approaches are used and these include ideas and thoughts generated by the children which “all reflect a distinctive Christian tradition whilst placing it firmly in our world which to make better we must make a positive ‘take care’ Christian response. There is also an ongoing respect for other religions and no religion in this.”

The Toolkit records that following a survey about worship / assemblies in which the children expressed a need for clearer differentiation and teaching on “what is ‘Worship’ and what is merely an ‘Assembly’”, staff are “working on growing children’s understanding of an assembly which is a gathering to talk about school issues in general (important, but not worship ...) and ‘Worship’ ... which has religious / thinking / praising songs, a message, prayers, a worship centre.”

Evaluation is carried out by both governors and parents when they visit, as well as the leadership team and pupils “when appropriate.” The results of

these evaluations are “largely very positive”. However, actions have been taken as a result of these evaluations. Examples include; working on developing children’s understanding of what is “worship” and what is “assembly”; the introduction of singing on entering the hall to create a more worshipful atmosphere; more pupil interaction where possible; more action songs.

Staff view collective worship as an important time for encouraging children’s spiritual development. Mrs Jones commented that the spiritual dimension of education “links into collective worship” (Interview, 27.1.11). Mr Wood stated that spiritual development is encouraged “mainly through collective worship. There’s a worship table in the hall and designated areas around the school. It’s integrated into everything” (Interview, 6.4.11). Worship times have a clear focus; in Mrs Cook’s words, “They are church based. The principles are Christian principles but it’s not indoctrination” (Interview, 14.7.11). Mrs Tate described leading SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) assemblies in which she would “link the theme to the Bible; light a candle; allow time to reflect.” For Mrs Tate, a major factor in the way spirituality is encouraged at St Saviour’s is through the Headteacher’s leading of collective worship (Interview, 6.4.11).

5.5.2 Bishop’s Visit

The visit of the Diocesan Bishop to the school provided an opportunity for Mr Middleton to showcase the central ethos and values of the school. When the children were asked (by the Headteacher), “What makes this school?” their answers included; “we take care”; “friendship”; “bricks”; “us”. Mr Middleton went on to emphasise being a “take care” school, being prepared to try different things and “being the best we can be”. Several classes provided the Bishop with examples of their work which included; Year 1 ‘I wonder...’ work; Year 2 ‘One of us’ – if God had a name..., if I could ask God a question, I would ask ...; Year 4 “Take care” awards; Year 5 “The Passion” play for Easter. The

children were invited to ask the Bishop some questions. Some examples of the questions they asked were; “What does it feel like to be a Bishop?”; “Why are you a Bishop?”; “When did you become a Christian?”; “Who was your best friend at school?”; “What is your favourite Bible story?” (Field notes, 5.7.11).

Following the Bishop’s visit, children in the Reception class discussed with their teacher, Mrs Cook, the Bishop’s comment, “I believe the Bible is true.” Mrs Cook responded by saying that the Bible is an important book for Christians and that it contains different stories. When talking about the creation story in the Bible, one child had remembered the Bishop’s statement about the Bible and commented, “The Bishop said it was true.” Mrs Cook’s response was to say that “he believes it’s true but do we all believe?” She commented that she “wasn’t sure about where this conversation went.” However, Mrs Cook acknowledged that the children had warmed to the Bishop and listened carefully to what he said and concluded; “We pick up on conversations like this by telling children that a lot of people believe this is true but not everyone” (Interview, 14.7.11).

5.5.3 Other visitors

Collective worship is also led on occasion by visitors from a local Independent church. During one such worship time the leader, Bob, clearly stated that he was a Christian and he communicated a message which expressed the need to “be brave as a Christian (like Jesus was on the cross)”; to trust in God; to obey God and not step over the line between right and wrong. The children were generally engaged and the action song Bob introduced was well received (Field notes, 7.4.11).

5.5.4 The Passion Play

Year 5 pupils (with some children from Years 3, 4 and 6 who sang) wrote and performed a Passion Play for Easter. The children worked in groups on different parts of the Easter story, using the Bible, to write the script. The class teacher then added the music and they worked together to include actions and drama. The play was performed in the church and was attended by parents and staff. It was an excellent performance, described by Mr Middleton as “impressive” and “moving”. The main elements of the story were covered – the entry into Jerusalem; the Last Supper (which included Jesus washing the disciples’ feet; Jesus praying in Gethsemane; Judas’ betrayal and Jesus’ arrest; Peter’s denial and Jesus’ trial; the crucifixion and resurrection). Both grief and joy were excellently and sensitively portrayed. Contemporary music was used with meaningful words added whilst contemplative music played when Jesus was praying. The joy of the resurrection was effectively portrayed through the song, “This will be the greatest day of our lives” (Field notes, 13.4.11).

At the end of the performance, Mr Middleton took the opportunity to speak to parents about the ethos and philosophy of the school, in which the pupils are encouraged (and often do) to go “beyond expectation”; “This evening was an illustration of that!” (Field notes, 13.4.11).

5.6 LANGUAGE AND SYMBOLISM

The development of language skills is central to the curriculum at St Saviour’s. Mrs Tate commented that, “St Saviour’s children know how to express themselves and give the opinions of others. This has been commented on by the secondary school where many of them go” (Interview, 6.4.11). In Mr Wood’s view, there is a link between language development and spiritual development; “Children developing spiritually is to do with the way they talk

to each other. It links to their beliefs and values – they can interpret these in their own way” (Interview, 6.4.11). Mrs Cook’s concern with the younger children was to keep the language of spirituality at the right level “without it becoming gospel” (Interview, 14.7.11).

The Headteacher expressed the view that in order to write well there needs to be an understanding of the nature and power and opportunity within symbolism; “If you want to understand what’s going on around you you’ve got to have a kind of symbolic understanding as well as you’ve got to have a literal understanding and actually it’s a mark of children’s intelligence as they begin to operate in the abstract as well as the symbolic.” When exploring spirituality in school, Mr Middleton stated that they might talk about it in the context of writing – taking what children write and ‘tweaking’ it “with what I’m going to call emotional and spiritual language. In other words language that has a symbolic quality to it.” This could include the use of metaphors such as “love”, “faith” or “justice” so that “instead of saying ‘the sky was as blue as a lake’ we might say ‘the sky seemed to be driven by a sense of love’” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

In Mr Middleton’s view there is a need to understand symbolism in order to understand any level of religion “because religion is not a thing to be taken literally. It’s a thing where we see the underlying themes, the underlying nature of what people are trying to give out.” This process, he says, is not straightforward in a child’s world “but again it’s the drip, drip, drip of involving children in stories, in discussions, in actions around that kind of thing so that gradually they begin to get it ... educating the children into the symbolic nature of language and it’s not obvious but once it’s in a school you tend to take it for granted ...” With groups of older children Mr Middleton claims that it is possible to enable them to think and act in symbolic ways which are “stunning”; for example when asked to create works of spiritual art “where they have to define what they think spirituality is, how they think it

will look in a symbolic sense in terms of the picture they want to create and then articulate in words what that means.” This, he acknowledges, is challenging “and yes they do need significant adults alongside them helping them to achieve their ideas but they’re still their ideas and they’re amazing when they get it right ...” In order to give the children something to work with and work on there needs to be some structure so that “they can come up with quite profound things and then open up the discussion in all kinds of ways” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Opportunities are provided for children to write prayers on a prayer wall which may then open conversations initially on a simple level (for example, about the death of a pet) but then, commented Mr Middleton, “you may be taken to a deeper level where you begin to talk not just about symbolism but other things ...” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Special services and events have a symbolic significance. According to Mr Middleton, “the celebration of our first year in school service for Reception and the Leavers Service (which) symbolise the church school partnership as well as the sense that we are a family rather than just a school where you send your kids to ...” These events symbolise things “on a parent level”. For Mr Middleton, the message to parents is to give “a feeling that school is more than just academic rigour ... that you are part of something that is more than just send your kids there and hope they do ok. To end it (with the Leavers Service) is just if you like to symbolically bring the process to a proper conclusion and remind people who we’ve been together, what we’ve achieved together but also that it’s been done in the context of Christianity and a church ethos.” This, for Mr Middleton, is the basic definition of spirituality that he wants parents to feel (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Mr Middleton also gave the example of the approach they have to school meals where “having a salad bar in the hall has a symbolic element, just having tablecloths on tables symbolises something we’re trying to give as a

subtle subliminal message” that this is not just a hall with a few desks in, “it’s a dining hall where we’re going to learn the beauty of sharing food and socialising with our friends. It just makes the point. Plates make the point that it’s about manners and etiquette and how we eat rather than just a flight tray which just doesn’t make that point.” Symbolism, therefore, is both implicit and explicit within the school “because if we get it right it’s a seven-year journey so everything doesn’t have to be done on day one.” In summarising his view, Mr Middleton explained “our definition is not a church based definition initially it’s about a deep down who we are, who we connect to definition which allows it to be understood” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

CHAPTER 6: ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

The focus of this study is to identify the spiritual dimension of the school and the factors which contribute to the development and nurture of children's spirituality. This chapter commences with an analysis of the language used to describe the organisation and management of the curriculum which reveals the tensions that exist between what the school wants to do (encourage the development of children's spirituality), what it thinks it is doing (providing an environment in which children can thrive academically and spiritually) and what it has to do (to maintain its OFSTED status as an outstanding school). Having considered the broader linguistic issues operating within the school, the analysis then shifts to the level of the classroom where attention is given to the creative tensions produced when different learning theories sit side by side, creating opportunities for children to develop spiritually through their engagement with different pedagogies. Attempts to create a variety of spaces in which children can explore spirituality are then examined and the chapter concludes with a consideration of the relationship between the school and the local church and the ways in which that relationship enhances the opportunities for members of both communities to explore questions of meaning together.

6.0 THE DOMINANT LANGUAGE OF DISCOURSE

One of the key concepts identified in this analysis centres around the notion of "being":

- Being given permission
- Being disciplined
- Being yourself
- Being creative
- Being outstanding

- Being in community

Often these concepts are juxtaposed, as will be illustrated below, causing the tensions referred to above.

Tensions may be seen in the language used in the school documentation and in the Headteacher's interviews, where he yokes different ideas together and brings them into relationship with one another. This is illustrated in the "guiding principles" of the school which produce both a "feel good" factor ("Together in Achievement") and terms which are oblique in their meaning ("For children – for all"). Mr Middleton presents these "guiding principles", his core purpose and the climate and culture he seeks to create, in his paper Building Excellence Sustaining Success. For him, the core purpose of the school is that of "Profound Personal Development" where the guiding principles are:

- Together in Achievement
- St Saviour's as a 'Take Care School', where we "Take care of our self, each other, the world and with our work"
- At St Saviour's, "We work hard to maximize the learning and growing of all our pupils, in a take care environment"
- At St Saviour's, "Every child has the right to learn and grow in a caring school where he/she feels safe and happy and which provides equal opportunity for all"
- "Striving to be the best we can be"
- "For children – for all"
- St Saviour's: "A purpose driven school, which knows itself and seeks to know more ..."

The paper states that the unwritten eighth principle is: "It's never boring here!" which is accompanied by the statement that; "Life is good if we are confident in ourselves and take hold of the opportunities offered us."

These statements use both the language of OFSTED ("together in achievement") and the aphorisms which are central to the pedagogy of the school ("take care school", "take care environment"); phrases which begin to sound like maxims or Christian texts, often repeated and easily memorised. This language has the "drip drip" effect referred to by Mrs Cook when she

talked about the influence of the Headteacher on her thinking; “My thinking has developed (not changed) through the ‘drip, drip’ effect – through (the Head’s) influence though not overtly. I’ve not changed my inner beliefs but my perspective on it” (Interview, 14.7.11).

The looseness of the term “profound personal development” illustrated the difficulties inherent in finding adequate language as the school sought to reconcile developing each pupil’s individual uniqueness with the requirement to produce outstanding test results; attempting to allow sufficient opportunities for children to acquire the knowledge or insight which demands the deep, intense study or thought implied by the use of the term “profound”, alongside the requirements of OFSTED. The language used implied that it was possible to discern when a child had developed in a “profound” way, whereas in practice this may be so “personal” as to not be visible since such development is often unseen.

According to Bernstein, “control” establishes the language to be used whilst “power” establishes who speaks to whom. The language at St Saviour’s had been established by the vision of the Headteacher and was clearly communicated at all levels between the Headteacher, staff and pupils. This language controlled the language the teachers used to the children concerning what the school was about. The Head’s aphorisms recurred within the pedagogical discourse of the school creating a distinctive language environment and a mixture of ideas which was sometimes difficult to decode. For example, in the Active Curriculum document the Headteacher articulated his aim as being to “liberate the creative heart of the school” in a “well considered, disciplined and qualitative way”; which raises the question of whether creativity can always be “liberated” in a “disciplined way”? There was a calm and courteous atmosphere within the school but the definition of creativity on which this atmosphere was based did not sit easily with

definitions of spirituality which ask deep and unsettling questions that do not always produce neat, disciplined answers.

The terms “knowledge”, “discipline” and “creativity” were often held in tension in interviews with the Headteacher and in his written papers as he attempted to express a complex mix of ideas. This was illustrated in the Active Curriculum document in which the Headteacher said he was attempting to “refresh and renew” the teaching and learning taking place within the school through integrating six strands which offered children the opportunity to “retain information and grow”:

- The Knowledge Curriculum
- The Skills Curriculum
- The Creative Curriculum
- Our Beyond Expectation Learning Model
- Our Future Engage Deliver Approach to Leadership
- Our Core Purpose/Guiding Principles/Culture and Climate

Mr Middleton talked about the school being “driven” by values which were written down and thought through. Views on these values were strongly framed as they were expressed and then synthesized into “short, memorable almost obvious statements because if we don’t write them down how do we know?” The Headteacher was clear about the results; “In writing them what we then get is both statements of what we stand for, statements of what drives us, statements that challenge. They have aims and aspirations in them but they’re what we do today not just what we do tomorrow but also in that sense they allow us to be judged” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Everyone who went to the school, whether as a visitor or as a member of staff, became aware of these values since they were displayed around the school and reflected in the language used by children and staff.

The pedagogic discourse of the school was often controlled through what had been articulated by Mr Middleton. Teachers and teaching assistants were aware of these “memorable statements” and were expected to provide learning experiences which incorporated the values expressed in them. There was a “St Saviour’s way” of doing things which was reflected in this language and provided a unifying force for the whole school community. The key statement about the school, according to the Headteacher, was that “we are a ‘take care’ school”. This, he claimed, was understandable (on the surface) by anybody; it enabled teachers to use a common language and children to “begin to articulate what the school stands for”; “It’s something that parents can understand, that governors can understand, that the community can share in and also it’s the core of the value system we share with the church ... and therefore we believe that if you went to the children and asked them what the school stood for most of them would be able to tell you it’s a ‘take care’ school and know something about what that meant ...” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). This claim was borne out during the fieldwork period; when asked during a collective worship time, “What makes this school?” one of the answers given by the children was, “We take care” (Field notes, 5.7.11). The language used within the curriculum and reflected throughout the life of the school created the “correct” “St Saviour’s” response from the child.

The phrase “take care” has several different connotations – from showing love and care for others, yourself and the environment, to producing your best work, to a warning to “be careful” in a place of danger – and will be explored further at relevant points in the following sections.

6.1 ORGANISATION AND MANAGEMENT OF THE CURRICULUM

The language used in the organisation and management of the curriculum centred around the aphorisms noted above and the different notions of “being” explored below. Often these notions became intertwined although they have been given separate sections here in order to facilitate discussion about them.

6.1.1 Being given permission

The curriculum at St Saviour’s was strongly classified with pupils being expected to master basic skills and knowledge before being given the opportunity to use those skills and their knowledge to shape their own ideas (Active Curriculum document). In his Active Curriculum document, the Headteacher clearly articulated his view that staff should “Stop and BE excellent” which illustrated the tension of contrasting ideas being brought together – stopping and yet at the same time striving to be or become excellent. The “BE” here was also doing additional work as it represented another key phrase used in the school, “Beyond Expectation”, which also seemed to contrast with the notion of stopping and being ontologically present in a spiritual sense (this is explored further in section 6.1.4 below). Mr Middleton articulated his aim as being to “liberate the creative heart of the school” but to do this “in a well considered, disciplined and qualitative way. It, like pupils’ work, had to be a ‘take care’ approach, it had to hold the needs of children at its core, but offer not just personalised education (to become known as ‘Assessment for learning’ or AfL), but ‘education with personality’, where both child and adult is allowed to touch their work with who they are.” The language here was concerned with giving permission for all members of the school community to personalise their work in some way. It was a language of power and control that had a tension at its centre since personalised work does not always conform to external expectations.

This language of power was also communicated in Mr Middleton's paper, Building Excellence Sustaining Success, where he talked about staff being "allowed" to do things and "not being afraid to think creatively". The language used here implied that there was a potential fear in thinking creatively about new ideas. The Headteacher was giving his staff permission to be creative despite the external pressures they faced to maintain their "outstanding" OFSTED grade. Being "allowed" to do things is not necessarily the language of encouragement but of the need to keep things well disciplined and strongly framed.

On the other hand, for staff, being "given permission" in this way created opportunities to contribute to new initiatives. Many of these emanated directly from the Headteacher but other staff also initiated projects, such as the "Rock Challenge". Entry to this competition was organised and co-ordinated by Mrs Scott and involved children from across Key Stage 2. The strap line for the competition was "Be your best" – language that was compatible with the dominant discourse operating at St Saviour's which required children to go "beyond expectation" and "be the best they can be".

6.1.2 Being disciplined

The Headteacher's paper, Building Excellence Sustaining Success provided examples of ways in which he considered that a disciplined approach should operate in practice: "always remembering to emphasise the 'take care' / quality and disciplined approach which must be adhered to – including the important area of presentation / layout". Here importance was placed on the need to produce top quality work produced in an orderly manner that conformed to certain standards and could therefore be displayed as products of the "St Saviour's way".

Conforming to standards in order to produce "outstanding work" was especially important in the display of pupils' work around the school. Displays were teacher-led and highly controlled with only the "best" work which

exemplified the “take care” ethos being displayed. For example, a teacher commented that the quality of some work produced by the children under the direction of a student teacher was not quite up to the standard expected of work going on display “in this school” since, “Only the best work goes on display, rightly or wrongly” (Field notes, 7.4.11). There was a hint here that this teacher did not necessarily completely agree with the school approach which produced carefully decorated walls that gave an aesthetic experience to the visitor but which did not necessarily indicate the children’s engagement with the process of learning. This approach contrasted with the storytelling space described by Stanley (2012 p.30) which included “drawing space on papered walls”, encouraging young children to engage with the process of developing the language required to communicate the stories they create.

Corridor displays observed showed carefully finished items of artwork such as those seen in Figures 1 to 5 below. Mrs Cook commented that all the work displayed around the school was carefully presented in order to show the best of the pupils’ achievements (Field notes, 3.9.12). Staff spoke of such displays with pride and saw them as celebrating the pupils’ work. One member of staff, having recently visited another school where pupils’ work was stored on the top of a cupboard, remarked that, “at St Saviour’s we celebrate children’s work by displaying it” (Field notes, 13.6.12). At St Saviour’s displays exemplified work where the children had been encouraged to “take care” in the sense of “produce your best, most carefully presented work”. The examples of artwork were copies of paintings by Gauguin and the “Mona Lisa” carefully reproduced. The children had been given clearly framed instructions about the finished product and a clearly identified picture to reproduce. Examples of poetry written by the children were also beautifully displayed, the finished pieces of work being clearly re-written and refined. Some displays had a teacher’s description of the project to which

pieces of work were expected to conform, indicating that the task had been strongly framed by the teacher.



