Whitefriars Church of England Primary Academy

Spirituality at Whitefriars

Building the House on Rock (Matthew 7:24-27)

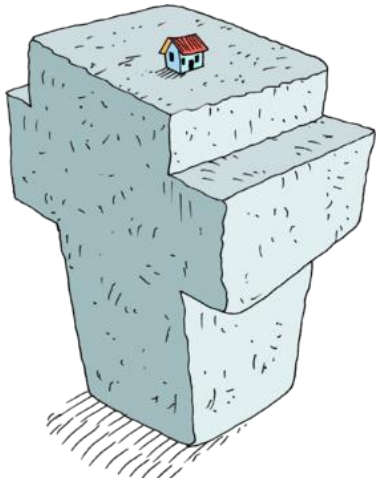
Whitefriars flourishes by encouraging ambition, growing resilience and making community.

Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

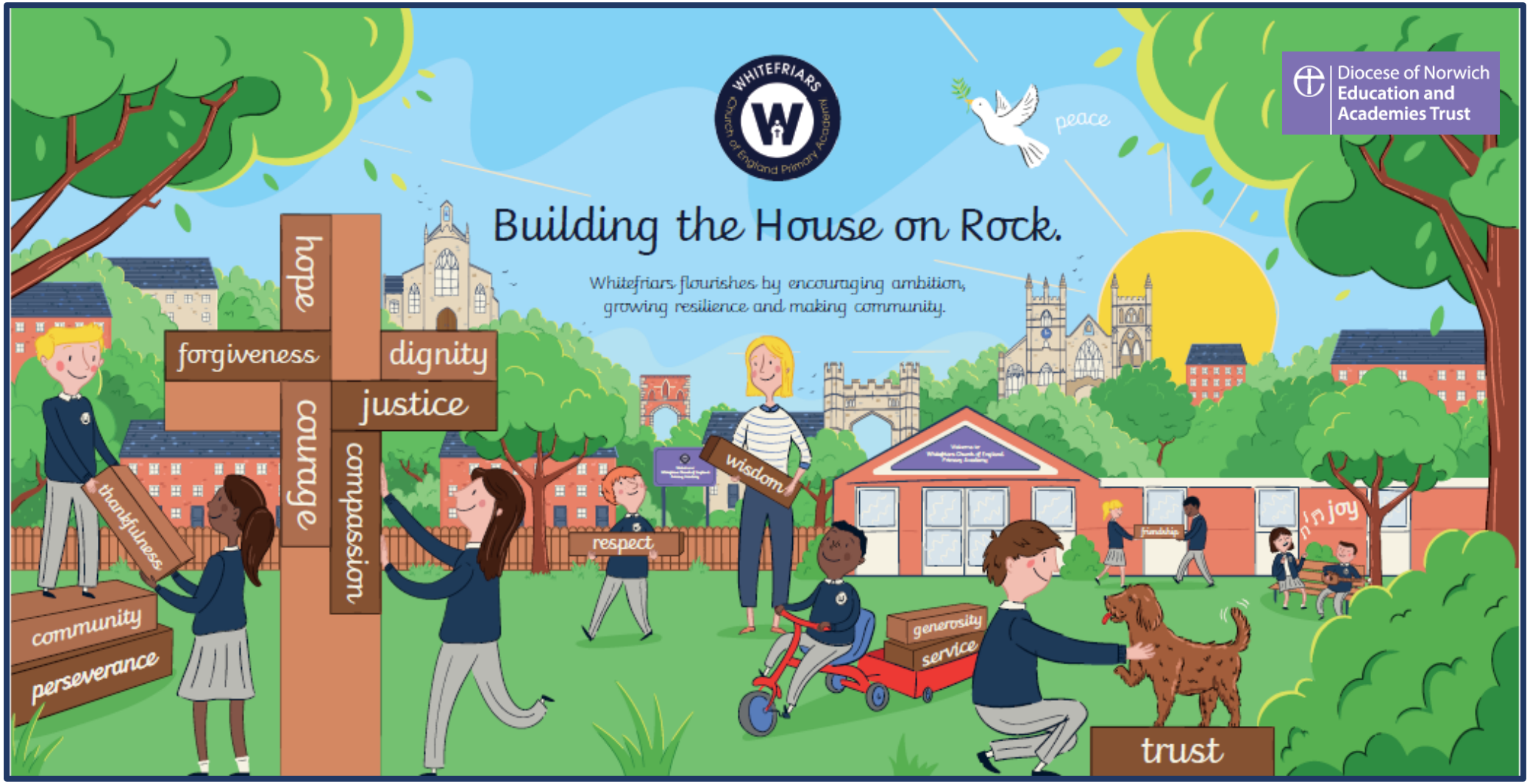
Our School Vision

Building the House on Rock

Whitefriars flourishes by
encouraging ambition, growing resilience
and making community.



Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust



"Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. 27 The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash." Matthew 7:24-27

Our Vision Explained

In July 2019 we created, in liaison with our community, our updated vision, which is grounded in a clear theology rooted in a Christian narrative, based on The Parable of the Wise and Foolish Builders *Matthew 7:24-27*

The meaning of this parable of Jesus is quite obvious: proper foundations are necessary. With a literal house, it is unwise to build on sand, because the foundation will be unsteady and the house will eventually suffer some kind of damage. This will waste resources, and all the time and work put into building the house in the first place will have gone for nothing. In contrast, it is wise to build one's house on a sure foundation; anchoring to bedrock makes a building withstand the test.

We recognise that both school and general life can be extremely hard made up of a series of trials, like storms, that can come from nowhere. Our vision is for each of our pupils, our school and community to grow to be built securely on rock with the resilience to stand steady and strong and withstand these storms unshaken by circumstances. We want to grow our children fully as 'whole' children to stand firm and strong with the foundations that they can rely upon. We recognise that building upon the rock is not easy and takes time, commitment, and energy however it is vital for the long term and in preparing our pupils for their futures.

Our vision is that all children at Whitefriars, as they move through our school, develop their character, which we define as a set of positive personal traits, dispositions and virtues that informs their motivation and guides their conduct so that they reflect wisely, learn eagerly, behave with integrity and cooperate consistently well with others. This gives pupils the qualities they need to flourish in our society

We aim for everyone to:

WHITEFRIARS Church of England Primary Academy

- have values that make life good for everyone
- grow as human beings in the love of God
- love learning so much they never want to stop
- celebrate success - their own and others'
- Have courage to face life's challenges
- know they are valued
- be thoughtful
- help make the neighbourhood a better place
- develop to their full potential

What is Spirituality?

Spirituality is not possible to teach. It is like the wind - it makes a difference but is uncontrollable for each person. It might change someone's understanding and beliefs but ultimately is an innate sense of awe and wonder. It is about understanding that there is something more than just 'me'. Promoting spirituality should not be confused with developing faith. Faith is a set of beliefs by which you live your life by and could be a response to a belief in God. Faith is something you choose whereas spirituality is an aspect of human development - it is not separate but integral to who we are and what makes us whole. Spirituality is for everybody regardless of faith.

How does Whitefriars promote spirituality?

Our school aims to support children in making sense of themselves and the world around them. We aim to help them observe their own responses to different experiences. Our school believes that experiences, both in and out of school, are important to the development of all pupils. We will create frameworks that help them to consider big, sometimes overwhelming, concepts such as life, death, identity, war, environmental factors etc. but without necessarily offering answers. These opportunities come through the teaching and learning of our whole school curriculum particularly our values, Collective Worship, RE, PSHCE/RSE, Science, Art, Music and English. Children will have exposure to spiritual experiences and conversations to know that it exists for everyone, including adults.

Spirituality Pictorial Representation

Life is full of openings: windows which allow us to look out, mirrors which allow us to reflect and doors which allow us to move on. A simple pictorial representation of how we develop Spirituality within our school community is shown in the table below:

	Learning is like looking through a window to see new horizons - looking at the world in new ways.	Windows are for looking out onto the world and becoming aware of its wonders, both the 'wows' and 'ows'; things that are 'awe-full' and make us wonder and be grateful and things that are 'awful' and make us wonder and ask questions. The whole curriculum and life itself are full of opportunities to recognise this sensitively.
	Reflection is like looking in a mirror and having time to reflect on the learning and ourselves.	Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting, alone and together, to see things more clearly, for thinking and asking important questions learning from our own and each other's responses. In schools we must allow time for this for individual and group reflection and sharing of perspectives. Some subjects and times allow for this specifically, such as religious education and collective worship but in all subjects, there will be opportunities, unexpected or planned, when things just 'crop up'. Handled sensitively, it is possible to make the most of all these times, if there is ongoing deliberate and corporate staff and pupil support.
	Responding is like going through a door considering how the learning will have an impact on yourself or your behaviour. It is about understanding how others feel.	Doors are for looking through in order to then act or express this in some way in response; for moving on, making choices, and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving.

