



Spirituality in Education Alliance UK

Supporting the development of whole children and flourishing school cultures

The Spirituality in Education Alliance UK (SIEUK) is working with others to promote an understanding of spirituality within schools and to create learning environments that better promote and nurture the inner life of both students and teachers.

"All human beings are born with a natural sense of spirituality, which is the integral dimension of full human development. Spirituality fosters a way of being that provides a foundation for a young person's physical, emotional, intellectual and moral development. There is mounting empirical evidence that nurturing the spirituality of children supports their health and happiness and helps them be more engaged, higher achievers, and better citizens." - Collaborative for Spirituality

An essential unity

Until recently, mainstream science has considered the seemingly separate and material appearance of the universe as being its essential, and sole, reality. It has held that consciousness somehow arises from the brain as an accidental result of random occurrences that enable the evolutionary emergence, and survival, of the fittest.

Now, a radically different understanding is emerging. Leading-edge science across all scales of existence and across many fields of research tells us that mind and consciousness aren't something we have – but rather what we and the whole world are. This new paradigm converges with profound spiritual insights and experiences of all ages

and traditions. It sees the physical realm as the manifestation of a deeper, unified, informational reality. This integral model invites and empowers a renewed realisation of the inherent sanctity and universal worth and value of all existence. Crucially, it offers meaning and purpose to our existence, and that of our entire universe.

Being 'conscious' is about experiencing a sense of self, of what it's like to be 'me'. But it also implies a level of awareness – our level of responsiveness and empathy to others and the wider world. And how that awareness informs our choices and behaviours. Leading-edge science now shows that our universe is fundamentally interconnected. Even more revolutionary, there's increasingly compelling evidence that our 'immaterial' minds don't somehow arise from our 'material' brains, but that universally, mind and matter are aspects of a deeper, non-physical and ultimately unified reality.

Unity awareness understands the ultimately unified nature of reality. But it also expresses itself through radical diversity, not homogeneity; through unique individuation and experience and collective inclusivity. Coming together as a species – not only to understand, but vitally to experience and embody such unity awareness – would transform how we relate to ourselves, each other and our planetary home in every way we can imagine, and with love, not fear at its heart. It would honour the power of unity consciousness to catalyse radical and transformational change.

Promoting an ecology of Wellbeing

Within the understanding of such an integrated approach, spirituality is recognised as an innate human quality, that pre-exists cultural or religious differences, that stems from a unified reality and that is grounded in connection and love. As such it is an essential element for human flourishing. Human beings do not exist in isolation, but in dynamic interconnection, with human flourishing only existing only within a deeper ecology of wellbeing.

Within this approach, wisdom is not derived from intellectual knowledge, but, instead, wisdom contains knowledge and follows the path of values. Children in the modern world are saturated with information and are rewarded for their academic prowess and ability to regurgitate facts. What has been missing is an approach to education that recognises and nurtures all children's innate competencies and dispositions, that acknowledges the equal importance of social and emotional development and that appropriately validates effort as well as achievement.

Honouring children's potential in this way would mean supporting the spirit and energy of what is already inside them to grow and flourish in the outside world, rather than continually forcing what is outside in, and providing them with a values-based, ethical language that nurtures the development of positive mindsets, behavior and competencies of character. It would explore how human values are developed through the school curriculum and how an integral, values-based approach could inspire pupils

to adopt the positive mindsets, beliefs and behaviours that would enable them to grow and flourish, both during their time at school and in the way that they then and subsequently live their lives.

Teaching from the heart

If we care about the educational wellbeing of children, we must also care about the values and wellbeing of the adults with whom they spend most of their time. The work of the alliance, will therefore, also explore how we can create learning environments that better promote and nurture both the inner and outer life of everyone with the school system.

"We need to open a new frontier in our exploration of good teaching: the inner landscape of a teacher's life. To chart that landscape fully, three important paths must be taken—intellectual, emotional, and spiritual—and none can be ignored. Reduce teaching to intellect and it becomes a cold abstraction; reduce it to emotions and it becomes narcissistic; reduce it to the spiritual and it loses its anchor to the world. Intellect, emotion, and spirit depend on each other for wholeness. They are interwoven in the human self and in education at its best, and we need to interweave them in our pedagogical discourse as well." Parker Palmer.

Learn more about the work of the alliance

The alliance is currently in the very early stages of its development and welcomes all expressions of interest and support. In the first instance please write to us at: contact@sieallianceuk.org



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www.sieallianceuk.org