Figure 1: Year 2

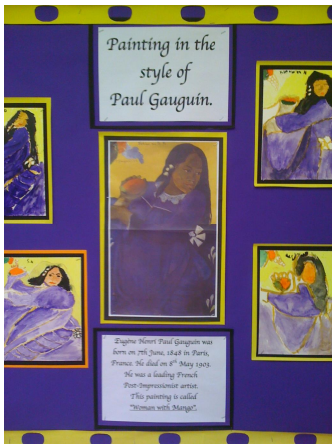


Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4: Year 6

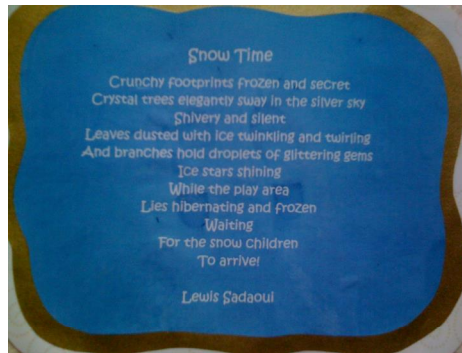


Figure 5: Year 4

Classroom displays (see Figures 6 to 9 for examples) were also very carefully presented. The Year 6 display showed the result of a series of discussions of topical issues where pupils had been engaged in debate and then produced work for display. The message from each classroom was that the children and staff had “taken care” to display the very best of the work they had achieved and that this work had undergone a process of “taking care” in order to make it “exceptional”. These key features of display work indicated that there were expectations that work should be of a certain standard and presented in a certain way in order to remain an “outstanding” school. According to one teacher, the disciplined approach to the curriculum was intended to facilitate high level work – ensuring the correct foundational skills were present – whilst displays were intended to showcase that work to visitors (Field notes,

3.9.12). Religious education work, according to the Toolkit (p.15), “forms a significant proportion of the work on display and both pupils and staff should be able to articulate what it means and how it was achieved.”



Figure 6: Year 6



Figure 7: Year 4



Figure 8: Year 1



Figure 9: Reception

The displays illustrated a pedagogical process in which children were encouraged to “be themselves” and “be creative”. Being creative could be achieved by following the “St Saviour’s way” of conforming to certain standards of disciplined learning before having an opportunity to develop an individual response to tasks. This indicated the tension observed above, between creativity and discipline, the need to be uniform yet individual, the desire to maintain the “outstanding” OFSTED label and being a Church of England School which offered a holistic approach to education within a disciplined environment.

Another example of “the St Saviour’s way” was identified in the school’s definition of teaching Religious Education (RE) where RE “the St Saviour’s way” included a “‘real’ and ‘personal’ element, a ‘caring response to the world’ which ‘makes a difference’”. This definition of Religious Education, formulated by the Headteacher, was reflected in interviews with staff who acknowledged his influence on their own pedagogy. Mrs Scott (RE Co-ordinator), for example, spoke of Mr Middleton’s influence on her own RE teaching. When teaching children about the way in which the Muslim faith is central to the lives of Muslim children she would get them talking about this and thinking about how they live their own lives and what is important to them in their own lives; “(The Head) helps them relate faith to themselves eg. Muslims pray three times a day – so then what is important for the children to

do?” (Interview, 10.3.11). According to Mrs Scott, “(The Head’s) RE is for people who are scared of teaching RE. It’s not threatening so you can do it” (Interview, 10.3.11). Implicit in this comment is an assumption that staff feel ill-equipped to teach RE and that they need to be shown a “way” of approaching the subject. This is provided by the Headteacher through a tightly framed definition of the “St Saviour’s way” and an assertion that teaching RE at St Saviour’s is carried out in a “real” and “personal” way. The language suggested that there was an expectation of conformity yet there was room for individuality.

Mr Middleton’s approach was explicitly ideological; he summarised the “St Saviour’s way” of doing things (in the Active Curriculum document) as a “state of mind, a way of thinking and approach and a challenge to innovation”. All staff were expected to “sing from the same song sheet” yet also be prepared to take risks and be innovative, “in order to get the very best from ourselves and the children we serve ...” The expectation after following the “St Saviour’s way” was that, “Children leaving St. Saviour’s, after up to 7 years of step on step learning, (will have) enough knowledge to make informed choices (for example) about healthier eating and lifestyle ...” Knowledge, therefore, was not just about facts but was also about the accumulation of experiences which allow information and learning to be remembered. The type of learning encouraged at St Saviour’s was described in the Active Curriculum document as “sticky learning”, a phrase Mr Middleton adopted from Malcolm Gladwell (2009) who refers to “stickability” in learning that “will give (often over an extended period of time and varied, yet consistent input) relevant information and learning a chance to be remembered ...”. The language of “stickability” in learning was compatible with the persistence implied by the requirement for discipline in learning which was emphasised throughout the school documentation concerning organisation and management of the curriculum.

6.1.3 Being outstanding

According to Bernstein (2000 p.5), within organisations there is a need to develop a special language which derives “macro relations” (the bigger picture) from “micro interactions” (the local situation / example) – generating principles from which specific descriptions can be derived. In his Active Curriculum document, the Headteacher outlined the general principles which teachers were expected to use to inform their planning – the practice of teaching (power) being derived from the language of teaching (control) used in this document. The general principle, according to this document, was to enable children to produce work which they could “show off”. For teachers this meant ensuring that walls displayed examples of children’s “best work”. This language of “showing off” was defended by the Headteacher in the Active Curriculum document:

My recurring question: **“If you were only allowed to offer a child one thing, what would it be?”** My constant answer: **“The chance to show off.”** Not in a big headed way, for this is something we encourage our young people not to be, but through work and achievement that thrills, satisfies and brings the happy refrain: **“Look what I’ve done!”** Only perhaps in these moments does confidence, self esteem and motivation truly have chance to grow. Our drive was and is, therefore, to ensure children (and dare I say staff) had and have access to these moments.

Access to these moments of “outstanding” achievement was provided by ensuring that children produced tangible evidence of their learning in the form of art or literacy which could be displayed or “shown off” to others; taking pride in completing a given task.

The Active Curriculum document described the process by which these moments could be achieved. The aim was to provide “a creative and valued curriculum, which is high challenge and high reward for all (to some liberation), especially when always delivered within the parameters of quality (the high standards we set, model and demand) and discipline (the attitude and rigour we develop).” The tension between creativity and discipline was illustrated again here as the school attempted to offer all children the

opportunity to produce work of a high standard. The document claimed that this high standard of work, which they called “take care” work, “has gone a long way over the years to both inspire and define us.” Producing this level of work was, therefore, both the motivation for the staff and the essence of the school. This was illustrated when Mrs Cook commented on her pride at listening to some children talk to an Investors in Pupils Assessor about their work; “We had a hand in that” (enabling the children to talk eloquently about what they had been learning). External judgements reinforced the view that the school delivered “high standards”. The school achieved the Investors in Pupils Award and, according to OFSTED; “This is an outstanding school, in which pupils make excellent progress and reach exceptionally high standards.”

6.1.4 Being yourself and being creative

Within the curriculum offered by the school, Mr Middleton stated that before doing “anything out there and creative” there was a need to get the foundations right (Interview, 10.9.10). According to this view, it would not be possible to think beyond the usual or obvious unless the basic skills of learning had been established. Mr Middleton went on to describe his model for enabling children to be themselves and be creative: “At the bottom it says ‘provide’. In the middle of ‘provide’ the I and D stick out as capital letters because the model is ‘provide identify provide’ [provide (opportunities), identify (successes) and provide (more opportunities)]. The more we provide for a child the more we will see and they will see what their potential is, what they may be capable of. Because the other model is ‘define, identify, provide’ which says ‘we will test you and then we will define you’ and there’s far more to profound personal development than that simplistic and often damaging model” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Here Mr Middleton took the view that identity needed to be established before creativity could take place; that identity came from provision, then the individual would be allowed to be creative and gradually become more creative, reflecting the disciplined

stepped approach to learning and creativity discussed earlier. The child was being moulded rather than being observed in order to discover who the child was and then providing for the child (a child-centred approach).

Underpinning this strong framing of the curriculum was the “beyond expectation” model which involved:

Everything from when and how we intervene with children to show them what’s possible to the discipline and the rigour we need to bring, to the quality that is so important to frame everything around, to the leadership which must take the whole thing forward, ‘cos the model is provide, enhance, enrich to take children beyond expectation. The foundation stones of learning that children need, the creative challenges and the engaging curriculum and opportunities that we can offer them based on that enrichment giving a context to those people who come in with alternative experience to add to that enhancing experience that we’ve got. Everything has its place within the model it’s not just thrown in because we thought of it today but within that kind of thing we’ve things like the ‘take care’ ethos challenge - teachers themselves are constantly being reminded of what they should be aiming for (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

Going “beyond expectation”, for both staff and pupils, was dependent upon the disciplined approach which provided the basic skills and knowledge the children needed whilst allowing opportunities for children to “be creative” and “be themselves” through different experiences offered within the curriculum.

According to the Headteacher’s paper, Building Excellence Sustaining Success, such experiences were delivered “through a Culture of Opportunity within a Climate of Participation.” The aim was to provide a fair chance for children to develop their abilities in a school community that encouraged all its members to take part or have a share in what was on offer. The Headteacher’s paper referred to the “Beyond Expectation (B.E.)” approach which contributed to this “culture” and “climate” by ensuring against under-achievement. Tensions arose here as children were expected to achieve success which may be “beyond” them, out of reach or beyond normal. “Being yourself” does not necessarily involve going “beyond expectation” since not everything can be

“beyond expectation”. The paper spoke of setting children challenging goals which they needed to be properly supported in achieving.

The work children were encouraged to produce was termed “signature work” or “Take care work” that was “of a high standard / outstanding, different and expresses your personality and expertise. Essentially work that helps define our school and its distinctiveness.” The term “signature work” implied that each child’s work would be recognisable as uniquely their own. This echoed the term used by Rebecca Nye when referring to a child’s spiritual “signature voice” (the way in which children develop their own special language for communicating spiritual ideas or talk). Yet the term “take care work” can have different connotations – the imperative voice may carry a warning or instruction to “be careful”, “produce your best work”, make it neat and ensure it contains suitable material, with sensible ideas that can be easily read, work to be proud of. The result could be careful work that conformed to the “St Saviour’s way” rather than work which displayed a child’s individuality in the way that a signature implies. Signatures can be unreadable.

It appeared from observation that staff generally viewed the term “take care” as a positive instruction which applied to all areas of school life. Mrs Cook commented that; “Take care applies to everyone – it can be understood from the start and changes and develops as the children grow older. ‘Take care’ can mean different things but they (the youngest children) can understand the concept and that it’s important” (Interview, Mrs Cook, 14.7.11). In this instance the language controlled the pedagogical approach to the curriculum since “take care” was being applied on a number of different levels – for example, to work produced by the children and to relationships between different members of the school community.

This strong control of the language used in the pedagogy of the school extended to controlling the notion of creativity. The Active Curriculum

document defined creativity as “a unique idea, based on prior knowledge, shaped through activity, leading to outcomes that are personally satisfying” and claimed that because there was a creative approach to the curriculum and leadership in the school new levels of stimulus and challenge had been provided to which teachers and teaching partners had responded. Yet a “personally satisfying” creativity would seem to deny the potentially unsettling nature of creativity and the different forms of knowledge which Bernstein refers to as “the esoteric” and “the mundane”; “... the knowledge of the other and the otherness of knowledge. There is the knowledge of how it is (knowledge of the possible), as against the possibility of the impossible” (Bernstein, 2000 p.29). According to Bernstein, in modern society control and management of the thinkable is carried out by the higher agencies of education whilst the thinkable is managed by the secondary and primary school systems (Bernstein, 2000 p.29). He writes about a “potential discursive gap” or space which exists between meanings and refers to this as the “crucial site of the yet to be thought” (Bernstein, 2000 p.30) which is both beneficial and dangerous at the same time. Access to the gap, he continues, was regulated in medieval times by religious systems; today access is “controlled more and more by the state” (Bernstein, 2000 pp.30-31). Bernstein describes the paradox which exists where authorities attempt to control access to this “gap” using agents who have been “legitimately pedagogised” yet the “very pedagogic process reveals the possibility of the gap, and shapes the form of its realisation” (Bernstein, 2000 p.31). In exploring the possibility of allowing access to this “discursive gap” (to think creatively beyond the “mundane”) within a strongly framed curriculum, St Saviour’s illustrated the resulting tensions through the way in which frequent juxtapositions created semantic ambiguity.

This ambiguity of meaning was illustrated by the Headteacher’s introduction of “up to” books for Key Stage 2 pupils. These were special books in which

pupils could choose to write what they were “up to”. They were intended to be different from a “learning journal” since they were to record thoughts and ideas, memories, puzzling questions and creative thoughts and were for the benefit of the children themselves. However, in a later interview the Headteacher admitted that the idea had not worked as he had intended. He recognised the need to define meanings more clearly and to encourage more teacher involvement in valuing the books and providing better guidance to children on when to use them. In Mr Middleton’s view, creativity was “a unique idea based on given knowledge and shaped through activity or action” (Interview, 6.10.11). The “up to” books were, he explained, intended for children to record new ideas based on something they had thought about which they could try out to see how it worked and then re-shape based on their evaluation. He expressed the view that the children needed more guidance until they were able to use the books for themselves – perhaps allowing space to reflect on the week, expressing both what they had learned and how they had felt (developing emotional intelligence). This could be seen as a recognition of a need to provide specific opportunities and training to think in this way (access to Bernstein’s “discursive gap”) rather than relying on the children to recognise these opportunities for themselves; another example of the tension between conformity and spontaneity, discipline and creativity, and of the Headteacher’s understanding of how this type of stepped thinking should work.

In this interview, Mr Middleton expressed the view that “what you are up to as a person” could be linked to that person’s spirituality – “What do you want to be up to as a person?” He seemed to be linking ideas to action as he talked about what a person could be “up to” (“what you desire”) and whether they are “up for it” (“what you are willing to do about it”). He also viewed this as part of his strategy of “Future Engage Deliver” (from Steve Radcliffe’s book *Leadership Plain and Simple*, 2010, using ideas which could be easily

communicated) for staff – enabling them to engage with new ideas and committing to taking action: “I want to get staff to use a sense of what I want you to be up to – active and child friendly – let’s do stuff and engage in the adventure rather than have adult learning objectives” (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11). The emphasis was on activity and doing rather than on being (echoing the aphorism of going “beyond expectation”), hinting again at a tension between allowing opportunities for reflection (developing spirituality) yet requiring some kind of outcome in terms of action or activity.

Mr Middleton attempted to reconcile these tensions creatively through his development of the “Active Curriculum” in which he stated he was bringing everything together – creating activity (something happening) linked to the idea of being “up to” something, thought leading to action (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11). The process he outlined emphasised the requirement to develop skills and also the need “to know stuff as well” – bringing together skills, knowledge, experience and creation in an active curriculum. He spoke about developing social and emotional learning and “structured imagination” in the Early Years Foundation Stage; indicating a tension between allowing children the freedom to imagine at the same time as developing skills for acquiring knowledge. In Year 1 this approach to learning continued but with “more rigour and formality”, more inter-personal skills and group work, followed by further “academic rigour” in Year 2. Having acquired the discipline required in Key Stage 1, a more creative theme was introduced in Year 3 where “we explore creative approaches within our ‘take care’ ethos to produce high quality work” (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11).

Creativity was therefore dependent on gaining and maintaining disciplined approaches to learning. Mr Middleton identified Year 4 as the stage where children were moving towards more mature disciplines and understanding, at the same time as beginning to develop self-awareness. In his view this was

the time when children connected with their emotions and who they were in a different way – “they have a sense of self but haven’t yet learnt what it means” (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11). According to Mr Middleton, schools needed to manage this stage carefully as children are developing “emotional maturity” rather than “growing up maturity” and therefore often “fall out” with their friends. Here he expressed a view that schools should be about more than acquiring skills and knowledge; they should also be about allowing space for children to find out who they are and what they think about their feelings. Hyde (2008) and Miller (2007) refer to the need for children to be offered opportunities to search for meaning not just to acquire knowledge. Hyde (2008 p.238) writes about “the emergence of the characteristic which has been termed *weaving the threads of meaning*” in which “children’s sense of meaning, cultural traditions and world views they had been brought up in (allowed them) to make meaning of events and piece together their own worldview.” In Miller’s (2007 p.28) view, teachers should aim to be “as transparent as possible to the transcendent” in order to enable students to experience “mystery and awe for the web of associations, designs, and patterns that interconnect all nature and embody a new way of knowing in which meaning is synergistically, rather than linearly derived.”

Mr Middleton stated that he thought that “girls are deeper thinkers when they are younger because their thoughts are often about how they are feeling” (Interview, 6.10.11). However, allowing the time and space for children to discover who they were and what their thoughts were about their feelings, within a curriculum which is seeking to maintain high standards produced tensions since external pressure compels schools to focus on more measurable indicators of academic success.

Mr Middleton expressed the view that Philosophy for Children could provide the right kind of time and space for children to develop “deep thinking” in a

structured and disciplined way since P4C could be linked to emotional intelligence - “one becomes more relevant if you have the other. Questioning of self leads to questioning of others and of the world” (Headteacher interview, 6.10.11). According to Mr Middleton, this was part of personal development and could enable teachers to talk to children about **why** they might be feeling the way they were feeling. Providing children with the language and the opportunity to express these thoughts could be an important aspect of developing children’s spirituality whilst allowing the school to maintain its high academic standards – developing children’s ability to express their views on a deeper level as well as their cognitive thinking skills. Mrs Jones (Y4 Teacher) observed that two terms of weekly P4C sessions had not only improved the children’s talking and listening skills (in particular the quieter children had developed the confidence to speak in other subjects) but had also enabled children to express “big” questions and ideas in general conversation; “they are using skills I’ve not seen in this age group before – it’s affecting the way they think” (Interview, 20.1.11). In her view, spirituality was not necessarily religious or just about RE but was about the “journey” children go on in the school, learning values and developing as “whole” children, with P4C enhancing the process (Interview, 20.1.11). She particularly commented on less “academic” children coming out with “strong” thoughts which gave her a different insight into aspects of the children she might not otherwise have seen (Interview, 20.1.11). P4C, therefore, provided a forum or space in which all the children could explore thoughts and ideas once they had learned the basic structure and rules of the sessions. In her view, expressing their questions and responding to those questions not only enhanced their cognitive development, it also allowed opportunity for a different level or depth of thinking which was not necessarily related to academic prowess.

6.1.5 Being in community

When Mr Middleton spoke about encouraging an active curriculum, he connected this view of the curriculum to his definition of the spiritual dimension of education (see section 6.1.4). He talked about the two aspects of spirit and spirituality being linked but different and related this to being yourself “at the deepest level” and being in community, understanding who we are and who others are through understanding our relationships; “‘Spiriter’ is to ‘breathe life into’ the school and the curriculum – the way you breathe life into a school ... Spirituality is who we are at the deepest level” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Mr Middleton spoke of the need to understand who we are and who others are through understanding relationships with those who mean the most to us. The aim appeared to be to “join up” active achievement and developing spiritually (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). The result of this approach to finding out who we are “at our deepest level” may, however, be unsettling and uncomfortable. Breathing “spirit” into a school could have unexpected results, producing tensions in a disciplined environment where children are expected to conform to a particular way of doing things whilst at the same time being encouraged to think at a deeper level.

This tension was hinted at again when Mr Middleton referred to creating a community that was able to work well together, “taking care” of each other and having “a sense of creating something good and profound together and I do think that gives us that energy and sense of breathing life into what we want because there’s every opportunity to both achieve but also to explore” (Interview, 10.9.10). The language used here conveyed an intention to mould a community ethos at the same time as fostering individual creativity, illustrating the complexity of the Headteacher’s task as he sought to maintain the position of the school as an outstanding school whilst attempting to

create the spaces required to develop the more abstract areas of learning located in Bernstein's "discursive gap".

6.2 CLASSROOM PEDAGOGY

At St Saviour's the variety of ways of "being" expected of children and adults in the school led to tensions, noted above, between creativity and discipline, individual creativity and community ethos, developing academically (achievement) and spiritually (free to be oneself). The material analysed below illustrates the tensions inherent in requiring so many different ways of "being". The analysis focuses on the way these tensions operated in the classroom pedagogy of the school. Three aspects of pedagogy have been selected – the approaches to teaching writing and talk, and an analysis of an event which was of importance within the life of the school.

Bernstein's (2000 p.57) performance model of pedagogic practice emphasises what the learner cannot do or does not know. The learner is therefore required to receive the "correct" text from the transmitter or teacher. The sense of deficit places emphasis on the text to be acquired and on the transmitter of this knowledge, creating an ordered performance model whereby the learner cannot proceed to "higher" stages of learning until the preliminary steps of appropriate knowledge gained or skills acquired are in place (Bernstein, 2000 p.57). This was reflected in the pedagogy at St Saviour's where skills were acquired through a step on step approach, for example, to the teaching of literacy. Literacy skills were required before the children were expected to be able to express their thoughts, ideas and emotions through writing; the building blocks of learning were expected to be in place before a higher spiritual awareness could be expressed. Learners were taught the skills and knowledge they did not know, according to their performance in relation to the levels prescribed by the National Curriculum. This approach impacted on the organisation of the classroom and the language of learning, as illustrated in the examples discussed below. These

approaches to the teaching of writing and the performance of an event followed the stages identified by Piaget where children first learned skills (how to “do”) in an individualistic, concrete way before they were enabled to express “spiritual” ideas.

