

FAITH IN THE NEXUS



How are we providing reflection time and space?

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The Faith in the Nexus research project.

In the Faith in the Nexus research, the term nexus refers to the connections between home, church school and the local church community. Our project investigated the ways church primary schools, working in collaboration with churches and interested key groups, facilitated opportunities for children's exploration of faith and spiritual life in the home. It involved 20 church primary schools, a cross-section of Church of England and Catholic primary schools. Focus group interviews were held with 187 pupils and 267 adults (parents, staff, local clergy, and other interested key groups) and an online survey was completed by 1002 people; 730 pupils and 272 adults.

Key questions raised by the research:

How do we address children's need for reflection space and time?

How can we translate children's experiences of reflection in school into the home and church environment?

Key findings from the research:

Reflection was about quiet space and time for thinking about big questions of God, the world, concerns for others and for self.

Prayer was about praying to God or for relatives, and prayers could be written down or read.

Parents were more likely to talk about children praying at home than reflecting.

Children actively seek out spaces and times to be alone to reflect, think and pray.



Church primary schools provide several spaces such as reflection corners and spiritual gardens.

What emerges through analysis of children's responses to the research questions, is a need for space to reflect, think and pray. In the church primary schools, these spaces were in classrooms and in the playground; at home the children made their own times and spaces.

Few children mentioned church as a place to reflect.

This space and time is essential for spiritual wellbeing. Many children, like adults, had no or little quiet time in daily life.



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Conversation Starters.

The spiritual garden is a place to reflect and it's a place where people enjoy to go and pray and it would be the first [place] I would take a visitor. (Pupil)

I would go in the reflective garden because I want to rest... (Pupil)

Me and my sister set up this little worship table. We put a blanket on [a box] and we put our bowl of lavender on it. (Pupil)

It's really important because, if we feel sad [and] just want to be alone we can pray up to God to please let us feel happy again. (Pupil)

Sometimes in a way I talk to myself and because I sometimes think that I'm talking to God ... my great Nan is 94 and I pray about her. (Pupil)

We had the reflection garden made because we've lost children and members of staff. (Governor)

I find it hard to find time and sit down and have quiet time. (Parent)