Opportunities for Spirituality Development

Opportunities for spirituality development come when:

- children are given space to stop, look, listen, think and reflect
- children feel safe to share opinions and think differently from others
- children use their imagination

Children need:

- time to be listened to;
- adults that are respectful;
- space to explore, think and discuss;
- opportunities that encourage wonder and surprise;
- to know that there is not always a product or end result;
- to know there is another way.
- time to 'just be' and to experience peace and stillness

The Building Blocks of Spirituality

Self-Awareness or Self Knowledge.	All humans need to be aware of, and acknowledge, their own inner life of thoughts, feelings and emotions. What does it mean to be human? This is an important part of developing self-respect, a sense of identity and self-worth. In turn, this enables us to value and respect others. Pupils will be given a range of opportunities to reflect upon and discuss their beliefs, feelings and responses to personal experiences.
Forming Relationships	An important part of personal growth is being able to develop relationships with others, recognising them as people of worth and value. This includes developing a sense of community and building social relationships. Pupils will be given the opportunity to develop an understanding of both their individual and group identity and to form and maintain worthwhile and satisfying relationships.
Asking Ultimate Questions	This is the search for meaning and purpose in life. It involves asking questions such as "Why me?" in times of suffering, or "What happens when you die?" The youngest children often ask the most profound questions of this type and deserve to be taken seriously when they do so. We believe that it is important that this area of reflection and challenge is encouraged, not stifled. Ultimate questions are not limited only to RE and collective worship but can arise at any time.
Uncertainty, Awe and Wonder	In historical and spatial terms everyone is insignificant. An awareness of one's place in the world enables a person to live with natural doubt and uncertainty and encourages the search for meaning in life. When faced with eternity and infinity, or the wonders of the natural world and human achievements, feelings of awe and wonder are also a natural response. For some this may include experiencing feelings of transcendence which give rise to belief in the existence of God. It may also encourage a belief in ideals and possibilities of rising above one's present experience of the world (e.g., by adopting and supporting specific causes or issues). Pupils will be given opportunities to reflect on, consider and celebrate the wonders and mysteries of life and to experience moments of stillness and reflection, for example in Collective Worship.
Beliefs and Values	This is the search for, and development of, personal beliefs and values which may or may not be shared with other members of the community. This naturally may include the development of religious beliefs, and as a church school we seek to be a supportive environment in which people can explore and clarify their own beliefs.
Creativity	This is the exercising of the imagination or intuition and insight to express one's innermost thoughts and feelings, especially through the creative arts. Creative work can be an important tool for exploring some of the other areas of spiritual development, including the Creative Curriculum, Music, Art and opportunities beyond the traditional classroom setting.
Feelings and Emotions.	The sense of being moved by kindness or beauty, or being hurt by hatred and injustice. This should bring a growing awareness of when it is important to control feelings and emotions. Pupils will be able to foster their emotional life and express their feelings in the community of the church school, knowing themselves to be accepted and loved as unique individuals. We recognise that these areas of experience are common to most people - they are the "third dimension" of existence alongside the physical and the mental. All the above experiences may be explained and explored in both religious and nonreligious terms and demonstrates our commitment as a church school open to those with other faiths and beliefs.

Spirituality Across Our Curriculum

Spirituality through Collective Worship Collective Worship can often develop spirituality in both nature and content. Our school uses 'The Gathering, The Worship, The Reflection and finally The Dismissal as four key elements to our whole school Collective Worship. The school uses repeated words as our opening and closing that reflect the school vision. Collective Worship offers time for thought and reflection, and light is used as a symbol. Children are offered opportunities reflect and respond within collective worship. Prayers written by the children consider thoughts and concepts that are important to them. Activities and opportunities will include:

- exposure and appreciation of nature;
- following rituals and traditions;
- use of prayer or reflection time;
- time for silence and stillness;
- acts of service that benefit others;
- stories that promote thought and imagination (without the need to find a moral)

Evidence of spirituality may come through art, play, attitudes, movement and using the senses.

Barriers to Development of Spirituality

Development of spirituality can be hindered when:

- adults trivialise something small to them but which is big to a child;
- the 'busyness' of life and not having the time to look and think;
- lack of space for stillness and listening.