Bernstein contrasts performance pedagogy with that of the competence model where the emphasis is placed on empowerment – what you can do or know. These are “practical accomplishments” which are creative and “tacitly acquired in informal interactions” (Bernstein, 2000 p.4). Within the competence model the learner discovers what they already know and think and is provided with the opportunity to develop this knowledge further. This approach to learning was illustrated at St Saviour’s through the introduction of Philosophy for Children (P4C) where the children (and their teacher) explored a stimulus together by expressing their initial ideas to each other, trying out new ideas with each other and thereby learning together. The community of enquiry approach employed within P4C reflects the view of Vygotsky that children learn first in community. Their learning is then internalised and they proceed to more individualised forms of learning (Vygotsky, 1986 p.36).

These contrasting theories of learning introduced another layer in the tensions noted earlier which also had the potential to be creative and productive. The individualistic approach to learning encouraged by the performance model enabled children to develop and express a deep awareness of self. One of the central concepts articulated by the Headteacher was that children should be given opportunities to discover who they are “at their deepest level” and that in making such discoveries they should also be given opportunities to communicate what they found through writing (see section 6.2.1 below). Alongside this individualistic approach to learning was the social model of learning demonstrated through competence pedagogy where children (and teachers) learned alongside one another, exploring

concepts and ideas together. The emphasis was on talking and listening, on trying out ideas rather than on producing a written piece. At the end of a P4C session all participants in the discussion were given an opportunity to speak their “final thoughts” on the original question under discussion. Each child expressed their ideas and questions in a safe environment knowing those ideas were being valued and listened to (see section 6.2.2 below). Deepening children’s thinking skills in a social context orally could also enable the children to express their thoughts individually through their written work.

6.2.1 Approaches to teaching writing

The Headteacher regularly worked with pupils in Years 5 and 6 to develop their creative language and writing skills. In his paper, Extending the ‘Gifted’ Writer, Mr Middleton posed the question: “Where could I take children (from Year 5 and 6) who had already achieved English L5 when ‘vocabulary choices are imaginative and words are used precisely’ (NC Level Descriptor English pg.7)?” The language of this question reflected the “beyond expectation” ethos discussed above, as Mr Middleton considered where he could “take” children who had already achieved a certain level of skill in writing and what they might be able to achieve “beyond” this level. His language implied that “going beyond” could include opportunities for pupils to think more deeply and to express those thoughts in their written work; achieving a higher level academically in order to go deeper spiritually.

Following a Year 6 lesson on creative writing, Mr Middleton described his passion for creative writing and language which provided his motivation for challenging all children to move onto a different level of thinking, writing and expression; ultimately to consider “spirituality” which in his view could be indicated through the use of emotional language and use of the unusual in expressing those emotions (Field notes, 15.4.10). By enabling children to express their deeper feelings about their experiences and relationships through enhanced use of language there was a sense of children being

allowed to explore more spiritual aspects of life – the “potentials” which Hull (2002 p.171) describes as being “latent within the biological nature of the infant and are only gradually developed.” According to Hull (2002 p.171), these “potentials transcend the biological.” Language is included in his list of “potentials”, along with symbolic functioning, conscience, self-awareness, inter-personal relations and creativity. If these “potentials” can be developed they may contribute to the transcendence of the biological which, states Hull (2002 p.171), “may be described as the spiritual”. Mr Middleton’s emphasis on using creative writing to enable children to think and express themselves at a different level, therefore, conformed with Hull’s contention that “art and science break through the limits of our language, our thoughts, our imagination, so lifting us up to a new level of our ontological vocation” (Hull, 2002 p. 173) which enables spiritual development to take place.

In order to extend the pupils’ use of language in Year 5, Mr Middleton utilised the structure of *The Magic Box* (a poem by Kit Wright) as an example for pupils to emulate. In Year 6 he had re-visited this work with the pupils; aiming to facilitate their use of more abstract and emotional language and ultimately to produce “something unusual”, using spiritual concepts and language (Field notes, 15.4.10). Strong framing of the task meant that the Headteacher maintained control over the language to be used as he provided a sheet giving examples of “Emotional and Spiritual Words and Images” and asked questions designed to prompt the children to think about and express deep questions and emotions: “What emotions might a volcano symbolise?”; “How do you feel deep down?”; “Who do you care about deeply?” (Field notes, 15.4.10).

Mr Middleton stated that his intention was to use creative writing to improve SATs levels but he claimed that “the real ‘driver’ is the development of spirituality and the use of spiritual and emotional language” (Field notes, 15.4.10). The provision of a clear structure was fundamental to the Headteacher’s approach; “It takes time to move on to another level, making

‘good’ achievement ‘outstanding’. Level 4s to Level 5s and beyond” (Field notes, 15.4.10). Within this structured lesson, the Headteacher provided examples of how to improve and what to look for. He encouraged pupils to engage in self-criticism and peer discussion which recognised good points in their work as well as points to work on with the aim of developing their language and analytical skills; “Everyone has done something great. Everyone could do something better” (Headteacher, Field notes, 15.4.10). The language used here was intended to remind the children that whatever they had achieved there would always be an opportunity to “do better”, to go “beyond expectation”. The Headteacher’s emphasis on further developing the children’s analytical skills and gaining higher levels of achievement may not necessarily be synonymous with acquiring deeper levels of spirituality since commentators have noted that within the area of spiritual development and self-awareness there is a place for being satisfied and content “in the moment”, present to the here and now rather than continually striving for something more. Adams (2010 p.12) states that in asking the reader to recall what it was like to be a child she is not just asking the reader to focus on the physical and emotional memories of places and people, instead the “focus is on engagement with the self and the ways in which we ... perceive the world (now)”. Miller (2009 p.2705) suggests that “often in the classroom, children are not welcomed wholly to exist ... The heart of living, as it is being experienced right now, in the here and now is not discussed. In that we ask students to leave much of their awaking selves behind, it hardly seems surprising that often students are not wholly present in class. The classroom chair has been occupied, but the spirit lives elsewhere; a disintegrated presence is created.”

A continual striving to do better through building on the past orientates the learner both backwards and forwards rather than to the present where spirituality may also be experienced. Huebner (1959 p.6) warns that often “We focus on the process of becoming rather than on being. We miss the

wonder of the here and now for the expected glory or fullness or richness or security of the future. But the struggle for that future and for the betterment of the present in that future makes us less sensitive to the immediacy and wholeness of the present.” However, there were other spaces in the life of the school where children could inhabit the present moment (see Section 6.3 below). It is not always possible to analyse moments of profound spiritual insight, sometimes it is enough for a child to record such moments knowing that an adult has taken their experience seriously; “In order for an adult to be permitted access to a child’s worlds, the child needs to be sure that the adult will take them seriously in this particular aspect of their lives” (Adams, 2010 p.125). As Huebner states; “Perhaps it is better to remain speechless, awed, with a child who is overcome by a sunset than to say ‘how beautiful,’ thus labeling and reducing to ... words an experience which transcends words” (quoted by Schoonmaker, 2009 p.2726). There is, therefore, another tension here between the need to raise levels of achievement and the desire to enable children to explore spirituality through their written work.

The Headteacher communicated through his pedagogic discourse to the children his conviction that if they believed in themselves they were “97% more likely to succeed” (Field notes, 15.4.10). “Success” in the “St Saviour’s way” involved striving to go beyond what had been achieved before; offering opportunities to develop both academically and spiritually. Speaking to some children during a rehearsal for the end of year production he stated: “Remember what your Headteacher thinks of you – you’re all great and you can achieve great things” (Field notes, 17.6.10), again using the language of “beyond expectation”. These generalised exhortations reinforced the central idea of a “culture of opportunity” in which all the children were encouraged to fulfill their potential. The challenge he gave the children through this spiritual writing activity was to think on an emotional and spiritual level; to go further with their writing than they had gone before; “Just putting in ‘God’ and ‘Jesus’ doesn’t mean you’ve done the spiritual bit!” ; “Move above the

ordinary to give a spiritual dimension. So ‘the warmth of the sun’ is obvious and ordinary, whereas ‘the value of friendship’ has a spiritual dimension” (Field notes, 15.4.10). Mr Middleton provided the children with examples of ways in which their own experiences of relationships and developing self-awareness could be expressed so that a spiritual dimension might be discerned in their work. By modelling the words and phrases he expected to see in their work, Mr Middleton was providing the children with the tools he believed they needed to express some potentially difficult thoughts and feelings. However, by doing this there was also the possibility of stifling the children’s individual use of language to express unique thoughts and ideas in ways which reflected their own experiences, using their own language to do so.

As well as providing a sheet of “Emotional and Spiritual Words and Images”, Mr Middleton challenged the pupils to suggest other images or ideas. He also explained some of the “religious” words such as “repentance”, “grace” and “salvation”. He then read out examples of what he considered to be good work written by the pupils themselves:

1. “The joy of a family united”
2. “A sad smile and a joyful frown”
3. “I will sleep in my box on the seventh day of creation”

Mr Middleton explained that they would need to be disciplined in their work (using appropriate punctuation, changing words around and providing a good ending) in order to translate their work into disciplined SATs writing (Field notes, 15.4.10). The children were then instructed to work in pairs to analyse each other’s work, providing positive comments and suggesting improvements. This approach reflected the emphasis on acquiring skills and discipline in learning in order to be equipped to be “creative” which was expressed in the Active Curriculum document discussed earlier.

Following this lesson, the Headteacher explained that his ultimate aim was to develop the children's use of imagery and symbolism in order to move them onto a more "spiritual" level. In order to facilitate this development his next task for the children would be to write a poem entitled "Who am I?" having read them a poem called "Who are you?" According to Csinos (2011 p.115); "in telling stories (about themselves), people offer windows into their lives to those who are listening. People who listen to children's stories can learn about their inner lives, what they find meaningful and how they experience God ..." The Headteacher described a further stage in this process when children would be asked to dress in a way that represented who they were and take a photograph of themselves to accompany their poem. There is an interesting contrast here between the notion of discovering who the children are in a deep spiritual sense and somehow displaying those discoveries in a visual way through dress which could be said to be a surface expression. This differs from the religious concept that it is more important to look at "the heart" rather than the appearance of a person; "The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart" (1 Samuel 16 verse 7).

This project combined the ideas behind the aphorisms which were at the centre of the school's mission to explore who children were "at their deepest level" (profound personal development) through the "take care" approach which aimed to produce "best work" to display, including a visual image of themselves which would contain its own set of expectations of acceptability. In the Headteacher's view, children had an opportunity to think more deeply within a disciplined approach. He offered two examples of poems written by Year 6 pupils where the children had expressed themselves in a meaningful way within very difficult home circumstances (including family breakup and a parent starting a prison sentence). Again there was a contrast or tension between discipline and creativity which the Headteacher yoked together in an intelligible way through modelling expectations about the use of language

whilst allowing opportunity for children to consider the use of different words to express spiritual concepts and experiences.

Thus the Headteacher's lessons on spiritual writing were strongly framed, setting the structure and pace of the lessons in clearly defined terms. Expectations were explained at the outset and, in Bernstein's words: "Control determines the type of language that can be used and can determine both what is reproduced and what may change" (Bernstein, 2000 p.5). The discipline of the task was strongly framed before the pupils were allowed the opportunity to develop the more creative and spiritual dimensions of the poetry. This approach would seem to contrast with the view expressed by Wangerin that "Children need to dwell within the story, so the story will affect behavior, and not just their intellectual thinking" (Ratcliff, 2004 p.14). Stories, according to Wangerin, "are a means of the child discovering the self in relationship" (Ratcliff, 2004 p.15). Through this experience of writing, some children had the opportunity to express who they were on a deeper level. In this context learning literacy skills became the key to unlocking successful expressions of spirituality.

During his interviews, Mr Middleton defined spirituality as "who we are at the deepest level" which, he claimed, connected to the feeling we have for those people we think most of (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). This sense of spirituality did not, in his view, need to be connected to the church or religion (although it could be). The Headteacher was attempting to make spirituality accessible to all by trying to define it "in a way others can get" (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10), although at times this led to some tensions in the language he used. For example, he spoke about love as "a spiritual thing because God is love – the essence of who we are" yet he also recognised that he did not want to "just define spirituality as anything to do with God" (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Mr Middleton expressed his aim as being to put children in positions where they could explore, for example, "the things

you most love” which, he stated, we tend to recognise when they are gone (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). In these controlled situations children would be given opportunity to use language to express “something deeper”; “a sense of something both external (awe and wonder) and internal” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). The Headteacher said that he wanted the children to work out for themselves where their spiritual place was, who was their spiritual person and where love was in this (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10).

An example of a controlled situation where children were allowed to explore emotional and spiritual language was a series of poetry lessons in which the Headteacher provided a group of Year 6 “gifted and talented” children with a structure which they were “allowed to manipulate” (Headteacher paper, p.2). The children were reminded of “some basic rules through which poetry can initially be shaped ... reflecting my experience based understanding that even creativity must be based on a foundation of properly taught skills if pupils are to be able to make appropriate choices and take appropriate risks” (Headteacher paper, p.2). Throughout this piece of work there was an emphasis on the importance of “quality” (“the high standards we model for pupils and then demand of them”) and “discipline” (“the need for a positive attitude”) which, according to the Headteacher, are both essential “if creative work is to be achieved in a worthwhile and rewarding way” (Headteacher paper, p.3). This language again illustrated the tensions discussed earlier whereby children were expected to conform to certain standards and rules before being allowed to engage with the idea of emotion and spirituality.

According to Mr Middleton, creating this opportunity for “gifted and talented” children to engage with emotion and spirituality produced a “depth and perceptiveness of (some of the) thinking” which “went far beyond my expectation” (Headteacher paper, p.4). He linked this depth of thinking with a “comparatively high ability to manipulate language and imagery to give

expression to their ideas and insight” (Headteacher paper, p.4). In this project he connected the ability to think deeply with the ability to express emotions and spirituality through the written word. In his paper, Mr Middleton went on to claim that the poetry the children produced was the result of “high challenge, within a rigorous culture, which supports them towards excellence,” (Headteacher paper, p.4). This was the language of achievement required to maintain an “outstanding” school. However, the Headteacher also expressed the aim of taking the children “beyond their biological self to achieve what Hull rightly describes as spirituality” (Headteacher paper, p.4). This, he claimed, was evidenced in their use of language, “symbolic functioning, conscience, self-awareness, interpersonal relationships and creativity” (Headteacher paper, p.4). Imagery and symbolism were to be developed before the children could move on to a more “spiritual” level. The requirement to achieve high levels of literacy before being allowed to explore deeper spiritual and emotional questions created a tension between allowing time and space for “thinking deeply” (spiritually and creatively) and ensuring that there were measurable outcomes acceptable to OFSTED. This approach graded pupils’ development of literacy skills whilst allowing them to undertake an individual journey of discovery about themselves. “Gifted and talented” pupils were offered this opportunity since they had the building blocks of their literacy skills in place and were, therefore, to be allowed to develop their spirituality. This opportunity for “gifted and talented” pupils to achieve higher levels whilst exploring deeper questions was an experiment in reconciling the tensions between academic achievement and spiritual development but for a limited subsection of the class. This approach accorded with the notion of a “building block” approach to learning discussed above and contrasted with the inclusive approach illustrated above through the “Who am I?” work undertaken with the whole class.

The emphasis at St Saviour’s on a performance pedagogy was, according to Hall *et al.* (2007 p.615), “unsurprising in a national school culture strongly

oriented towards individual outcomes and the rank ordering of performance.” They point out that where an accountability culture pervades “it undermines trust in teacher professionalism and encourages a sense that there should be a tangible product or outcome from educational endeavour” (Hall *et al.*, 2007 p.615). This culture of accountability, Hall *et al.* (2007 p.615) claim, does not encourage the “high –risk strategy” of adopting longer term goals for learning or of defining success differently (quoting Kress *et al.*, 2005). Success in OFSTED terms requires that schools show the levels of progress pupils have made in their academic achievements. Mr Middleton’s emphasis on the acquisition of high levels of literacy skills reflected his goal of ensuring that the school maintained its “outstanding” OFSTED label. This goal required the performance model approach to pedagogy observed in the teaching of literacy skills with this group of gifted and talented pupils. However, the Headteacher’s stated aim was not only to raise levels of achievement through producing disciplined SATs writing, it was also to enable children to develop their ability to express their spirituality through the use of creative, emotional and spiritual language, thereby redefining some of the outcomes that could be expected from a literacy task.

6.2.2 Approaches to teaching talk

The introduction of P4C to a Year 3 class of children was viewed by Mr Middleton as a way of giving structure to the process of thinking and wondering (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). In his opinion this shape and structure was necessary if “you’re going to have different teachers at different levels of understanding and commitment delivering it throughout the school so that drip by drip by drip from Reception through to Year 6 children are building their capacity to think deeply ...” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). The language used here indicated that it was desirable for children to learn to think deeply and that one way in which this could be achieved was through learning the expectations of discussion within P4C

sessions and that this should be delivered in a consistent way across the school.

Bernstein (2000 p.17) describes the rules of recognition and realisation which enable a speaker to recognise what is expected in a particular context. Where classification is strong power relations in a context become easier to recognise (Bernstein, 2000 p.17). As children are introduced to the structure of P4C they come to recognise the explicit rules which apply in this context. However, unless the learner also develops the realisation rule they will be unable to speak the legitimate text (Bernstein, 2000 p.17). The realisation rule, according to Bernstein (2000 p.17), determines how we put meanings together and how we speak about them so that the “right language” might be produced. If the learner is unable to recognise the context of the framework they are in the learner becomes silenced; knowing the correct way to speak is the realisation rule. P4C provided children with the context and space within the classroom and the curriculum in which to explore ideas together with their teacher. It enabled the majority of pupils in the class to recognise the context of P4C (a community of enquiry with rules of participation) and to realise the way in which to speak during the sessions (taking turns to speak, listening respectfully to one another, giving reasons for thoughts and ideas). The children and their teacher also learned to recognise what might be relevant to the discussion whilst realising how they could put together meanings to create legitimate or acceptable text.

P4C offered some assistance in resolving the tensions between allowing space to explore ideas and “think deeply” and the requirement to develop the skills necessary to achieve and maintain high academic standards. The strong boundaries and classification of P4C resulted in the teacher maintaining control over the way talk took place and the way talk happened. As the children learned the discourse or form of language to use they discovered a different way of how to “do disagreeing” through building a community

where ideas could be explored. This was a strongly classified and tightly framed activity where language controlled the form of the discourse which took place. There was a set of rights which determined when pupils could speak and when they should listen which was built on the realisation rules. Within the sessions themselves, however, there was weak framing as the children were given the opportunity to determine the questions which they asked about the stimulus and which questions would be discussed by the class. The teacher was the facilitator of the process whilst the learners had more apparent control over the direction of the discussion.

P4C allowed access for the majority of pupils to a forum in which they could explore “deep” questions and ideas without first having to obtain the literacy skills required to express these ideas through written language. Two children who displayed the realisation and recognition rules required within the P4C sessions were able to express some deep spiritual ideas during those sessions but were unable to articulate these ideas in a written format. During a discussion on the question, “Does God get hurt by the wrong things people do?”, Calvin asked; “Why are people mean to him (God) when they don’t believe in him?” (Field notes, 2.3.10). Within another discussion, Lily asked; “Why do people just think about themselves?” (Field notes, 15.4.10). These questions seemed to suggest that both children were searching for meaning. Comments in later P4C sessions seemed to indicate that they were both developing the ability to articulate their thoughts confidently within the community of enquiry environment. For example, in response to the question, “Did Jesus think it was a miracle that he was the Son of God and that he came to make the world a better place?”, Lily expressed her view that; “Jesus made the world a better place because of who he is.” Calvin also stated his opinion, saying; “I think Jesus wanted to do good things like God and keep it in the family business” (Field notes, 7.10.10). Such children may be excluded from the more literary forms of expressing spirituality.

