

report for school year 2024-25

Helena Power

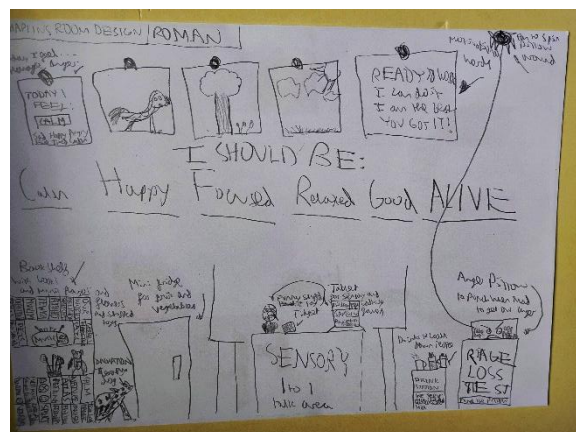
'Sharing life in all its fullness'

Our aim in the chaplain's sessions with the classes this academic year has been to deepen the children's understanding of spirituality, particularly as it is expressed through the Christian faith, and to allow them to explore their own feelings about life and the world around them using the prompts 'up', 'in', and 'out'. This has been rewarding work as by the end of the year most pupils were able to articulate what spirituality meant to them, and why they consider it important.



In October Mike Berrisford and I launched this theme in an INSET (staff training) day on spirituality in school, and through using the Godly Play approach to the spirituality of children, I invited the staff to explore their own feelings on this, as well as see the session from the point of view of the child. I then visited each class several times over the school year to develop this further and link in with the work Mike and the staff were doing on the school values and vision, the importance of body, mind and spirit, and the idea of 'up, in, out' in collective worship and in class.

Godly Play approach. In January we played out a lively retelling of the story of Jonah to see what we could find out to help us with the theme. In March the sessions focused on how the children feel that they flourish spiritually, using a sensory approach. The older classes designed a chaplain's room or outdoor reflective area, the younger ones expressed themselves creatively through art, song and danced to spiritual music.



'If this shell was alive and could talk, what might you ask it?'

'Can we be friends?'

(Year 1)

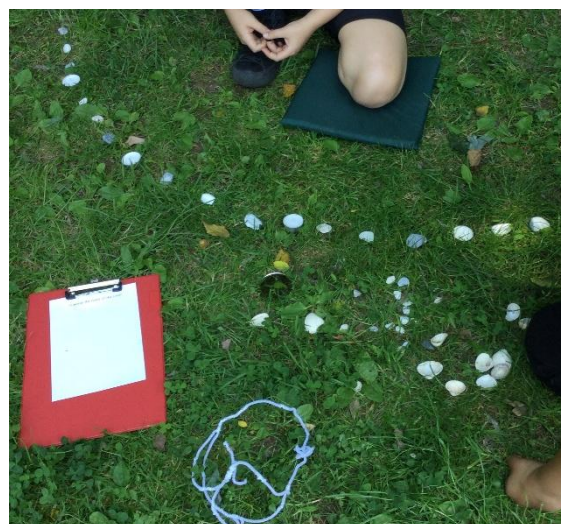


In the summer term we went out under the beautiful mature chestnut tree to help us think 'up', and considered nature and our place in God's amazing creation in many interesting ways, including creating a nest for a harvest mouse, or a reflective outdoor space. The children enjoyed the calm and relaxed time under the trees.

The circle of light

The burning candles remind us to look up.
The stones remind us to look after nature.
Sitting with friends reminds us to care for each other.
Amen.

Phoebe H, Aya, Scarlett (Year 5)



The INSET day revealed that Rockets preschool would like to strengthen their link to the work on the children's spirituality, so I have been visiting them every half term to tell an interactive Bible story, which is a great pleasure. At the other end of the age range, in the summer it was good to have individual conversations with the school leavers, using the 'It's Your Move' book supplied by the church for each child as a helpful resource. I also gave them New Testaments supplied by Good News for Everyone, formerly the Gideons.

Helping to link the school more closely with the church, I was involved with the Christingle service, a wonderful celebration, and children who had become familiar with church through school were very happy to take roles in the service. We also offered a pancake afternoon in the Lang Room, and together with families from school, a team organised a joyful Mothering Sunday celebration. The school services at church for harvest, Christmas, Easter and Year 6 are always popular and I attend as many of these as I can. This year, together with Revd Andy, I was delighted to invite Reception, years 1 and 2 to church for a special Christmas celebration of their own, where they were also able to enjoy being surrounded by the Christmas tree festival and see the tree the school had decorated.

In addition to school sessions and being around at the gate or on the playground for parents and staff as well, in October I attended deanery synod to raise awareness of my role in school and the impact this has on children and families, and I've been able to support families from the village in various ways, including arranging foodbank referrals and membership of the Best Before Food Store.