By being aware of these potential barriers, staff throughout Whitefriars are able to allow children to develop their spirituality throughout their daily lives whilst in the school environment.

Spirituality Across Our Curriculum

Subject	Opportunities
PE	• Through P.E. at Whitefriars, we enable spiritual development by allowing our children the freedom to move and express themselves. We build wonder in their achievements as they learn a new skill and share this with others.
Computing	• Children are given a variety of exciting opportunities to express themselves through coding & programming, creating media and collecting data. They develop ideas and present these in a range of formats using information technology. Children are encouraged to be responsible and safe while using the internet, being mindful of themselves and others. Children use their class Seesaw page to share work with their peers, give constructive feedback and praise to each other while developing their own computing skills.
Drama	• By allowing for insight, self-expression and the chance to walk in someone else's shoes
Design and Technology	• At Whitefriars we inspire creativity and imagination, children can design, make and evaluate products that solve relevant and real problems within a variety of contexts, looking not only at their own needs, wants and values, but also the considerations of others. We celebrate personal creativity by exploring extraordinary design, inspiring awe and wonder through beauty, functionality and the magnitude of some designs ie The Taj Mahal, or the inner workings of clocks and mechanical objects. Design can explicitly be focused for religious experience ie Mosques, Cathedrals and Temples.
Music	• In music, children share a unique part of themselves by using their voices expressively and listen intently to others' voices. They experience the sense of joy and wonder of performing together, being both responsible for their own role and part of something bigger.
Art and Design	• Through Art and Design at Whitefriars we awaken spiritual development by appreciating, reflecting and responding to a wealth of artists and their work. Drawing upon their social, historical, geographical and religious backgrounds.
PSHE/RSHE	• Through RSHE at Whitefriars, we encompass spirituality by developing an awareness of, and responding to others' needs and wants. We recognise people's worth and values. We have a strong sense of community which inspires children to grow into confident and resilient individuals.
RE	• By experiencing wonder and joy through learning about and from stories, celebrations, rituals and different expressions of religion and worldviews. By asking and responding to questions of meaning and purpose. • By considering questions about God and evaluating truth claims. • By exploring spiritual practices such as worship and prayer, and considering the impact of these on believers as well as any relevance to their own life. By working towards the RE Gold Quality Mark.
Geography	• By creating a sense of awe and wonder by exploring the natural world. Creating curiosity amongst children and enabling them to ask questions about the world around them. Discovering their place in the world and comparing this to other people's experiences and other places. Understanding how the human and physical world can help children identify themselves.
History	• By considering how things would be different if the course of events had been different; for example what difference would it have made if the Normans had not been successful in 1066?

MFL	• By exploring the beauty of languages from around the world. • By exploring the way language is constructed.
Science	• Throughout our Science curriculum, we provide many opportunities for pupils to learn about nature, explore the role they play in protecting our world and how they can contribute to their wider environment. Through the skills children learn as scientists, children are encouraged to ask 'big questions' about the world around us, take risks, demonstrate curiosity and open mindfulness. Staff model openness to the fact that not all answers can be provided by Science.
Literacy	• Writing: At Whitefriars we respond to different text types by taking inspiration from other authors. We learn to appreciate the beauty of language and how we can create art through using words and our imaginations. • Oracy: At Whitefriars, children become communicators through discussion and creativity. This is supported by the sharing of different texts from different cultures and discussing different matters with an open mind. • Reading: At Whitefriars we engage with spiritual development by responding to well chosen and awe inspiring topic related texts. We learn to reflect on what we have read using our Reading Stems - inferring, clarifying ..... We value each others reactions, ideas and opinions and learn to empathise with characters' feelings and actions - interpreting their thoughts and making connections to our own lives, values and the wider world around us. • Phonics: At Whitefriars, children develop creativity by exploring how words are constructed together using sounds. Phonic knowledge is the key to unlocking awe and wonder through reading.
Maths	• At Whitefriars, we encourage spirituality through a range of mathematical opportunities. Children are introduced to the wonder of numbers, including numerical patterns, order, shape and space. Investigations and problem solving provide moments of awe and wonder, where children are encouraged to deepen their understanding. There are opportunities to make connections between numeracy skills and real life throughout our curriculum.