The mastery of literary operations does not always have to precede spiritual expression. According to Ratcliff (2004 p.12), Wangerin's view was that children should "move into" stories "with their whole being and selfhood" and continued, "the experience of a good story is always profoundly spiritual, because it helps children connect with deeper truths and ultimate meanings in life, ..." The whole child, stated Wangerin, is invited into the world of story such that they identify "not only with the cognitive content, but also the emotions, the suspense, the totality of the story, and all of the senses as well as reason and imagination are involved" (Ratcliff, 2004 p.13). Despite his view that faith develops in identifiable "stages", Fowler (2006 p.36) acknowledged that some people reach chronological and biological adulthood whilst remaining at a stage of faith best described as "early or middle childhood". However, some children may experience "a deeper and more rapid development of faith" as a result of their "spiritual aptitude" being nurtured in a context of spiritual practice. Csinos (2011 p.7) puts forward the view that children exhibit different "spiritual styles"; "four ways of knowing God that affect children's spiritual experiences, ultimate concerns, and relationships with the world around them." Csinos (2010 p.3) labels these styles "word, emotion, symbol and action" and claims that unless those who work with children (including teachers) recognise these different spiritual styles there is a danger in presuming that our own spiritual style is the "correct" approach to spirituality thus excluding those children who have a different spiritual style (Csinos, 2010 p.4).

P4C offered an opportunity to reconcile the tensions involved in allowing children the space to "think deeply" whilst maintaining discipline and rigour since it provided a structure in which children who were able to think in this way had the opportunity to express their ideas using more spiritual language. P4C offered this possibility to more children, not only to those who excelled in literacy and art but also to those who exhibited different styles of spirituality.

6.2.3 Approaches to performance

According to Bernstein's model, where there is strong framing the teacher has control over the selection and sequencing of a lesson. Strong framing enables learners to access the "realisation rules" - learning how to speak in a particular context once learners are aware of what meanings are relevant: "recognition rules regulate what meanings are relevant and realisation rules regulate how the meanings are to be put together to create the legitimate text" (Bernstein, 2000 p.18). In the context of St Saviour's, the recognition rules indicated that the Bible and Christian teachings provided meaning and these teachings were used to create a text about how to live a meaningful life (realisation rules) by addressing questions of faith and spirituality. Bernstein points to two types of discourse (instructional and regulative) which are explicit when framing is strong. A key episode at St Saviour's which illustrated the way in which the recognition rules were used within the classroom was the Year 5 Easter performance. Pupils were given a task with clear instructions (strong framing) on how to achieve the desired outcomes.

An evening performance of the Easter story took place in the church and was attended by parents and staff. The Year 5 teacher had organized the class into groups to work on different parts of the story. They were to use the Bible to source their play and from this had developed their own script. The teacher had then added the music and songs and together they worked on the actions and drama to produce the final play. The final performance was described by the Headteacher as "impressive" and "moving". All the main events of the story were included and the grief and joy of the disciples was portrayed through the choice of actions and music.

Strong framing of this task enabled the pupils to recognise which episodes were relevant (according to the Biblical version of events as interpreted within a church school context) to their play and to realise the emotions behind the events which gave their performance its status as a "legitimate

text". The parameters of the task were displayed in the classroom following the performance. This was part of a larger project which also involved re-telling the Easter story in language suitable for a younger audience (see Figures 10 to 12). The classroom display exemplified the "take care" approach discussed above, showing examples of newspaper articles written by pupils plus illustrations of the story. Opportunities to engage with the deeper, more "spiritual" aspects of the story came from the performance itself as the children engaged with the emotional aspects of the story generated by the human drama of the situation. These emotions, however, were not expressed through the language used in the written work displayed in the classroom. Although one newspaper article was entitled "Was he really the Son of God?" it did not go on to explore the question. The article acknowledged that this was no ordinary crucifixion and that the crowds were larger than usual but it then went on to chronicle the events of the crucifixion. If there had been opportunities to reflect on the "passion" and drama of the performance and the possibility of finding a deeper meaning behind the events portrayed, these were not reflected in the written work on display in the classroom. The focus of the task was on acquiring knowledge of the story and on communicating the narrative. Framing of the task was concerned with passing on the story rather than reflecting on its meaning to individuals or to the participants within the story. The children had produced materials that met the standards of display expected at St Saviour's. However, they did not appear to have engaged with the narrative in such a way as to elicit the more philosophical questions of faith and spirituality which can arise when children go beyond an obvious encounter with a learning stimulus to ask existential questions.



Figure 10

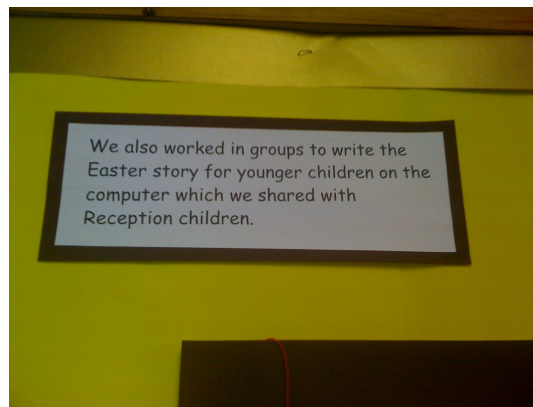


Figure 11

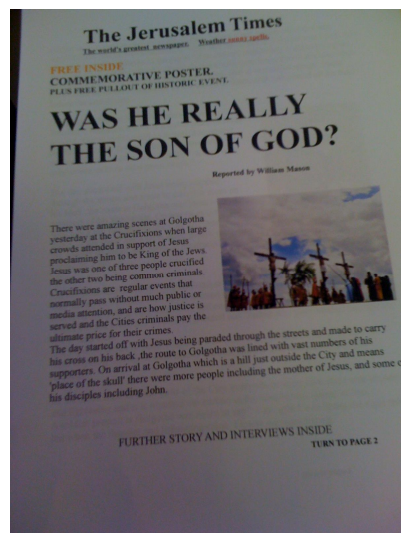


Figure 12

The performance and its preparation allowed all the children to participate and engage with the story which provided opportunities for them to explore the emotions and “passion” of the story from the point of view of different characters within the story. The relational aspects of spirituality could be explored in a “community” context to which the majority of the children had access. However, the requirement to produce written outcomes for display produced a tension since some children with lower levels of literacy skills would have difficulty expressing deeper levels of response to spiritual issues in a written format.

There appeared to be an expectation that certain versions of the Easter story would be told, written about and performed using legitimate text for a church school context - a “right” performance for a church school and suitable display for the walls. This contrasted with opportunities to engage with thinking about the Passion in moments of stillness and reflection, indicating further tensions and complexity where thinking may have had the opportunity to deviate from the “right” answers expected in a church school.

6.3 CREATING SPACE FOR EVERYDAY SPIRITUALITY

The Headteacher and staff actively attempted to resolve some of the tensions analysed above by creating symbolic, psychological and emotional spaces which would facilitate the development of spirituality within the everyday life of the school. According to the Rector, a Church of England school, “should be a place where children can understand the message of the Gospel and how it can be relevant in their lives” (Interview, 13.9.12). Having physical space in which to explore questions of faith in safety is, therefore, by this account, fundamental to the ethos and values of a church school. According to this view, Mrs Cook identified what for her was the key question in relation to developing children’s spirituality: “The question is how to create and manage opportunities for spirituality in the classroom for all” (Interview, 14.7.11). Creating not only a physical space but also space within subject teaching,

within developing relationships and more overtly spiritual spaces were recognised as important elements of learning and spiritual development which should be available to as many children as possible.

6.3.1 Physical space

At the school level in St Saviour's there was a recognisable physical space for collective worship in the school hall and spaces for reflection in different areas of the school. In addition there was a "spiritual space within our RE Area, (we have) a 'Take Care Tree' in the hall, around which our Worship Centre is based" (Toolkit, p.15). This specialisation of spaces indicated strong internal classification in the arrangement of areas of the school and the objects within them. Pupils and staff could readily recognise these spaces and understand what activities were expected to take place within them. The experience of collective worship and the study of Religious Education communicated the Christian values that were central to the life of the school. These were strongly classified in order to communicate the values consistently. These Christian values and principles were put into practice at St Saviour's through the "take care" ethos discussed earlier which indicated the framing that had taken place in order to make these meanings public "and the nature of the social relationships" involved (Bernstein, 2000 p.12).

This framing regulated two systems of rules – social order and discursive order. Discursive order is concerned with the selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria of the knowledge and is conveyed through Instructional Discourse (ID) and Regulative Discourse (RD) (Bernstein, 2000 p.13). ID conveys a clear sense of order and where the knowledge is coming from – in this context it emanated from the Headteacher, class teachers and the Rector. Within RD, the knowledge givers decide how and where opportunities to explore ideas are provided. At St Saviour's such exploration could take place in the physical spaces of the hall, classrooms and RE area at certain times which were controlled by the adults in the school. Bernstein's model indicates that within

the physical spaces created in a school both ID and RD take place, with ID being embedded in RD and RD being the dominant discourse (Bernstein, 2000 p.13). Teachers selected and presented the ideas to be explored, making clear connections with the church and the Christian faith, at designated times within the school day.

Within the physical place created for collective worship in the hall at St Saviour's, all children had access to space between curricular activities in which to engage in opportunities for worship and prayer. When in use as a place of collective worship, this multi-purpose area was cleared to allow all the children and adults to be seated together. A "Take care" tree and table on which were placed a cross and Bible became the centre of attention. These were situated beneath crosses on a wall which had been designed by the children and indicated where attention should be focussed during collective worship time. The leader of the worship time would control the amounts of talk, song, prayer or reflection that happened within this time and place.

According to the Toolkit (p.12), "school prayer is an integral part of worship", although children were not forced to pray since it was recognised that "some may not believe or believe something differently and therefore (we) ask them to respectfully think what is important to them." Spiritual space was being provided within the physical place in the school hall which had been transformed into a collective worship area where children could respond in ways that were appropriate to them as individuals. Karen, a Year 4 pupil, confirmed that during worship time prayers may be said and that if any children did not want to pray they were encouraged to "think about" what they had just listened to; "I usually pray. It helps me to pray but I'm not sure why" (Interview, 13.1.11). For Karen, the opportunity to pray was received positively as being something that helped her even though she could not explain the reason behind the benefits she experienced. Regular opportunities to pray had created a familiarity with the process which she

enjoyed but the limited time available to experience these benefits prevented the development of a deeper awareness of the feelings and emotions being expressed through those prayers.

The meanings behind the prayers said (particularly the Lord's Prayer which was the theme for a series of worship times) and the hymns sung were explained by worship leaders. Children were expected to assimilate this information and encouraged to contribute to a prayer wall by writing issues they would like prayer for on post-it notes and displaying them on a prayer wall or in a prayer diary. This attempt to make prayer real and relevant relied on children being willing to allow their thoughts and needs to be displayed publicly. This public display framed the way problems and reflections were conceptualised and addressed, making prayer a public discourse rather than a private one. The language used in writing for public display will be different from that used in private expressions of emotion. The provisional nature of the prayer requests was indicated by the use of post-its which revealed a temporal approach to the process of prayer rather than an approach which encouraged an ongoing dialogue that children could develop throughout their lives. However, for those children who chose to express their thoughts in this public forum it was a physical place where space had been created for them to explore spiritual issues and concerns in a safe environment which was free from direct comment or judgement.

During assemblies led by Mr Middleton, the children would be taught Christian stories from the Bible which were used to illustrate Christian principles and values. According to Mrs Tate, the Headteacher's assemblies were central to encouraging the development of children's spirituality in the school (Interview, 6.4.11). This view was shared by Mr Wood who stated that the development of spirituality was encouraged in the school "mainly through collective worship – there's a worship table in the hall and designated areas around the school. It's integrated into everything" (Interview, 6.4.11). The

messages provided by the Headteacher during assembly provided both children and staff with opportunities to reflect on the Christian approach to life issues. These ideas were reinforced by a Christian visitor from a local independent church whose message included the need to trust in God, to be brave as a Christian and to obey God (Field notes, 7.4.11). The children were engaged in ways that related to their own situation and were given space to reflect on what relevance these words may or may not have in their own lives. Therefore, the physical places around the school were important indicators to staff that spiritual issues were to be taken seriously and that children should be given space in those areas to explore and express their thoughts and concerns.

The visit of the Diocesan Bishop provided an opportunity to hold a “special” assembly during which the Headteacher showcased examples of children’s exploration of spirituality. These included Year 1 “I wonder” work, Year 2 asking God questions and the Year 5 Passion Play. The “Take Care” awards were explained by Year 4 and a group of children played their guitars. This was a strongly classified and framed occasion which enabled Mr Middleton to emphasise the values of the school (“we are a take care school where we try different things and try to be the best we can be” – Field notes, 5.7.11) to the Bishop. However, the provision of this physical space in the school hall also allowed some time, within the occasion itself and later in the classroom, for spiritual space in which to ask questions and do some individual thinking. The Bishop spoke for a short time about his own memories of starting school. Having engaged the attention of the children he then allowed time for the children to ask him some questions. These ranged from, “Who was your best friend at school?” to “When did you become a Christian?” and “Why did you become a Bishop?”; “What does it feel like to be a Bishop?” and “What is your favourite Bible story?” (Field notes, 5.7.11). The children had listened carefully to the Bishop’s discourse since their questions were largely framed by what he had said. This wide range of questions indicated that for the

children questions about human feelings which were highly relevant to their own situation were equally as important as the more theologically based questions about the Bible and becoming a Christian. This occasion provided space for children to consider how they might integrate personal experience with reflections on theology.

The physical space of the classroom later provided an opportunity for Foundation Stage children to explore some of the issues raised in the assembly with their teacher. Mrs Cook allowed some time for questioning and thinking about what the Bishop had said concerning the Bible; “I believe the Bible is true.” Mrs Cook explained to the children that the Bible is an important book for Christians and that it contains different stories. She reported that the children referred back to this conversation at a later date when studying the story of creation in the Bible. One child had commented; “The Bishop said it (the Bible) was true” (Interview, 14.7.11). The teacher expressed some caution about her own response to this comment; “My response was to say that he believes it’s true but do we all believe? I’m not sure about where this conversation went” (Interview, 14.7.11). Here the teacher had been willing to allow some spiritual space in which the children could explore existential questions about creation and human existence and allow the possibility of disagreeing with what the Bishop had said. However, she also attempted to deal with the ensuing conversation with young children in a way that did not seek to close down their questioning or give answers that might be interpreted as indoctrination. She expressed the view that it is important to “have a well-structured way of helping them (the children) develop...It’s the importance of thinking” (Interview, 14.7.11). Mrs Cook was expressing the tension which existed between allowing space for spiritual development and the need to develop appropriate thinking skills in a structured way, enabling children to express their spiritual thoughts at a more profound level. It was difficult for the teacher to provide access to these deeper ways of thinking whilst recording the achievement of children as levels

of progress. Although conversation and talk did not produce such outcomes it was nevertheless considered to be a worthwhile use of time.

During interviews some of the children stated that assemblies provided opportunities for thinking time and for asking questions. Sometimes these questions could be asked out loud within the worship time, at other times the children asked questions in their own minds about the story they had listened to. Tim spoke about a story he had heard in a SEAL (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) assembly which had prompted him to ask the question (in his mind); “Why do people be mean to each other? If everyone was kind we’d all be equal and there’d be no wars” (Interview, 11.11.10). Not only was he asking a question here, Tim was also offering a solution to the problem based on the story and his own experience of the world in which he lived. Helen also stated that assemblies offered time to think, “about God, creation, Jesus, being kind” and for further processing of her thoughts; “We can think more about being kind or mean and what the world would be like if people were just mean or just kind. We shouldn’t be mean. We should let others join in our games even if they are older or younger than us” (Interview, 9.12.10). For Helen, these opportunities to think provided space to work out her own reactions to the stories she heard and to consider what actions she should take as a result. Her thoughts included both theology and the everyday practicalities involved in living out what she was hearing.

Esther also referred to thinking time in collective worship which had been linked to the different seasons and had prompted a personal response. At Christmas, for example, she would say a prayer before opening her presents, “to say ‘thank you’ for how Christmas started and about when Jesus was born” (Interview, 9.12.10). Learning about Christmas in school had allowed Esther to consider ways in which this might influence her actions elsewhere. Poppy stated that collective worship had introduced her to different people and “how they think and live lives in different ways to us so they think

differently" (Interview, 9.12.10). She gave an example of thinking about a boy with Downs' Syndrome; "What does he think about everyone around him? We don't know what he's thinking" (Interview, 9.12.10). Poppy went on to explain that she continued to think about this after the worship time and that she had lots of questions but had no opportunity to ask anyone about them. According to Poppy, it was possible to ask (sensible) questions in some collective worship times (for example, with Mrs Cook) but "it's hard to do in front of everyone. The same people ask questions – the very young ones or Years 5 and 6" (Interview, 9.12.10). Thinking time, therefore, may begin in worship time but is not confined to that time and may extend far beyond it. The public nature of worship time meant that opportunities to ask questions within worship time were restricted to those who were "brave" enough to ask their questions in front of everyone else. Many children who were unable or unwilling to ask questions during worship time would not necessarily have the opportunity to ask their questions at other times in the day. Consequently many thoughts and questions could have been lost through lack of opportunity to express and explore them in greater depth.

Calvin commented that thinking times did not happen very often in assembly but "I like it when they do" (Interview, 13.1.11). He clearly grasped any opportunity provided by the questions asked to think about his personal response to those questions. On one occasion the children had been asked what they could do to make school better. Calvin's response was that there should be more new people in the school because then they could have more friends; "I like showing people what I can do. I like making friends with new people" (Interview, 13.1.11). John commented that there was "too much talk" in assemblies and that it was "boring". He preferred to have his own thoughts – some were random, some about the talk and some came from philosophy sessions; "Sometimes I say random stuff. It's a chance to do my own thinking in assembly" (Interview, 11.11.10). Even though he did not always value the content of the assembly, John nevertheless valued the opportunity to do his

own thinking in the physical place and spiritual space created by attending collective worship in the school hall. The presence of such a space allowed John to think in a way that would not have been possible in a different place. It was an opportunity to gather together thoughts and ideas gained from different areas of the curriculum and other times of the school day; to begin to process those thoughts and attempt to make sense of them.

According to Bernstein (2000 p.204), “voice” can establish what can be said and its context, whilst **what** is said and the form of the contextual realisation is the “message”; the message being a function of framing. Thus, “The stronger the framing, the smaller the space accorded for potential variation in the message ...” (Bernstein, 2000 p.204). Strong framing by the Headteacher at St Saviour’s conveyed a consistent message to both staff and children with apparently little opportunity for deviation from that message. However, Bernstein (2000 p.207) explains that, “There is always a boundary. It may vary in its explicitness, its visibility, its potential and in the manner of its transmission and acquisition. It may vary in terms of whose interest is promoted or privileged by the boundary.” This boundary may be viewed as a “prison of the past” or it may open future possibilities where “what is acquired may well not be what is expected” (Bernstein, 2000 p.207). The boundaries were set at St Saviour’s largely by the Headteacher (“We are a school that likes to discuss the importance of symbolism with children and we are always looking for other ways of positively adding to the ways of showing the important and relevant Christian foundation we are built upon” – Toolkit, p.15) and the Church (see below). However, the Headteacher also provided spaces for the children to do their own thinking. The children’s comments revealed that they liked the spaces they were given and that whilst they did use the spaces they were given for thinking, what they thought about was not always entirely what the Headteacher appeared to intend should happen.

6.3.2 Subject space

Bernstein (2000 p.6) claims that strong classification may be identified when there is “strong insulation between the categories”, where each category has its unique identity and voice and its own “specialised rules of internal relations”. Here, he continues, it is the space between the categories or subjects that preserves the individual categories and what preserves the insulation between the categories is power (Bernstein, 2000 p.6). Bernstein (2000 p.8) uses the example of the Medieval University to illustrate the strong classification which existed between subjects. Subjects were divided between the Trivium (logic, grammar and rhetoric or the Word) and the Quadrivium (astronomy, music, geometry and arithmetic – the structure of the physical World). Although the subjects were strongly classified and therefore clearly identifiable, “the word and the world are integrated through God” (Bernstein, 2000 p.8). Here he identifies a “principle of integration” whereby it is safe to pursue an abstract exploration of the world because the “trivium comes first” (Bernstein, 2000 p.8). Bernstein indicates that since the Trivium is concerned with the construction of the inner consciousness, the inner life is important if the outer world is to be learned about and understood.

At St Saviour’s there was strong classification between the subjects in Key Stages 1 and 2 with weaker classification in the Foundation Stage. Mrs Cook (Reception teacher) expressed the view that the RE materials (in the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE) were too compartmentalised for teaching the younger children; “it’s (the Syllabus) not about spirituality ... we do things like role-play. If you were God and you were creating a butterfly what would you want your butterfly to look like? We’re thinking about God as creator” (Interview, 14.7.11). She went on to comment that (for the younger children) it was easier to bring spirituality into the creation story rather than into a story such as Noah’s Ark, probably preferring to focus on the joys of creation rather than the pain of destruction with young children. Yet the story of Noah’s Ark can be perceived as profoundly spiritual, dealing as it does with the issues of life

and death, sin, judgement and reconciliation. The concern is possibly also to do with where a more “spiritual” conversation may lead with younger children and the best ways to respond to such conversations with age-appropriate language and concepts. Mrs Cook did not want to “make children think what I think” (Interview, 14.7.11). Her intention was to facilitate the development of the children’s thinking skills in order to enable them to reach their own conclusions and have their own ideas. This teacher wanted to give the children an opportunity to explore in the spaces between subjects, enabling the children “to feel spirituality without necessarily saying God is behind it” (Interview, 14.7.11). For her, there was the possibility of experiencing a sense of wonder and spirituality when they were finding and studying bugs and creatures not just during designated RE time.

When she allowed children opportunities to experience “spiritual moments”, Mrs Cook was careful to allow the children freedom of choice in their responses: “It’s tricky to get it morally right. I want to give the children a choice whether or not to believe” (Interview, 14.7.11). She therefore avoided linking God to spirituality. This particular teacher was uncomfortable with the idea of talking directly about God in relation to “spiritual moments”, preferring to allow the children to explore the possibility of God being involved in these “spiritual moments” for themselves, without making categorical statements. Although in a church school context it would be appropriate to discuss God in an open way, the Headteacher (in an interview discussed above) also expressed the view that spirituality is not necessarily always to do with God and religion.

In Key Stage 2, the children were given opportunities to discuss issues (including spiritual issues) within subject space. Mr Wood (Year 6 teacher) commented that Philosophy for Children had the potential to support spiritual development since “It’s beneficial to have (designated) time to discuss” (Interview, 6.4.11). P4C offered a curriculum space in which to

explore the deeper issues of spirituality. Mrs Tate (Year 4 teacher) also spoke about the benefits of having a recognised time for philosophy sessions where it had been timetabled and the children knew it was “okay to talk and think – children and staff know the time is there to do this” (Interview, 6.4.11). Mrs Scott (Year 3 teacher) commented that P4C gave children permission to think and explore because “things aren’t necessarily written down so it’s a safe way to think ... in P4C there’s time to let your mind unfold and express thoughts. It’s okay to have random thoughts. P4C gives an opportunity to go deeper. Such opportunities are limited by time in other lessons” (Interview, 10.3.11). Clearly identifiable times for deeper levels of thinking became more important for teachers and children in ensuring access to spiritual moments as the children progressed through Key Stage 2 and experienced a more structured learning day which provided fewer opportunities for informal spiritual thinking to take place in the spaces between or across the subject areas. P4C offered time and space to think between the strongly classified subjects of Key Stage 2. Such spaces provided an opportunity for adults to wonder with children, rather than giving answers; “for when adults wonder, it allows the children time and space to do likewise” (Csinos, 2011 p.136).

Mrs Jones (Year 4 teacher) observed that creativity was important in the school “and can enable staff and children to talk about their beliefs” (Interview, 20.1.11). Providing opportunities for creativity was linked here to expressions of belief. The process of being creative allowed thinking space for the children to develop their views on matters of belief. In her experience, “The Headteacher’s philosophy is that children should be encouraged to stand up for their beliefs and make their own decisions. He encourages freedom of thinking; thinking ‘outside the box’ and presenting ideas in different ways” (Interview, 20.1.11). The ability to think creatively was viewed as a positive means to develop the confidence to make decisions and to defend chosen beliefs.

According to Mrs Wray (Teaching Assistant), creative opportunities enabled conversations to take place which centred around expectations, aspirations and beliefs as Year 6 pupils thought together about the ways in which their family and their beliefs affected them (Interview, 14.7.11). By providing the space to talk, pupils were enabled to think about who they were and to articulate their thoughts and feelings at a deeper level. Mrs Wray also referred to a spiritual art competition in which younger pupils took part. The task was to articulate as well as draw a prayer to God; “It takes art to a different level. They think about who is God? They talk about the belief that the same God looks after us and is all around us, a sense of all around. They can draw a picture but can also articulate in words” (Interview, 14.7.11). Although the subject (art) was strongly classified, the pupils were given time to express their thoughts verbally concerning areas which could be termed “spiritual” and were not confined to the purely artistic nature of their task. The process of creativity allowed opportunity for thinking space which could be expressed both artistically and verbally.

According to Mrs Tate, “The spiritual dimension is about the journey of children through their education – it comes from within and comes through everything we do in school” (Interview, 6.4.11). Allowing thinking space for the children to consider what their feelings would be and what they would do during the last days of Jesus’ life allowed them to consider a spiritual dimension to life as “they put themselves in the picture. They are encouraged to be self-questioning – they ask questions and talk and become involved in the story” (Interview, 6.4.11). The subject area (RE) was strongly classified but within the time allocated to the subject, space was allowed for thinking and the conditions were provided for spiritual conversation to take place. Mrs Tate commented that the responses of that particular class to this activity showed a greater level of spiritual awareness than the responses of classes in previous years; “This may be linked to the skills being developed through philosophy sessions” (Interview, 6.4.11). Mrs Tate claimed that the provision

of designated identifiable times in which to develop thinking skills (P4C sessions) was enabling children to articulate deeper thoughts and feelings in other curriculum areas where they were also being given spiritual space. Mrs Tate had concluded that the children enjoyed thinking and questioning, “especially open-ended questions where they can express an opinion or view and then explore this together” (Interview, 6.4.11). However, she continued, “some classes experience this more than others. A lot depends on the confidence of the teacher to allow things to develop or go off in a different direction. (Mr Middleton) encourages the idea of taking time to allow the children to succeed and think in different ways” (Interview, 6.4.11). Strong classification of subjects was, therefore, a feature of St Saviour’s school at Key Stage 2 but within the subject areas there were opportunities for children and adults to engage in spiritual thinking time.

Mrs Scott (Year 3 teacher and RE co-ordinator) spoke of the importance of developing thinking skills throughout the school. She considered there were identifiable thinking spaces related specifically to RE and spiritual development. She gave examples of Year 1 pupils who would devise questions to ask God, Year 3 did an activity with colours which included opportunity to think about God and Year 6 wrote poetry with a spiritual dimension (Interview, 10.3.11). Pupils were expected to progress not only in their thinking skills but also in their ability to express spiritual ideas and feelings. The children were being given specific spaces in which to develop skills in asking deeper questions. According to Mrs Scott, further spiritual development would be possible if there was more time. However, the strategy (of having “so much going on”) in her view was being successful as it was “possible to develop the inner child to believe – to find a way everyone can shine and meet their potential” (Interview, 10.3.11). She claimed that by having so many different learning opportunities on offer the majority of children would recognise where their interests and abilities lay. Although it could be hard to keep up with everything, “because things aren’t regimented

there is freedom to explore with support from the Head” (Interview 10.3.11). Within the strongly framed curriculum this teacher expressed the view that there was sufficient flexibility to allow enquiry and discovery in different areas of learning. This structured RE curriculum, suitable for a church school context, contained within it the possibility of creating opportunities for spirituality to be explored in ways that were meaningful and helpful to the children.

The use of controlled situations which allowed children to explore spirituality was extended to an art project (see also section 5.0.3), with a group of able Year 6 pupils. Mr Middleton and Mrs Wray worked with 10 pupils on the concepts behind the project, exploring questions such as: What is important to me? Who is special / important to me? What makes me special? Mrs Wray described the way they looked at expectations, aspirations and beliefs and thought about how their families and beliefs affected them, “how we’re grounded” (Interview, 14.7.11). She also talked about the discussions they had with the children as they considered questions such as, “I wonder what will be or happen if I take that path? I wonder who God is?” (Interview, 14.7.11) They then thought of lots of words “which we mind-mapped and extended” (Interview, 14.7.11). A local artist worked with the children to translate their written ideas into art work in the form of trees. The branches of their trees illustrated the types of people they were; the aspirations or dreams of who they would like to become; something in life such as family or friends. The roots represented their values or beliefs and the things that “grounded” them and helped them develop as people (Interview, 14.7.11).

Figures 13 to 18 show examples of the finished “spiritualitrees” being exhibited in the school entrance. These were examples of display work produced in the “St Saviour’s way”. The trees illustrated collections of words that attempted to summarise the discussions which had preceded this art work. The finished work was designed to convey a sense of children’s

engagement with spiritual language but was unable to fully convey their understanding of the concepts behind the pictures. Tim described the roots of the tree as “what we’re rooted in, the things that make us strong and keep us standing” (Field notes, 4.3.13) while Catherine spoke about being “rooted in God” because “I am a Catholic” (Field notes, 4.3.13). Having been involved in the project in a subsequent year, Mr Wood commented; “Maybe we could have gone a bit deeper. Some of the comments were a bit superficial” (Field notes, 4.3.13). However, he also stated that “when talking about roots one person said their family was most important to them and they couldn’t bear to be away from home even for one night” (Field notes, 4.3.13). Space had been created within the curriculum for children to explore and then illustrate ideas related to their spirituality in a carefully controlled context which shaped the visible outcomes.



Figures 13 and 14



Figures 15 and 16



Figures 17 and 18

6.3.3 Spiritual space

Whilst he stated that he did not believe it was possible to touch on spirituality in an overt way in every area of the curriculum, Mr Middleton also acknowledged that there were occasions when it was appropriate to challenge children to “create a sense of spirituality or use spiritual language” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). The creation of a “spiritual space” was, he stated, an example of this challenge. He described the process whereby a small group of older children worked with a local artist who specialised in using willow and making dens, to create a “spiritual space” or “prayer pod” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). The challenge, he said, was given to both the artist and the children not to make a den but to make a “spiritual space”. The Headteacher described his response to the artist’s question, “What do you mean (by a spiritual space)?” as “no idea, go and ask them (the children)” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). His stated intention here was to challenge the children (and the artist) to find a way to create this space and to understand its meaning (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). Here there was weaker framing of the activity which allowed more space for thinking both in a spiritual sense (allowing opportunity for the children and the artist to explore together what a “spiritual space” might look and feel like) and in a physical sense (creating a tangible space in which to enter for times of reflection, prayer or thinking); where the outcome (other than creating some kind of “den”) was not pre-determined or somehow measurable.

Mr Middleton expressed the view that this “creative sense of what the spiritual might bring to our work, our teaching” should be encouraged in teachers, “open(ing) their minds to how they can teach and what’s possible” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). A tension again appeared between allowing this creativity yet maintaining the discipline and rigour required to deliver outstanding levels of achievement from the majority of pupils since this project involved a small group of older pupils and an outside provider who worked independently from the teaching staff.

Once completed the “prayer pod” or spiritual space (tepee) was sited in the school entrance area for pupils to use. However, interviews with some of the children in Year 4 seemed to indicate confusion about the “spiritual space” and its use. Some of the children were uncertain about its existence whilst others were unsure about its purpose. Two children who had used the tepee expressed quite different reactions to it. Tim said that he occasionally used the tepee to sit in at the end of school when his mother was attending governors meetings. He would sit and think about things, “like what I’ll do when I get home. I feel a bit bored when I’m in there. I’m more excited about what I’m going to do when I get home” (Interview, 11.11.10). Helen, however, said she liked going in the tepee (usually if she was ill or waiting with someone) although sometimes she preferred being outside; “I like going in there with someone else. It feels safe. We can talk about what’s been happening at home, especially with our pets” (Interview, 9.12.10). Both children viewed the tepee as an escape from the usual routine of school. For Tim it felt like an interruption to his activities which he did not particularly enjoy, while for Helen it was a safe space in which to chat to her friends about things that were important to them. Providing such a place was valuable to some children as it gave them space to express their thoughts and feelings without the necessity to “achieve” something.

The Headteacher’s expectation was that all staff should engage children in activities which included the opportunity to think about and articulate a spiritual dimension to their work. This was achieved through building on existing practice rather than expecting staff to completely re-think their approach to teaching. Mr Middleton spoke of ways in which he encouraged teaching staff to “transform” teaching activities from a straightforward task into a task which asked children to articulate what they had done and explain what it meant in a symbolic way; for example to build a building which meant something to them and be able to explain why it was important to them (Interview, 7.10.10). This he described as the “tweak to transform” by which

he attempted to move staff gradually towards the “St Saviour’s way” of delivering the curriculum which included opportunities for children to develop spiritually.

6.3.4 Relational space

According to Bernstein (2000 p.12), framing “regulates relations, within a context” so that the way one speaks establishes relationships between people. Framing is concerned with how meanings are to be put together, “the forms by which they are to be made public, and the nature of the social relationships that go with it” (Bernstein, 2000 p.12). At St Saviour’s a link was established between spirituality and relating to others which Nye, in her definitions of spirituality (discussed in Chapter 2 above), describes as “relational consciousness”. Relationships and being in community are important to life in any school but at St Saviour’s the school’s take care values of relating to one another and discovering “who you are at the deepest level” were connected to spiritual development by the Headteacher; “(our) definition of spirituality is not a church based definition initially it’s about a deep down who we are, who we connect to definition” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). The importance of relationships within the spiritual development of the children was expressed by Mr Wood when he commented that; “Children developing spirituality is to do with the way they talk to each other – it links to their beliefs and values – they can interpret these in their own way” (Interview, 6.4.11). Within the Spiritualitree project, Mrs Wray (Interview, 14.7.11) described the way in which the pupils had been encouraged to talk not just about themselves as individuals but also about themselves as members of the community of St Saviour’s school; considering what a “spiritualitree” for the school might look like.

Children were also encouraged to consider family relations and the influence of family on the way they thought and behaved through the love, discipline and aspirations they had received (Mrs Wray, Interview, 14.7.11). This space

for thinking about the influence of relationships on spirituality was created as part of the Spiritualitree project. It allowed the children to reflect on relationships in a different context, providing the time and space to articulate their thoughts and feelings before expressing them artistically. Mrs Scott also linked this sense of community and belonging with spiritual development when she stated that she preferred being in a church school where the importance of a sense of belonging, awareness of a “higher being” and knowing where the values come from reinforced “who we are and where we come from ... There’s a reason for life. We are responsible and care for one another” (Interview, 10.3.11). There was a sense of being able to offer an explanation for the values that were central to the life of the school as well as a sense of knowing where the authority for those values emanated from. These members of staff were articulating the importance of providing relational space which would enable relationships to grow and develop and allow spiritual realities to be expressed through these opportunities.

The Rector also expressed the importance of relationships; “Who is walking with you, on a personal or organisational level, affects whether spirituality is able to grow or wither” (Interview, 13.9.10). When considering issues related to spirituality, the Rector stated that both children and adults are vulnerable and that it is very important who is walking with you; “school and church are both there, together with family so that children can be nurtured and allowed to grow as part of a group. When youngsters are left on their own their spiritual development is vulnerable and negative peer pressure or issues have a negative effect. Being valued and walking with others has a positive effect on developing spirituality” (Interview, 13.9.10). The Rector was expressing the need for sympathetic guidance to be on offer to the children. In his view, this guidance should emanate from relationships with adults they could trust. Such relationships should have been established and developed over a period of time ideally in each of the contexts the children experienced in school, in church and at home. Csinos (2011 p.31) also talks about the need for adults to

take time to listen to children, to find out their views and the “meaning that they make”; “to gain a sense of how they feel about God, church and the world in which they live.”

The church personnel were viewed as important partners in providing the conditions for appropriate relationships to be fostered which could support the development of children’s spirituality. In this context, spirituality was seen as an important facet of developing healthy and positive relationships within the school community and the church had a crucial role to play in supporting both the staff and the children’s developing spirituality.

6.4 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL AND CHURCH

In their interviews, both the Headteacher and the Rector stressed the importance of St Saviours’ church school status. For the Headteacher, being a Church of England school gave them “permission to consider things around religion, so that prayers and hymns can be part of what is happening but the children still need to think things through for themselves” (Interview, 10.9.10). Being part of the church school structure brought benefits to the children’s spiritual development as the school had a special relationship with its local church and was able to access the church’s resources – both the church building and church personnel. The Rector spent a considerable amount of time in the school – not just leading collective worship but also as the school’s chaplain (available to staff as well as children), as an adult helper on school trips, running an after-school club and meeting regularly with the Headteacher; “The idea of the church being in the school as a church community is developing slowly” (Interview, 13.9.10). The school also used the church for special services (see below) where church and school came together and the church gave books to the children (not necessarily Bibles) to help them on their spiritual journey; “The church is seen to be journeying with the children” (Interview, 13.9.10).

6.4.1 Creating “horizontal solidarities”

According to Bernstein (2000 p.xxiii), conflict between social groups may be reduced by creating a discourse that emphasises what all groups share and their interdependence; “All schools make massive attempts to create horizontal solidarities among their staff and students ...” In church schools these horizontal solidarities centre around church school distinctiveness and Christian values which involves, “a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum and ensuring that a Christian ethos permeates the whole educational experience” (Chadwick, 2012 p.3). Staff at St Saviour’s clearly articulated the difference that teaching in a church school made to everyday school life. This included an acknowledgement by Mrs Jones of the importance of being able to use the local church for services and for curricular activities; the fact that Christian beliefs were talked about clearly in assemblies and that RE had a higher profile than in the community school where she had previously taught (Interview, 20.1.11). This teacher clearly valued the resulting opportunities to discuss spirituality and belief with the children since these were an integral part of the learning process within this church school context.

Mrs Scott’s comments expressed a deeper level of understanding of the importance of the school’s church status when exploring the reason for life. Belonging to a church school, in her view, went beyond the importance of having a sense of belonging to considering the existence of “a higher being” and exploring “who we are and where we come from. There’s a reason for life” (Interview, 10.3.11). For her, the values of the school were clearly Christian and influenced all aspects of school life, including “being responsible and caring for others” (Interview, 10.3.11). Here, the principle of caring and sharing which may be found in all categories of schools, was clearly grounded in the school’s foundation as a church school. Mrs Tate’s comment supported this view; “The church status (of the school) underpins everything. It is driven by Mr Middleton and the involvement of the church (in the life of the school)”

(Interview, 6.4.11). There was an energy involved in maintaining these values and vision that was being provided by both the Headteacher and church personnel.

For Mrs Cook, the difference church school status made was reflected in the underlying premise of the school community being linked to the church. The church was in close physical proximity to the school and both were central to the community; “parents are happy to be in the church, they feel comfortable there. For me there’s a nice feeling going to church” (Interview, 14.7.11). Having close links with the church was perceived as beneficial to relationships between staff, parents and the local community. It provided something extra to pupils’ experiences of learning. They had opportunities to consider Christian beliefs and values but it was “not indoctrination” (Mrs Cook Interview, 14.7.11). Although learning about Christianity was strongly framed there was the flexibility noted above (section 6.3.2) for children to consider their own thoughts and reactions to what they were being taught.

There could be a tension between the horizontal discourse discussed above and the vertical discourse which Bernstein (1999 p.159) describes as a “coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure”. Where horizontal discourse has few systematic organising principles, vertical discourse consists of “specialised symbolic structures of explicit knowledge” (Bernstein, 1999 p.161). Within St Saviour’s there was both tacit and verbalised acknowledgement of the positive influence of the school’s close relationship with the church which was expressed through the shared principles of the horizontal discourse embodied in the Christian values being lived out in the school. The vertical discourse was evident within the structure of the school day (with collective worship as a central feature of the day) and the organisation of the curriculum (with RE being given a high profile). There did not appear to be a tension between the two discourses since the staff interviewed spoke positively of the shared values being rooted in the

Christian message and the learning experiences and spiritual development of the pupils being enhanced by the close relationship with the church. Mrs Scott stated that she preferred teaching in a church school where there was an important sense of belonging, “of knowing where the values come from – who we are and where we come from is reinforced” (Interview, 10.3.11).