Auditing Spirituality

Quality of Education	• our pupils are making good and sustained progress and learn exceptionally well • our pupils develop, apply and transfer a wide range of skills to a variety of contexts • our pupils have opportunities to critically reflect and develop personal knowledge • our pupils express enjoyment and curiosity in learning about themselves, others and the world around them • our pupils show imagination and creativity in their learning • our pupils critically reflect on their experiences • our pupils are nurtured and nurture each other to discover and develop their gifts • A safe time and space is created for thinking, reflection and structured opportunities for pupils to listen and talk to one another which supports their language development. • our pupils' work is shared beyond the classroom and develops pupils as global neighbours • we celebrate occasions when pupils, staff or members of the community have risen above the ordinary, or shown courage in adversity • the more complex questions and concepts support personal learning and thinking skills development, and a safe space is provided for these to be explored • achievement is regarded as more than attainment and progress; it includes wider outcomes for pupils' personal development and well being. • Every child is celebrated in their uniqueness • Every child has experiences to enhance the journey of 'fullness of life' • We have high expectations of all pupils • we generate high levels of enthusiasm for, participation in and commitment to learning • we use imaginative teaching strategies which match individual needs accurately. • our teaching promotes pupils' resilience, confidence and independence when tackling challenging activities • our pupils express a variety of religious and non-religious worldviews which inform their views on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values	• Art exhibition • Choir performances • Concert performances • Pupil voice • Learning journey books • Values in Action prayers • RE books and RE learning journeys • Picture News folder • 25 Things to do at Whitefriars booklet • School website: photos of experiences/visits • Whitefriars Got Talent pics • Educational Visits non-negotiables • Use of talk partners • Ofsted report

	• we plan learning from the pupils' own experiences. We value each contribution, affirming, praising and challenging pupils • we create space for spontaneity when planning learning outcomes • our curriculum encourages use of the senses and alternative forms of expression • reflective time and silence is valued, and strategies are used to support this, e.g. visualisation; stilling, meditation • Feedback provides opportunities for pupils to think about and express their views on the reasons behind what they are learning • a sense of playfulness, curiosity and opportunity characterises our curriculum • our curriculum design ensures that there are big enquiry questions; pupils have plenty of time to think and talk about big ideas in all areas of the curriculum, not just in RE. E.g. we increase opportunities for saying 'I wonder…', trying to say it at least once a day! • in our curriculum we generate questions to allow children to explore the world they live in • we make sure our learning extends beyond the classroom. We ask 'Where might this work go? Who else might be interested in what we have learned? Can we link this to something outside our school?	
Behaviour and Attitudes	• our pupils make a positive contribution to a safe, positive learning environment • our pupils show a willingness to reflect on their experiences • our pupils encounter and display inclusivity and tolerance, embracing diversity. • we encourage our pupils to express their feelings and emotions • our pupils' behaviour and attitudes to learning improves when they engage in wondering; pupils show curiosity about what they are learning • our pupils know that each day they can start 'afresh' within a spirit of forgiveness and reconciliation • we have an inclusive and accepting attitude towards ourselves and others, e.g. visitors; those with a disability • We celebrate diversity and difference through encountering experiences our pupils for the wider world.	• PATHs • Photos of learning environment • Learning journey board • RE board • School council notes • Behaviour records • Pupil voice/Pupil questionnaire • RE educational visit planner

Leadership and Management	• we are committed to be the best we can everyday • this is shown by a highly successful drive to enable all the school community to 'live life in all its fullness' • our school curriculum provides highly positive, memorable experiences and rich opportunities for high quality learning • there is time for reflection and silence • there are key values which are talked about, reflected on and delighted in on a regular basis. This involves everyone in the school. E.g. gratitude; flow; joy; contribution; creativity • a thought for the week or equivalent is articulated throughout the school community and in all communications • our pupils express their understanding of our school's values and Christian vision through words • We have a shared language and policy for spirituality	• Pupil voice/Pupil questionnaire • Educational visits planner • Newsletters • Picture News folder • Prayer tree • Prayer space • RE boards
Personal Development	• our school develops pupils confidence and resilience to support their wellbeing • We are advocates for mental health. • We provide opportunities for self-awareness • We enable pupils to self- reflect so that they can flourish. • We recognize the school community can thrive together by enabling everybody's uniqueness to contribute to our vision. • We acknowledge that we sometimes need others in order to reach goals.	• MHFA info • Links with Hanseatic Union • Links with Mental Health support team • SEMH • Play therapist