6.4.2 Classroom discourse

In Bernstein’s view there is only one discourse in classrooms, not two, since there should be no distinction between “transmission of skills” and “transmission of values” (Bernstein, 2000 p.32). He claims that researchers “talk of education about values on one hand and competence on the other. In my view there are not two discourses, there is only one” (Bernstein, 2000 p.32). At St Saviour’s competence and values were being transmitted at the same time through the “take care” principles discussed earlier in section 6.0 where taking care of self, the world, work and each other encompassed both what was being learnt and the values being promoted within the church school context. The idea of “take care” was extended through a joint church and school initiative to present “take care awards” to children who made a difference by doing something for someone else within the community. Church and school were, therefore, working together to enable the Christian values of the school to impact on the lives of the children in the wider community.

Bernstein (2000 p.36) writes about the religious origins of the pedagogic device and the way in which religion was “the fundamental system for both creating and controlling the unthinkable, the fundamental principle for relating two different worlds, the mundane and the transcendental.” He draws a parallel between the religious and education fields where the Prophet, Priest and Laity of religion may be viewed as the Producers (of knowledge), Reproducers and Acquirers of pedagogy (or education). At St Saviour’s these roles are performed by the Headteacher, staff and children

respectively. The religious framework for church schools attempts to relate the two different worlds of educational and spiritual development by ensuring “the highest standards of teaching and opportunities for learning” whilst “celebrating their distinctive Christian ethos” (Chadwick, 2012 p.2). The role of the local church is vital in enabling the school to pursue this goal. Where there is a positive partnership between the church school and its local church these two worlds can come closer together. According to the Rector, his interaction with the children when visiting the church for curricular purposes had encouraged them “to feel that coming into church is like coming to another part of the school, encouraging school and church to be part of the same community” (Interview, 13.9.10). This illustrated the close connections between school and church in the learning process as well as the spiritual dimensions discussed above.

6.4.3 The sacred and the secular

Bernstein (2000 p.77) questions whether there has been a shrinking of the moral imagination in society such that “Empathy and sympathy can only be offered and received by those who are so licensed to offer and receive.” Consequently these attributes are not expected of everyone. This is contrary to the values operating in church schools where “(The) accent on spiritual and moral flourishing builds social and emotional capital contributing to community and individual well-being and resilience” (Chadwick, 2012 p.9). Bernstein (2000 p.77) identifies the difficulty society has when attempting to talk about shared values from a common perspective as emanating from a weakening of the place of the sacred. The sacred, he claims, is no longer central to society and therefore is not informing “the collective social base of society ...” (Bernstein, 2000 p.77). St Saviour’s, however, in common with other church schools, looked to the church for support in upholding its values and providing the foundation upon which those values were based. Mrs Cook spoke of being encouraged that “the school is run on Christian principles and built up from there” (Interview, 14.7.11). She clearly gained confidence from

knowing that the values of the school were based on the values of Christianity and the church, which gave greater authority to her position as a custodian of moral values as well as an educator; the Reproducer of pedagogy identified by Bernstein (see section 6.4.2).

The Rector expressed the view that part of his contribution to the spiritual development of the children in the school was to help them to understand that “God values each person” (Interview, 13.9.10). If children wanted to explore the idea of a personal spirituality, he continued, this should take place in a safe, non-threatening environment “on their terms – it’s about being valued” (Interview, 13.9.10). The Rector viewed the children as individuals with individual needs and ideas who were at different stages of their spiritual development. For him they were created by God and were therefore precious and valued by God as well as by him, as a Christian. In the Rector’s view, the children’s spiritual growth could be helped “through the building and the ethos” (Interview, 13.9.10). He gave examples of the way in which the building was used for curriculum purposes when classes went to the church to explore symbolism. However, for this Rector the children’s experience of church went further than simply learning about the mechanics of the church building and its contents. He wanted the children to “understand the building and what it means in their lives” (Interview, 13.9.10). The Rector was enabling the children to perceive that the church could be much more than just a church building – it could be a place where relationship was important and where there was space for children and young people to consider the “big questions” of life. The church itself was kept open twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week to allow access to anyone who chose to go there and the Rector stated that he often found youngsters “in the crèche or in the porch. They feel comfortable and welcome and ok to be there” (Interview, 13.9.10). The church therefore provided a safe space for children and young people to explore their thoughts, to have some thinking space in an environment where they felt at ease. Tim (Y3 pupil) commented that being in church helped him

to think, especially when he sat on a pew and looked at a Bible; “It makes me think of lots of questions, like why did people build the church and write the Bible?” (Interview, 11.11.10). His curiosity went beyond the physical appearance of the building to wondering about the motivation of the people who built it and to thinking about reasons for the Bible becoming a written text.

The Rector stated that young servers and choir members would discuss difficult situations and ask questions he felt they would not ask at home, particularly issues around relationship difficulties such as a marriage break-up: “what this means and why it happens. The children feel they have permission to have space to discuss such issues in church” (Interview, 13.9.10). Having been introduced to the church building on a regular basis through school visits and (for some children) personal involvement in the life of the church, some of the children had developed a familiarity with the building and a relationship with church personnel which allowed them to feel safe and comfortable to visit and explore their questions at any time. In these ways the sacred and the secular worlds of the children were being allowed to interact meaningfully, allowing them to explore and develop their spiritual thinking.

6.4.4 Religious language

According to Bernstein (2000 p.83), “The sacredness of the world is guaranteed or should be guaranteed by the appropriate construction of the inner, the truly Christian self.” There is a link between the secular and the sacred which, he claims, is in danger of being lost. Bernstein describes the way in which Christianity appropriated Greek forms of discourse in order to transmit a Christian message (Bernstein, 2000 p.83). Language and communication are central to Christianity since it is an exemplary religion, “the text is complete and perfect in Jesus”, unlike Judaism which is a non-exemplary religion where there is only one perfection, God (Bernstein, 2000

pp.84-85). In Christianity faith cannot be taken for granted, it is subject to doubt, questioning and interrogation, hence the importance of language and communication (Bernstein, 2000 p.85). Bernstein describes the two specialised discourses which existed in the medieval period; one for construction of the inner life and one for construction of the outer life; "The construction of the inner was the guarantee for the construction of the outer" (Bernstein, 2000 p.85). He argues that during the five hundred years since the medieval period the religious foundations of official knowledge have been replaced by a humanising secular principle; "I want to argue that we have, for the first time, a dehumanising principle for the organisation and orientation of official knowledge" (Bernstein, 2000 p.85). The consequence of this, he continues, is that market relevance has become the principle factor in the selection of discourses and that the new concept of knowledge (its relation to those who create and use it) has become a secular one; "Knowledge should flow like money to wherever it can create advantage and profit ... Knowledge is divorced from persons, their commitments, their personal dedications" (Bernstein, 2000 p.86). In Bernstein's view, "Knowledge, after nearly a thousand years, is divorced from inwardness and literally dehumanised. Once knowledge is separated from inwardness, from commitments, from personal dedication, from the deep structure of self, then people may be moved about, substituted for each other and excluded from the market" (Bernstein, 2000 p.86). The result is a fundamental break in the relation between the knower and what is known whereas in the medieval period the two were integrated, "Knowledge was an outer expression of an inner relationship" (Bernstein, 2000 p.86).

The close relationship which can exist between a church school and its local church provides an opportunity to reconnect the sacred and the secular through the language offered by the church which allows both children and adults to explore aspects of learning through the lens of an inner as well as an outer understanding of the knowledge presented. A vital aspect of church

school distinctiveness, as described in the Chadwick Report, is the commitment to “putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum” (Chadwick, 2012 p.3). According to Cooling, “‘Doing God’ in education offers the potential of a positive contribution to promoting human flourishing” (Cooling, 2010 p.66). “God-talk”, he argues, should not be restricted to RE (Cooling, 2010 p.70).

At St Saviour’s, the involvement of the Rector in the everyday life of the school ensured that children and staff had access to the language of the Christian faith not only through collective worship and RE but at other times too. In the Rector’s view, positive religion could provide structure, resource, language and a level of experience “to enable spiritual development to take place. For example when standing in church you realise that people have been here for the last eight hundred years trying to understand God. If you can enable people to unpack ‘religion’ and ‘liturgy’ they can realise in a positive way that it’s healthy and it helps” (Interview, 13.9.10). The Rector saw his role as a bridge which allowed people to make the link between sharing a personal spirituality in an informal way and expressing religious faith in more formal settings; “Very small steps lead to organic growth. For example, the Good Friday happening takes place (in the church) from 10am till 2pm and includes workshops and activities, ending with a service – it’s all part of the same event which is promoted by the school too” (Interview, 13.9.10). Religious language was being made relevant to the everyday lives of adults and children in the community in both the church and the school setting.

The Rector also provided access to the religious language of prayer. He paralleled spiritual development with a developing prayer life in which a “shopping list” approach to prayer becomes a “tsp” (“thanks, sorry, please”) approach, “as spirituality develops so does the depth of prayers” (Interview, 13.9.10). Prayer provided a forum in which to explore relationships (with God

and with other people) and deep questions. The Rector also allowed silent times at the end of the St Saviour's Fun Club which, he stated, gave a "special atmosphere and there's a spiritual energy" which, he had observed, parents (when collecting their children) also wanted to be part of (Interview, 13.9.10). This suggests that both children and adults valued opportunities to share in a silent time of reflection where thoughts could be clarified without the requirement to express them in verbal language.

6.4.5 Special services

Special services in church provided opportunities for school, church and parents to come together to explore as one community the symbolism of the church school partnership and the "sense that we are a family" (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10). These special services (such as the Welcome Service for Reception children and their parents and the Leavers Service for Year 6 children and their parents), according to the Headteacher, "symbolise something on a parent level. I want parents to get a feeling of something from them. The idea of having a service when your children are just in school is to get a feeling that school is more than just academic rigour ... That you are part of something that is more than just send your kids there and hope they do ok" (Interview, 7.10.10). This view was echoed by the Rector who commented that, "At the Reception service parents and children are shown that they are coming into a family – church and school together as the family of God ..." (Interview, 13.9.10). Both were expressing the view that school life should consist of more than learning knowledge; there should be room to consider alternative approaches to life which could include the Christian approach on which both school and church were based. There was an importance placed on the value of relationships which included the school's relationship with the church which parents and their children could also access. Mrs Cook commented that parents supported these services – they believed they were important and this belief was passed on to the children (Interview, 14.7.11). She also commented adversely on the fact that the most recent Welcome

Service had lacked the presence of the Rector (during an interregnum) echoing the Rector's own view that "It needs the ordained person there to open the door" (Interview, 13.9.10). The position of the Rector within the wider community provided legitimacy to the welcome being offered by the church to parents who found themselves in a new situation and a different environment.

For the Rector, the services enabled him to show that the children were being valued: "Each child has been given gifts which should be valued and developed as God-given" (Interview, 13.9.10). Here Christian teaching was providing a context in which the school could operate. The Leavers Service, in the Headteacher's view, was a symbolic ending of the educational process children had experienced at St Saviour's; a reminder to people of "who we've been together, what we've achieved together but also that it's been done in the context of Christianity and a church ethos" (Interview, 7.10.10). Mr Middleton's emphasis was not only on the academic achievements of the children but also that parents should feel "that basic definition of spirituality around your children who are now at the end of their schooling where almost certainly they will have achieved loads and developed loads and you can have that warm spiritual feeling about them" (Interview, 7.10.10). The Headteacher, therefore, attempted to communicate a set of values to parents that conveyed a sense of engagement with spiritual issues as well as academic success. His aim appeared to be to balance the tension between parental expectations of academic achievement and the desire to allow children to develop spiritually within a church school environment.

The Rector also spoke about the emphasis in the Leavers Service being on the child's development, both personal and spiritual, "which they are encouraged to take with them on the next stage of their journey" (Interview, 13.9.10). In preparation for the service, each Year 6 child reflected on his or her own personal story in school. These reflections would then be incorporated in the

Rector's talk during which he would describe the ways in which they had grown and developed since joining the school; "not just physical development but what is inside is also growing and developing" (Interview, 13.9.10). This emphasis on an inner growth and development echoed the views of the Headteacher (above) where he wanted parents not only to acknowledge the academic achievements of their children but also to perceive a deeper level of development which might be termed "spiritual".

The Rector commented that, "Having permission to do these things (engage in prayer, hold special services) is the key to these (spiritual) developments in a church school" (Interview, 13.9.10). In his view, it was possible to nurture and sustain these developments in a church school because they had "permission" to engage in these activities and use the resources offered by the church in an educational context. The school environment provided the educational context and safe space in which to explore deeper questions of life, meaning and relationships, whilst the church provided a language and symbolism which allowed children and adults to verbalise and discuss those questions in a meaningful way. Consequently, both school and church contributed to the achievement of a mutual goal; to enable children to explore their spirituality throughout their seven-year school journey at St Saviour's where "everything doesn't have to be done on day one and your definition of spirituality is not a church based definition. Initially it's about a deep down who we are, who we connect to definition ..." (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10).

CHAPTER 7: CONCLUSION

Achieving high academic standards and providing opportunities to explore spirituality are both central to the mission of church schools. However, as this study has indicated, this creates a “double tension” for church schools as they attempt to meet two very different sets of inspection criteria. This tension was evidenced in the leadership style, language and pedagogy operating within the case study school. Recognising this tension seems to me to be a prerequisite for supporting church schools as they seek to fulfil their mission within the current educational climate. Elbourne (2013 p.253) writes of the importance of “theologizing about Church schools and offering them reflective tools with which to explore their purpose and identity ...” It is my hope that this study will make a positive contribution to that process.

In this concluding chapter several sub-tensions which underpin the thesis can be identified. These include:

- The OFSTED/SIAMS tension.
- The sacred/secular tension.
- The individual/social learning issues.
- The performance/competence tension.
- The nurture/choice tension.

7.0 THE “DOUBLE TENSION” FACING CHURCH SCHOOLS

Questions about children’s spiritual development and its place within the school context have challenged educationalists in the UK ever since the 1944 Education Act replaced the term “religion” with the term “spiritual”. All schools are expected to provide opportunities for children’s spiritual development. For Anglican Church Schools such provision is perceived to be a priority. However, because they are church schools within a state system they are subject to the differing expectations of a dual inspection system. This

creates certain tensions and a degree of complexity for the schools. In addition to the OFSTED inspections (with their accompanying pressure to perform according to the prevailing inspection criteria) experienced by all maintained schools, church schools are also subject to a Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) every three to five years (see section 2.1). The SIAMS criteria focus on the ways in which church schools are fulfilling the injunction that they should be both distinctively Christian and inclusive of all faiths and none (Dearing, 2001).

Church schools are, therefore, expected to meet two very different sets of inspection criteria. My research indicates that these different demands can create particular tensions within church schools where serious attempts are made to meet the requirement to achieve according to OFSTED criteria which take account of measurable performance indicators, whilst also creating “space” for the spiritual in order to meet the stringent requirements of SIAMS on spirituality which is more difficult to measure. This tension is heightened by the perception that the OFSTED report “counts” for more than the SIAMS report in the wider public sphere, despite the centrality of spiritual development to the work of church schools and Christian education. Boyle has commented incisively on the dominant role of numbers and statistics in modern society: “We take our collective pulse 24 hours a day with the use of statistics. We understand life that way, though somehow the more figures we use, the more the great truths seem to slip through our fingers. Despite all that numerical control, we feel as ignorant of the answers to the big questions as ever” (quoted by Ball, 2003 p.215). A focus on statistics can, it seems, deflect us from considering the really important issues of life, such as those related to meaning, relationships and the existence of God; concentrating on the measurable can remove the need to pay attention to the immeasurable.

As discussed in section 2.4.2, research by Troman, Jeffrey and Raggl (2007, pp.549-572) indicates that schools, caught in the high stakes accountability systems that currently operate in England and Wales, focus particularly on the collection of what is measurable. The work of Ball demonstrates the ways in which, in order to do well in these measurable terms, schools adopt forms of performativity that reflect the need to do well in inspections rather than their own deep seated beliefs about teaching. Ball discusses the effects of this performativity on the “soul” of teachers who lose the sense of the authenticity of their work and professional identity. Teachers themselves become “ontologically insecure: unsure whether we are doing enough, doing the right thing, doing as much as others, or as well as others, constantly looking to improve, to be better, to be excellent” (Ball, 2003 p.220). Ontologically insecure school environments, staffed by teachers who feel pressured into performative behaviours to achieve outstanding results, are probably not ideal sites for the development of children’s spirituality. Research by Bryan and Revell (2011 p.413) with student religious education teachers indicated that this group of students “felt that an explicit articulation of their faith was inappropriate within the performative context of school.” According to Bryan and Revell (2011 p.408), the “organic relationship” which exists between the technical act of teaching (meeting externally determined outcomes) and “the disposition that informs *praxis*” (where ‘teaching’ as described by Aristotle “is transformed from a technical act, to ‘education’ which is practice located within the values of a given community”) is “at the heart of the tension between performativity and faith in the contemporary context, ...”

Those committed to church schools would want them to achieve all round academic excellence within the state system, as well as excellence in spiritual education; “The drive for excellence and effectiveness in Church schools is paramount, but not merely because the Government says so. The enabling of every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God, is a sign and

expression of the Kingdom and is at the heart of the Church's distinctive mission" (Chadwick, 2012 p.3). But, as Green (2009 p.83) comments, the emphasis of governmental and parental concern has been with academic standards such that research has focussed "on studying the impact of schools with a Christian ethos on attainment, rather than their spiritual impact". Lumby and English (2010 p.101) also comment that, "standards and performativity-driven pressures change not just what we do as school leaders, but who we are." A hint, perhaps, that the methods used to gain the high standards demanded by the government can affect the very nature of the school leadership role and indeed the values held by those school leaders.

Grace (2002 p.41) notes the tension which can exist in Catholic schools between "the domination of academic success over other goals" including its spiritual mission. He uses Bernstein's concepts of visible and invisible pedagogies to explore the view that in Catholic institutions, in the past: "Scholarly outcomes, knowledge, achievement and skills were not an end in themselves. They were given significance and meaning in a relation to the sacred and in a relation to concepts of service to community and the public good" (Grace, 2002 p.50). As a consequence of the emergence of "a new form of visible pedagogy" (the market), he continues, there is a danger that knowledge could become "dislocated from a relation to the sacred or to the community" and replaced with "a utilitarian, commodified and individualistic relation" (Grace, 2002 p.50). These comments offer a pertinent perspective to the Anglican church school community as it seeks to define its position in a new educational landscape which continues to prize "scholarly outcomes, knowledge, achievement and skills" above the acquisition of virtues and the formation of character.

7.0.1 The importance of leadership style and headteacher influence

My analysis of the language and curriculum of St Saviour's school revealed both positive and negative effects on the potential to create spiritual spaces and to encourage the spiritual development of the children. A level of complexity was illustrated by the leadership style of the Headteacher. His clear definition of spirituality ensured that both staff and pupils knew that matters of faith and spirituality could be discussed openly and that the creation of space for spirituality within the school day was an expectation and available to all members of the school community. However, the Headteacher's use of the language of "permission" also suggested an element of deficit and a desire to control where the "gaps" for spirituality would be located and made manifest each day. There was "permission" to create space despite the OFSTED climate which militates against this but still within the boundaries set by the Headteacher. This control of language appeared to be working effectively in this context but could be at odds with the notion that spirituality is concerned with developing a personal language and that excessive control of language development may hinder the potential for spiritual development.

The pedagogic discourse of the school was often controlled through what had been articulated by Mr Middleton. Control, Bernstein (2000 p.5) claims, establishes "different forms of communication appropriate to different categories." Control determines the type of language that can be used and can determine both what is reproduced and what may change (Bernstein, 2000 p.5). Teachers and teaching assistants were aware of the aphorisms or "memorable statements" that were integral to the pedagogical language of the school. According to one teacher; "People work here because they support the ethos of the school and the leadership – they buy into that. They model what they do on the Head's example" (Mrs Jones, Interview, 27.1.11).

There was a “St Saviour’s way” of doing things which was reflected in this language and provided a unifying force for the whole school community. The key statement about the school, according to the Headteacher, was that “we are a ‘take care’ school”. This emphasis illustrates a potential tension within the prevailing culture where, according to Ball (2007 p.224), “performance has no room for caring”.

The key aphorism “take care” provides an illustration of this complexity operating at different levels within the school community. The phrase “take care” has several different connotations – from showing love and care for others, yourself and the environment, to producing your best work, to a warning to “be careful” in a place of danger. It could be understood at different levels by all members of the school community since it contained layers of meaning and could allow individuals to make up their own layers of meaning; freeing up thinking and playing with language. By building on the simple concept of “take care”, children could become better equipped to cope with the more abstract layers of meaning later.

The Headteacher’s exposition of the values which underpinned his philosophy as a school leader revealed his sense of purpose, “the profound personal development of young people” (Headteacher interview, 7.10.10), and illustrated Lumby and English’s contention that; “Education is a moral enterprise connected to sets of values, and school leaders are the custodians of those values and moral purposes” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.95). His Christian upbringing, in an environment where his parents “had a religion and spirituality which wasn’t pushy – a thoughtful belief and Christianity that challenged you” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10), influenced the Headteacher’s approach to the leadership of a church school. In his own teenage years he had been offered various experiences, “personal development in a religious context: Who are you? Who do you want to be? Is that appropriate? What will you do about that?” (Headteacher interview,

10.9.10), and had transferred these beliefs into the school context putting “profound personal development at the core of what we do” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). A headteacher with a clearly articulated concept of spirituality can, therefore, have a profound effect on the ethos and atmosphere of a school which may then facilitate opportunities for both children and adults to explore spirituality in a safe and secure environment.

7.0.2 The language context

According to Lumby and English (2010 p.124), sacred language can be used in relation to school leadership in order to “inspire, to strengthen and to direct to core values” since “The school leader as teacher implies a reversion to education as a means of developing the whole person, spiritually, aesthetically, intellectually, and physically.” Lumby and English (2010 p.124) quote the Plowden Report which states that children need “to be themselves ... to learn ... to be human beings” and conclude that; “The goal of the leader as steward or as teacher is to enable students ... to live a life they value in the present and in the future. Education is not merely a means of achieving accreditation as a currency for exchange.”

The use of “sacred language” is particularly apt within a church school environment where the language of church is being translated for the children; providing children with a religious language through which to express aspects of their spirituality. Chadwick (2012 p.8) expresses the view that part of the “mission” of church schools is to “share an enduring narrative, a set of values and ways of behaving that stem from and express the Christian foundation of the school, thereby sharing the faith with all members of the school community.” The Rector of St Saviour’s, Reverend Smith, succinctly stated that a church school “should be a place where children can understand the message of the Gospel and how it can be relevant in their lives” (Interview, 13.9.10). In his view, links to the local church provided the school with a physical space in which to explore personal spirituality, a language with

which to ask and explore questions, and opportunities to think: “The children have responded positively. They are searching and asking – hungry for development. They know it’s ok to say that they want to pray for someone or something” (Interview, 13.9.10).

Written documentation indicated that staff had worked to define spirituality at St Saviour’s. They believed that each person was created in God’s image “but with an understanding that this is about the gift of ‘spirit’, in terms of spirituality that defines who we are and who we belong to.” Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) was at the heart of the school’s “personality” since it was the foundation they built on and the “spirit” that drove them: “It has the potential to take us from the ordinary to the extraordinary and is something exemplified not by any one thing, but by the school itself” (Toolkit, p.12).

The Headteacher, Mr Middleton, stated that there was: “A clear definition of spirituality [which] is at the heart of who we are” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). This was reflected in the school’s self-evaluation which clearly articulated a sense of the school as a community in which spirituality was at the core of its meaning and purpose: “St Saviour’s is a community that genuinely believes in the power of spirit, both in terms of the school’s personality and the spirituality which is at its heart, spirituality which sees itself fundamentally as about who we are and who we can become and which is defined within the special God given, Christ defined, bonds we share with those who are most precious to us – here, if anywhere, is the awe and wonder (the **W**orld of **W**onder factor) of [St Saviour’s] Church of England Primary School” (Toolkit, p.9).

Mr Middleton used Hull’s definition of spirituality as a stimulus to experiment with “the concept of challenging children to write using ‘emotional and spiritual language’” (Headteacher paper, p.1). He claimed that the use of such language “encouraged pupils to tap into their deeper feelings” and release

the spiritual potential referred to in Hull's account. He also associated spirituality with the development of an understanding of "who we are at our deepest level" and our relationships with those who mean the most to us (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10); reflecting Nye's definition of spirituality expressed through "relational consciousness" and the "everydayness" of McCreery's view on spirituality.

The language at St Saviour's, therefore, had been established by the vision of the Headteacher and was clearly communicated at all levels between the Headteacher, staff and pupils. According to Bernstein (2000 p.5), "control" establishes the language to be used whilst "power" establishes who speaks to whom. At St Saviour's, the language of the Headteacher controlled the language the teachers used to the children concerning what the school was about. The Head's aphorisms recurred within the pedagogical discourse of the school creating a distinctive language environment and a mixture of ideas which was sometimes difficult to decode. For example, in the school's Active Curriculum document the Headteacher articulated that his aim was to "liberate the creative heart of the school" in a "well considered, disciplined and qualitative way"; which raises the question of whether creativity can always be "liberated" in a "disciplined way"? There was a calm and courteous atmosphere within the school but the definition of creativity on which this atmosphere was based did not sit easily with definitions of spirituality which ask deep and unsettling questions that do not always produce neat, disciplined answers. There was a contrast here between the Headteacher's drive to control the pedagogy and his desire to allow the freedom to explore spirituality when staff were given permission to "stop and be creative".

The leadership of Mr Middleton, provided a clearly articulated notion of spirituality and a certainty of approach which may be termed the "St Saviour's way". The common language of the school community included aphorisms such as "take care" and "profound personal development" (discussed in

section 6.0). Exploring “who we are at our deepest level” was, according to the Headteacher, the core principle of the school and was partly delivered through a “take care” philosophy. Mr Middleton claimed that the more we understand who we are and who others are through our relationships and our empathy with one another, the more chance we have of developing spiritually. He continued: “I mean spirituality for us is about who we are at our deepest level and that sense of feeling we have for those who are most important to us ... Actually when we take care of each other, we take care of the world we give ourselves the opportunity to find more of that and become closer to people and things that are important and of course in a church school context, closer to God if that’s where you choose to go but that’s not our purpose, that’s just a question we might ask, another level of possibility that we might offer to a child” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Here the Headteacher is attempting to resolve the tension between operating within the controlled framework of a Christian ethos and providing opportunities to explore questions of faith and, therefore, doubt enabling the church school to, “Nourish those of the faith; Encourage those of other faiths; Challenge those who have no faith” (Dearing, 2001 p.4).

The language context of a school expresses the commonly held beliefs and values of the school community and can convey different levels of meaning to different members of that community. Developing a common understanding of, approach to and language concerning spirituality contributes, it appears from this case study, to the development of a learning environment in which relating to the self, to other people, to the environment and to the divine is integral to the life of the school.

7.0.3 The importance of pedagogy in contributing to spiritual development

According to Alexander (2008 p.4), pedagogy “is the act of teaching together with the ideas, values and beliefs by which that act is informed, sustained and justified ...” Values and beliefs (whether of wider society, the institution or the individual teacher) cannot, therefore, be separated from the activity of teaching in the classroom. Alexander writes of the importance of “talk” within the classroom – talk which allows “meanings” to be “constructed and exchanged” (Alexander, 2008 p.96) and which does not just communicate something from one person to another, “it also reflects and defines human relations” (Alexander, 2008 p.100). Therefore, he continues, within teaching “ideas about how people should relate to one another are paramount” (Alexander, 2008 p.100). Alexander (2000 p.412) also identifies “time” as a value in education “as well as a measure of it” where teachers often gave children time to recall “but less commonly gave them time to think” (Alexander, 2008 p.105). The goal within the classroom, he continues, is usually to ensure that “time assigned and time successfully spent on worthwhile tasks, coincide as closely as possible” (Alexander, 2000 p.413). Time is not, therefore, to be “wasted”; students in this context, maintains Alexander (2000 p.426), must be kept busy and must be convinced that the “compulsory activities are worthwhile after all and that the things they are busy at are not just ‘busy work’” (quoting Philip Jackson).

At St Saviour’s, staff were given time (permission) to “stop and think”, to be creative, “to explore who we are at our deepest level” (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10) and having a clearly articulated definition of spirituality (based on Hull and linked to Nye and McCreery) led to certain pedagogical outcomes, including the creation of “children’s space” where children and

adults can “contest understandings, values, practices and knowledges” (Moss and Petrie, 2002 p.9):

- I. Within the curriculum a stepped approach to learning ensured that pupils gained the basics of language and literacy before being given access to specific opportunities to engage with spirituality in creative writing activities. According to the Headteacher (Field notes, 15.4.10), literacy should go further than developing literacy skills, although he did acknowledge how important they are. He was keen to encourage self-belief and confidence in all pupils and challenged all the children to extend their thinking and writing. He acknowledged that he was using creative writing to improve the pupils’ SATs levels but for him the real “driver” was the development of spirituality and the use of spiritual and emotional language. In his view imagery and symbolism needed to be developed in order to move on to a more “spiritual” level.
- II. The introduction of P4C provided space for children to engage in a community of enquiry where potentially spiritual questions could be explored by all children regardless of their ability to express their ideas in writing. Mrs Jones (Class 4 teacher involved in P4C sessions) in an interview (20.1.11), held the view that the spiritual dimension of education could be enhanced by P4C and she had become more interested in spirituality herself since being involved in P4C sessions. She had observed the children expressing “big” questions in general conversation, using skills she had not seen in this age group before; “it’s affecting the way they think.” She had also noticed that less “academic” children were “coming out with ‘strong’ thoughts” and she had seen different aspects to the children which she may not have seen otherwise. These outcomes were reflected in the outstanding inspection grades achieved by the school.

The pedagogy at St Saviour's ensured that skills were acquired through a step on step approach which reflected Bernstein's (2000 p.57) performance model of pedagogic practice. The performance model emphasises what the learner cannot do or does not know. The learner is therefore required to receive the "correct" text from the transmitter or teacher. The sense of deficit places emphasis on the text to be acquired and on the transmitter of this knowledge, creating an ordered performance model whereby the learner cannot proceed to "higher" stages of learning until the preliminary steps of appropriate knowledge gained or skills acquired are in place (Bernstein, 2000 p.57). At St Saviour's, therefore, literacy skills were required before the children were expected to be able to express their thoughts, ideas and emotions through writing; the building blocks of learning were expected to be in place before a higher spiritual awareness could be expressed. Learners were taught the skills and knowledge they did not know, according to their performance in relation to the levels prescribed by the National Curriculum. This approach impacted on the organisation of the classroom and the language of learning. These approaches to the teaching of writing and the performance of an event followed the stages identified by Piaget where children first learned skills (how to "do") in an individualistic, concrete way before they were enabled to express "spiritual" ideas. This performance model revealed a desire for high attainment and outcomes which led to a controlling of the pedagogy.

However, practice at St Saviour's also embraced Bernstein's competence model where the emphasis is placed on empowerment – what you can do or know. These are "practical accomplishments" which are creative and "tacitly acquired in informal interactions" (Bernstein, 2000 p.4). Within the competence model (in contrast to the performance model) the learner discovers what they already know and think and is provided with the opportunity to develop this knowledge further. This approach to learning was illustrated at St Saviour's through the introduction of Philosophy for Children

(P4C) where the children (and their teacher) explored a stimulus together by expressing their initial ideas to each other, trying out new ideas with each other and thereby learning together. The community of enquiry approach employed within P4C reflected the view of Vygotsky that children learn first in community. Their learning was then internalised and they proceeded to more individualised forms of learning (Vygotsky, 1986 p.36). The competence model thus illustrates the desire which also existed whereby children could be allowed space to grow and develop spiritually through a freeing up of the pedagogy.

These contrasting theories of learning introduced another layer in the tensions already noted which also had the potential to be creative and productive. The individualistic approach to learning encouraged by the performance model enabled children to develop and express a deep awareness of self. One of the central concepts articulated by the Headteacher was that children should be given opportunities to discover who they are “at their deepest level” and that in making such discoveries they should also be given opportunities to communicate what they found through writing. Alongside this individualistic approach to learning was the social model of learning demonstrated through competence pedagogy where children (and teachers) learned alongside one another, exploring concepts and ideas together. The emphasis was on talking and listening, on trying out ideas rather than on producing a written piece. At the end of a P4C session all participants in the discussion were given an opportunity to speak their “final thoughts” on the original question under discussion. Each child expressed their ideas and questions in a safe environment knowing those ideas were being valued and listened to. Each child was a member of a community of enquiry which provided an opportunity for them to be, in the words of Moss and Petrie (2002 p.101), “co-constructors of knowledge, identity and culture, constantly making meaning of their lives and the world in which they live.” Whilst it is clearly important to provide children with the literacy skills to

express their deepest thoughts and feelings, they should also be enabled to experience story, creativity and spirituality even where these skills are less well developed.

7.0.4 The church school context

According to Dearing (2001 p.3), since the state is now a “willing provider” of education the purpose of the Church in education is “not simply to provide the basic education needed for human dignity.” Rather, “That purpose is to offer a spiritual dimension to the lives of young people, within the traditions of the Church of England, in an increasingly secular world.” This emphasis on the spiritual dimension of life is reiterated in the Chadwick Report of 2012 where church school distinctiveness “must include a wholehearted commitment to putting faith and spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum and ensuring that a Christian ethos permeates the whole educational experience” (Chadwick, 2012 p.3). Therefore, within a church school there is an expectation that discourse will be strongly framed within the Christian tradition but also an expectation that questions of faith (and therefore doubt) and doctrine will be opened up and explored within the curriculum.

Brown (2013 p.162) asserts that if a church school is to be a safe school it should allow for “a vigorous and adventurous religious education and experimental forms of collective worship.” In his view, if the school shows clear evidence of having a Christian character, “then there will be a natural springboard to explore new and exciting ways of teaching religious education and engaging in worship” (Brown, 2013 p.162). The firm Christian foundation of a church school should, Brown (2013 p.163) continues, allow for this “radical exploration of religious education, worship and a deeper awareness of the spiritual” where “religious belief and practice can be understood in the context of everyday life.” Worsley (2013a p.265) likens the church school to a family where the “emergent child” has the “freedom to think within the

cultural context of the family” thus allowing “new learning to take place.” The role of the Anglican church school is, according to Brown (2013 p.165), to provide opportunities for all children, regardless of their religion or worldview, to “respond to the moment of revelation and imagination”, offering children “the time to turn aside and reflect on their experience.” As Lumby and English (2010 p.92) state; “There is a difference between a religious experience that opens a human being to the mysteries of the universe and one which erects dogma in the name of the infinite.”

As a church school, collective worship and Religious Education (RE) occupied a central position in the everyday life of St Saviour’s. Staff viewed collective worship as an important time for encouraging children’s spiritual development. Mrs Jones (Y4 teacher) commented (Interview, 27.1.11) that the spiritual dimension of education “links into collective worship” while Mr Wood (Deputy Head) stated (Interview, 6.4.11) that spiritual development was encouraged “mainly through collective worship.” During interviews some of the children spoke about assemblies providing opportunities for thinking time and for asking questions. Sometimes these questions could be asked out loud within the worship time, at other times the children asked questions in their own minds about the story they had listened to. Mrs Scott (Year 3 teacher and RE co-ordinator) spoke in an interview (10.3.11) of the importance of developing thinking skills throughout the school. She considered that there were identifiable thinking spaces related specifically to RE and spiritual development. She gave examples of Year 1 pupils who would devise questions to ask God, Year 3 did an activity with colours which included opportunity to think about God and Year 6 wrote poetry with a spiritual dimension (Interview, 10.3.11). Pupils were expected to progress not only in their thinking skills but also in their ability to express spiritual ideas and feelings. These formal and informal settings provided opportunities for the “everyday spirituality” explored in the research of Nye and McCreery.

Drawing on research in Australian Catholic schools, Hyde (2008 p.241) comments that children chose from the various frameworks of meaning presented by their society, the ones that “offered personal significance for them” and that “The children appeared to accept each other’s view because of the freedom each felt to enter the space between the frameworks of meaning in order to locate that which was personally relevant.” Such space can, he continues, create a tension between the meaning acquired from a personal life experience and “the authoritative wisdom of the culture or presented worldview” (Hyde, 2008 p.241). However, Hyde quotes Webster when he argues that “a person’s spirituality emerges in this space as the result of the encounter between personal meaning and the frameworks provided by society” (Hyde, 2008 p.241). The children in this research drew upon the Christian tradition, among many sources of meaning, as they entered “the space between the frameworks” to create personal meaning and, according to Hyde (2008 p.242); “In this act of meaning making – in the space of encounter between the Christian tradition and their own choosing of alternative frameworks of meaning – the children were giving expression to their spirituality.” According to Hyde (2008 p.243) one of the implications of these findings for religious education is that “if it is to nurture the spirituality of students, (religious education) needs to take account of, and begin with, the worldviews and personal meaning of the students themselves.” Children’s wondering, he continues, can “act as a tool for creating and expressing their spirituality” or “*weaving the threads of meaning*” (Hyde, 2008 p.244). Whilst stating that religious education in faith schools can use this as a means by which to nurture spirituality, Hyde (2008 p.244) also recognises that this could present a challenge “in that the process ought to begin with the created worldviews of the students themselves, and to dialogue with these, rather than beginning with the authoritative wisdom of the faith tradition.” At St Saviour’s, according to Mrs Scott (RE co-ordinator), the religious education encouraged by the Headteacher took as its starting point examples of faith

and practice (in Christian and other faith traditions) which the children were then encouraged to relate to their own experiences; “it’s not threatening so you can do it” (Interview, 10.3.11).

The provision of a Christian framework within which children can explore questions of meaning and relationship and ultimately discover and express their own spirituality and response to such questions is, it seems to me, a fundamental cornerstone of what it means to offer a distinctively Christian education within Anglican church schools. However, there also needs to be a continued commitment to respecting the fact that not all children will accept the Christian view of the world which they encounter in a church school; that exploring these questions honestly can produce doubt as well as faith at different times and to a different extent even in the same person.

7.1 HOW CAN CHURCH SCHOOLS SUSTAIN THEIR COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPING CHILDREN’S SPIRITUALITY?

According to Pring (2005, p.52), “faith schools” (by which he seems to include Anglican church schools) should not be satisfied with the “normal performance criteria of effective schooling” since the justification for their existence lies in “the nurturing of a moral form of life, not simply in academic attainment.” Brown (2013 p.157) goes a step further in stating that in church schools concern for all children is not simply an educational response but a theological response and this, he claims, is the “essential difference between a good Church school and a good community school.” In many church schools there is, Brown (2013 pp.157-158) continues, “a recognition of the mysterious nature of God present in collective worship, in the school Eucharist and in the importance for the school of the spiritual life of its children.” The recognition that there may be an unseen and mysterious side to life which can be talked about and explored offers Anglican church schools the opportunity to engage children at a deeper level.

7.1.1 Responding to the child

Egan (1997 p.16) outlines Rousseau's conception of education which emphasises the distinctive forms of learning engaged by different learners, the encouragement of active rather than passive learning and the insistence that "a student's own discovery is more effective than a tutor's 'words, words, words'." Providing a "safe place" in which to explore and make such discoveries should be at the centre of the church school's mission "where fears of the views of others are set to one side and the safety of the 'tent' offers children the freedom to explore and engage with religion (and spirituality)" (Brown, 2013 p.159).

According to Miller (2009 p.2705), students in the classroom are "not welcomed wholly to exist" because they have not been heard "into existence." Miller (2009 p.2705) quotes Mary Rose O'Reilly (1998) who states that it is possible to "listen someone into existence, encourage a stronger self to emerge or a new talent to emerge. Good teachers listen this way ... Teaching has much in common with the ancient art of spiritual guidance." However, Miller (2009 p.2705) continues, students are usually required to leave their "inner life" (questions about the meaning of life, death of loved ones, questions of justice) behind when they enter school: "The heart of living, as it is being experienced right now, in the here and now, is not discussed. In that we ask students to leave much of their awakening selves behind, it hardly seems surprising that often students are not wholly present in class. The classroom chair has been occupied, but the spirit lives elsewhere; a disintegrated presence is created." In Miller's (2009 p.2706) view, therefore, "the spirit" should be welcomed into the school setting and the classroom should be recognised as "spiritual space."

For the Headteacher at St Saviour's school, defining spirituality included the idea of "spiriter", of "breathing life into the school and its curriculum" through creativity, exploring feelings and emotions, recognising that everyone

can achieve but also that mistakes will be made along the way which can be put right (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Spirituality in this context was concerned with exploring “who we are at our deepest level” and did not have to take place solely through church or religion but was allowed for within the school setting (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10). Children were challenged to experience and consider where their spiritual place is, “who is your spiritual person?”, “where is love in this?” and encouraged to “figure it out” for themselves (Headteacher interview, 10.9.10).

According to Csinos (2008 p.21) children need spaces that “speak of the spiritual”; “sacred spaces and places in which children are included and given opportunities to experience God ...” In his view there are four types of human spirituality (“spiritual styles”) – head (rationalism), heart (pietism), mystic (quietism) and kingdom (encratism) (Csinos, 2008 p.46) – each of which should be considered when catering for the spiritual needs of children: “Only when an environment is created that nurtures and speaks to the inquisitiveness of head spirituality, the emotive nature of heart spirituality, the wonder and astonishment of mystic spirituality, and the crusade against injustice that is kingdom spirituality” can it be said that all children are being included (Csinos, 2008 p.89). The nurturing of a healthy spirituality will be achieved, Csinos (2010 p.4) maintains, when there is a “balanced tension” between all four styles.” In providing opportunities for children to engage spiritually whatever their preferred “spiritual style”, church schools are engaged in fulfilling Chadwick’s (2012 p.3) injunction “to meet the needs and expectations of all children in the Church school system.”

In Schoonmaker’s (2009 p.2714) opinion, “the classroom *is* a spiritual space” since “Education in the deepest, most inclusive sense is a spiritual endeavour, and human beings are inherently spiritual.” Classrooms, Schoonmaker (2009 p.2714) continues, are spiritual spaces “whether or not we intend them to be or recognise that they are. Here spirituality is defined as “a way of being that

includes the capacity of humans to see beyond ourselves, to become more than we are, to see mystery and wonder in the world around them, and to experience private and collective moments of awe, wonder, and transcendence” (Schoonmaker, 2009 p.2714). Schoonmaker (2009 p.2717), however, identifies the problem that use of the terms “learning” and “knowing” in schools has been limited to “mental operations” and “behavioural expectations” that can be easily observed and assessed thus limiting the use of these terms in relation to “a way of being or an indwelling of transcendence.” Hence, the possibilities of discovering and coming to know the “more-than-ness” of being human are often missed “not because they are absent, nor necessarily because they are considered unimportant, but because there is rarely time to consider them at all” (Schoonmaker, 2009 p.2717). The school curriculum, Schoonmaker (2009 p.2717) continues, is focused on “more measurable outcomes than *being*” and the challenge for teachers is to “see the spirituality inherent in the acts of learning, in coming to know, and in being in the classroom...”

For teachers at St Saviour’s school, there was an expectation that children would have opportunities to explore spirituality through the curriculum and through the centrality of collective worship and RE within the school (see sections 5.5.1 and 5.0.2). At St Saviour’s there were examples of the “spaces” (see section 6.3) that Schoonmaker (2009 p.2722) refers to in the following questions: “What space is there in the classroom for beauty and mystery? What space for art, music, poetry, and dance? What space to talk about religious observance and honour religious celebrations? ... What opportunity does the classroom offer for anticipation, wonder, joy, caring relationships?” Such opportunities required the engaging of emotions, the articulation of speculation (responding to “what if” questions) and reflection (“what happened?” in symbolic moments, valuing those moments and going beyond their face value to consider their meaning) and considering moral and ethical issues. This requires children talking and speculating in community; being

given time to think. However, the current emphasis on the need for pace in lessons and the coverage of content rather than depth of thinking militates against this. Alexander (2008 p.106) contrasts the kind of talk generally experienced in an English classroom with that of a Russian classroom where “talk is more likely to probe children’s thinking ...” Typically, he claims, in an English classroom the children will be engaged in “competitive bidding (for the teacher’s attention) and the gamesmanship of ‘guess what teacher is thinking’, and above all searching for the ‘right’ answer” (Alexander, 2008 p.106). In the Russian classroom, however, the teacher “constructs a sequence of much more sustained exchanges with a smaller number” and there is “time to do more than parrot the expected answer ...” (Alexander, 2008 p.106).

7.1.2 Creating time and space for teachers

Le Cornu and Peters (2005 p.53) describe the classroom as a “learning community” in which “teachers and students learnt together with a blurring of boundaries around the roles of teacher and learner.” Thinking, talking and collaborating are, they maintain, essential for the development of such a learning community where reflective thinking can take place (Le Cornu and Peters, 2005 p.55). Dewey (1933 pp.30-31) states that for reflectivity to take place there must be open-mindedness, whole-heartedness and responsibility on the part of the teacher. Such reflection can only take place, according to Le Cornu and Peters (2005 p.57) when there is a willingness to listen so that comments and questions can “flow from what preceded” and where there is time and a safe space for members of the learning community to “get in touch with their own thinking” thus enabling them to share what they were thinking, “using talk in an exploratory and tentative way.” Therefore, they conclude that a reflective teacher is one who is able to engage in reflective processes for themselves and engage students in reflective processes; “It is about a way of being in the classroom and developing that way of being in the

students”, developing an “inquiry stance” in themselves and in their students (Le Cornu and Peters, 2005 p.59).

Huebner (1993 p.414) states that “Everything that is done in schools, ... , is already infused with the spiritual. All activity in school has moral consequences.” As such, he maintains, spiritual and moral values should not require to be taught, as something outside the normal curriculum, rather they should be recognisable within the very fabric and life of the school if the school is a place “where the moral and spiritual life is lived with any kind of intentionality” (Huebner, 1993 p.415). However, he continues, if teachers are to be aware of the spiritual in education they must “maintain some form of spiritual discipline” (Huebner, 1993 p.415). Huebner (1993 p.415) identifies two kinds of spiritual discipline – firstly the need to be “in the company of co-journeymen” and secondly to develop “an imagination that has room for the spiritual.” At St Saviour’s school, Mrs Wray (Teaching Assistant) commented that she had “been on a journey myself in terms of my beliefs and values since coming to St Saviour’s ten years ago” (Interview, 14.7.11) and there was a sense amongst staff that everyone there supported the ethos of the school where “spirituality is encouraged through everything ... it’s in the approach to things not just what is being taught” (Mrs Jones, Interview, 27.1.11).

Recognising the spiritual in the everyday is, for Huebner (1993 p.415), essential since there are “spiritual possibilities hidden behind all of the forms and events that are taken for granted.” For Bruner (1986 p.125) it is by means of the imagination that “we create possible worlds and go beyond the immediately referential.” Unless teachers recognise that teaching is part of their own spiritual journey, Huebner (1993 p.413) maintains, they will lose hope in an educational landscape where it can be difficult to make room for the spiritual and suggest “other ways of thinking about evaluation.” Miller (2009 p.2706) suggests that “recognising the spiritual reality in the classroom and allowing it into the professional awareness of the teacher urges teachers

to use the fullness of themselves, their wisdom, and often some of their strongest motives.” According to Miller (2009 pp.2706-2707), respecting the spiritual space of the classroom does not involve teachers in conveying personal views about religion, rather, “spiritual awareness in the classroom starts with an augmented perceptual space within the teacher which then can sustain the spiritual possibility within the classroom. The way into spiritual awareness is to be present and listen.” Miller and Athan (2007 p.17) use the term “Spiritual Awareness Pedagogy (SAP)” to describe their belief that; “From a spiritual perspective, every dimension of classroom pedagogy is part of spiritual reality; and every moment in class, a spiritual opportunity.” This approach emphasises “collective use of the classroom as an inherently spiritual space” where the spiritual path of the whole learning group (including the teacher) is supported (Miller and Athan, 2007 p.18).

Alexander and Carr (2006 p.84) maintain that teachers “also bring their spiritual lives into the classroom” and that to assume that in order to operate in a “more professionally responsible way teachers need to leave their most cherished beliefs and values at the classroom door” has the effect of “creating divided pedagogical selves who are unable to invest the task of teaching with whole hearts and souls.” Thus, Alexander and Carr (2006 p.84) also claim that in order to “engage students as spiritual beings, teachers must be in a position to draw on and nurture their own spiritualities.” Teachers, therefore, as well as knowing the values of the school in which they teach must also develop an awareness of their own beliefs, values and spirituality if they are to avoid a situation described by Dewey (1933 p.32) where “persons continue to accept beliefs whose logical consequences they refuse to acknowledge.”

7.1.3 Developing leadership

The development of a climate in which teachers and children know that there is the kind of time and space available to explore spirituality and reflect on learning experiences requires the establishment of leadership patterns that welcome and encourage thinking space within the curriculum as part of the everyday fabric of the school.

Lumby and English (2010 p.123) explore the concept of the leader as steward who “stands in humility, recognising that the obligation is to care for that which has worth at least as great as her or himself, and reflects a continuity stretching back and forwards in time.” In the school context, they continue, the steward recognises “the value of every student and the right of that child or young person to be seen as worthy of care and support as any other” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.123). Children are not, therefore, in their view to be seen simply as “potential achievers of grades, contributors to test scores or fodder to feed the economy” rather the steward sees this achievement as part of “a holistic picture of an individual’s worth, and not as the primary value” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.123). At St Saviour’s school the Headteacher maintained that his aim was to create a “climate of participation for all” within a “school of spirit” where each child was “spirited” in the sense of having “life breathed into them” (Headteacher interview, 1.7.10). By getting to know the children and providing them with different opportunities, he continued, they could discover what they were good at and liked to do – “provide, identify, provide” rather than “test and define” (Headteacher interview, 1.7.10).

According to Lumby and English (2010 p.95), education is a “moral enterprise connected to sets of values, and school leaders are the custodians of those values and moral purposes.” The secular nature of our education system has, in their view, prevented its leadership from perceiving that what school

leaders do “is akin to what religious leaders do ...” since “Education is about transformation, a deep transformation that abolishes narrow categories and shallow distinctions” (Lumby and English, 2010 p.95). Lumby and English (2010 p.94) use the example of Robert Greenleaf to illustrate the concept of “servant leadership” as modelled by Jesus, stating that a servant leader is not a service provider “but a person who is deeply committed to ‘the growth of self, other people, institutions and communities’” (quoting Frick). They conclude that “A leader is first and foremost *a seeker*, not an achiever” (Lumby and English, 2010 pp.94-95). Such leadership, according to Cottrell (2008 p.75), requires people who will reflect deeply “on your own motivations, on your own passions, on the examples of others who have led you and on a steady and regular resetting of the compass of your vision through contemplation and reflection.” Those who see the value of such space for reflection for themselves are likely to value it for others and will create an environment where such opportunities are available to all.

7.1.4 Support of the Diocese and the National Society

Grace (2002 p.236) writes of the need for the leaders of Catholic schools to develop their “spiritual capital”. He defines such capital as “*resources of faith and values derived from commitment to a religious tradition*” and claims that spiritual capital “can be a source of empowerment because it provides a transcendent impulse which can guide judgement and action in the mundane world” (Grace, 2002 p.236). Such leaders will, he continues, recognise that “academic success and empowerment are intended to be used in the service of others” (Grace, 2002 p.237). Being articulate about the “spiritual purposes of Catholic schooling”, he maintains, will ensure that the nurture of spirituality is given top priority in the school (Grace, 2002 p.237). Cooling (2013 p.169) highlights recent research which indicates a similar lack of clarity amongst Anglican church school headteachers in their understanding of the distinctiveness of church schools where “generally headteachers were unable to distinguish the mission of their schools from the dominant secular

educational discourse.” However, he continues, the National College for School Leadership in 2011 viewed the role of the headteacher in a church school as “the interpreter of faith for the community” (Cooling, 2013 p.169).

There is, therefore, a need for church school leaders to be provided with opportunities to develop a reflective theology that will inform both their thinking and their practice. Brown (2013 p157) states that there is a constant challenge to the Church of England’s Board of Education and the National Society “to express its mission in clear theological terms and to present headteachers with a clear and accessible theology.” Elbourne (2013 p.248) attempts to “explore more deeply what might be the characteristic essence of being a Church school in the current situation” using the concepts of “Rootedness, Belonging and Narrative” to go beyond the mantra of “distinctiveness” and “inclusivity” highlighted by Dearing (2001). According to Elbourne (2013 p.253), church schools are “part of what the Church *is* not just one of the projects it *does*” and people should be able to glimpse something of what the whole church is about “by the narrative / liturgy lived out by Church schools day by day.”

Hart (2003 p.222 and p.229) writes of the importance of meeting with others to discuss “the spiritual” since “Honest and open conversation about the meaning of life and the nature of the spirit can be like fresh air.” Dioceses should look at ways of extending their provision of such opportunities for church school leaders and their staff to engage in recognising and developing spiritual awareness, to participate in opportunities for reflection within training events and to take part in spiritual “retreat”.

Dioceses are beginning to explore ways in which they can support schools to introduce the *What if? Learning* (WIL) approach to pedagogy which “seeks to be distinctively Christian by drawing on an anthropological vision that is faithful to the Christian tradition and then applying that to classroom pedagogy across the curriculum” (Cooling, 2013 p.178). The stated purpose of

WIL is to support teachers “in designing teaching and learning experiences for the classroom that are consistent with, faithful to and supportive of the school’s Christian character” (Cooling, 2013 p.183). Cooling (2013 p.182) claims that the WIL pedagogy focuses on character development and that the virtues developed “should not just be moral, ... but also spiritual and intellectual.” In addition, pupils need to be taught “the Christian beliefs and practices that underpin the pedagogical experiences that they are having” (Cooling, 2013 p.183).

Smith (2011 pp.43-60), another founder of the WIL approach, explores a Christian practice of reading which encourages the development of the virtue of humility in the reader who listens “charitably” to the text. Smith (2011 p.43) discusses the idea of “spiritually engaged reading” which includes the development of practices “that seek to move the reader beyond mere decoding of information and to slow and enhance his or her ingestion of words with a view to personal transformation.” He contrasts reading in which a text is “used” (a means of gaining information or distraction) and reading in which a text is “received” (“approached with vulnerability to being changed by it”) (Smith, 2011 p.44). Using the latter approach, the reader will revisit a text multiple times, “expecting it to make moral demands” and “willing to submit and be changed” (Smith, 2011 p.44).

Dioceses and The National Society, therefore, have a vital role to play in ensuring that teachers and leaders in Anglican church schools have opportunities to engage with their own spirituality; to develop a reflective theology which provides a greater understanding of the particular role that a church school can have in nurturing children’s spirituality; to develop a pedagogy which encourages a “community of enquiry” as part of its strategy and to ensure that more classrooms become “safe spaces” in which children can explore the questions that are so important to them.

7.1.5 Implications of the study

Church schools, therefore, should be encouraged to sustain their commitment to developing children's spirituality. Children require "safe spaces" in which to explore and discover; classrooms which are considered to be a "spiritual space" and where the spirituality inherent in "knowing" and "learning" is recognised and celebrated. Teachers should be encouraged to recognise their own spirituality and develop a spiritually aware pedagogy (see above, Miller and Athan). Leaders and teachers in church schools need to develop an awareness that it is possible to recognise the spiritual in the everyday; that being present and listening can present opportunities for spiritual development and growth. Dioceses and the National Society should be looking for ways in which to enhance and extend the work they already do in supporting staff in church schools to develop an appropriate "reflective theology" that encourages a meaningful engagement with spirituality in the educational context.

Green (2009 p.83) comments, as noted above, that the emphasis of governmental and parental concern has been with academic standards such that research has focussed "on studying the impact of schools with a Christian ethos on attainment, rather than their spiritual impact". Since research by Schagen and Schagen (2005 p.210) into the performance of faith schools failed to produce conclusive evidence that faith schools were more successful than other schools in value-added terms it could be argued that church schools should be justifying their existence by highlighting aspects of school life other than academic achievement, such as "the capacity to choose a life worth living in the context of some vision of the good" where an "important consequence of spiritual formation is that what persons believe and do should matter to them" (Alexander and Carr, 2006 p.84). Church schools offer a foundation in the Christian tradition which provides a framework of beliefs and a context of values within which individuals (both adults and children) can reflect, relate and find meaning; where teachers can see teaching as "part of

their own spiritual journey” (Huebner, 1993 p.413) and children have the opportunity to “weave the threads of meaning” (Hyde, 2008 p.235).

This thesis has elucidated the tensions involved in prioritising the nurture of children’s spirituality in a church school context. The stepped approach to literacy and learning at St Saviour’s school contrasted with the encouragement for teachers and pupils to take risks in being creative. Clear definitions and “right answers” indicated a control of discourse patterns which were both positive and negative in their effect. Spaces for spirituality were created, along with opportunities to create meaning through ambiguity and layered meaning (as in the aphorisms noted above); yet conversely such “right answers” could prevent individuals thinking for themselves, simply repeating taught definitions. The risk-averse culture of OFSTED had created the need to ensure a consistency of approach to teaching and learning (creating order, “taking care”), which could be at odds with the spaces created to facilitate the somewhat risky task of exploring the mystery and meaning of life. Creativity and spirituality involve “risk” since mystery is at the heart of existence. At such points there are not necessarily right or final answers, in contrast to the demands of performing for OFSTED when often the search is for the right answer to a question and one of the unwritten rules of the classroom is that the pupil’s task “in teacher-pupil discourse is to find the ‘right’ answer (‘guess what I’m thinking’)” (Alexander, 2000 pp.382-383). Hart (2006 p.169) records the experience of one 14-year old who could not get his teachers to take his questions (about life) seriously; “School seems not to be very interested in my questions or any questions really; it is all about the answers. We’re only supposed to give them the right answers.”

The reality in which church school headteachers operate is that of a highly performative culture with a hierarchy of inspections where to be outstanding requires high levels of academic achievement alongside a commitment to developing children’s spirituality. Worsley claims that “in many ways, Christ

lived in an 'OFSTED culture' where he had to abide by the terms of the law, but had some things to say about the application of the law. He healed on a Sabbath, his disciples picked and ate grain on a Sabbath. Yet Jesus claimed he had not come to abolish the law but to fulfil it." Hence, Worsley continues, "In the same way, we [Christians] can fulfil and even go beyond OFSTED" within a "culture of grace"(Worsley, 2013c p.5) where questions of meaning and purpose can be explored; where children can learn to live with the idea that there are questions that can be explored (for example through P4C sessions) but not necessarily answered; where teachers are comfortable with children asking "deep questions"; where "these innate capacities (for spirituality) can develop into mature patterns of faith" (Scarlett, 2006 p.29); where the "invisible pedagogy (concerned with a holistic process of personal formation rather than with the production of graded performances) is only made visible in the longer term" (Grace, 2002 p.51). Church schools should, therefore, offer a "threshold of free entry and free exit. People can travel in either direction" (Worsley, 2013a p.268) since there is a Christian framework which is open and hospitable which should be "attractive to those seeking understanding of the Christian narrative" and a "place of comfort and challenge for those moving away from Christian thinking" (Worsley, 2013a p.268).

If we are to support headteachers in discovering a Christian way of providing the best education for the children in their care we need to find ways through the tensions that result from attempting to produce the outcomes expected by parents and the inspection process whilst fulfilling the desire to explore spirituality. We need to consider ways in which we can enable church schools to experience these risks and tensions whilst discovering ways of embedding spirituality at classroom level so that a commitment to spirituality is not entirely dependent on the headteacher. We need to remember the importance of listening to children and young people. For them, the most important thing about school is "the people and being able to say what you

think and believe. It's the atmosphere. You know you'll be listened to and respected and you can listen to other people as well" (Eleanor, age 11); "It's not just about the grades you get and the length of the school day. It's about the other things you learn, like relating to people; thinking about and discussing important questions" (Hannah, age 17).

Church schools should be places where all children can experience the wonder of "the lit bush" in R.S Thomas' poem, *The Bright Field*, and can "turn aside and reflect on their experience" (Brown, 2013 p.165):

I have seen the sun break through
to illuminate a small field
for a while, and gone my way
and forgotten it. But that was the pearl
of great price, the one field that had
the treasure in it. I realise now
that I must give all that I have
to possess it. Life is not hurrying
on to a receding future, nor hankering after
an imagined past. It is the turning
aside like Moses to the miracle
of the lit bush, to a brightness
that seemed as transitory as your youth
once, but is the eternity that awaits you.
(R.S. Thomas, *Collected Poems 1945-1990*)

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APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL APPROVAL



The University of
Nottingham

School of Education – Research Ethics Approval Form

Name	Anne Lumb
Main Supervisor	Christine Hall
Course of Study	PhD (pt)
Title of Research Project:	An Ethnographic study of the spiritual dimension of a Church of England Primary School
Is this a resubmission?	Yes

Date statement of research ethics received by PGR Office: 15.09.10

Research Ethics Coordinator Comments:

Dear Anne

That is all fine now.

Good luck with your research.

Best wishes

Roger

