



St. John's Church of England Primary School



Spirituality Development Policy

St. John's Vision statement

Shine like stars

Through God's love, we will flourish and develop our gifts in our nurturing community, as we strive to be an inspiration to all.

Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

Reviewed: March 2024 - ratified by the Governors: 16th May 2024

Future Review: March 2027



Spiritual Development Policy

1. How is this policy a reflection of our theologically rooted Christian vision?

At St. John's Church of England Primary School, we believe that everyone is unique and valued by God and has the right to be treated as an individual with different learning and emotional needs. We aspire to be renowned for the excellent quality of teaching and learning in an environment where Christian values underpin all we do. We pride ourselves in being a nurturing and supportive school valuing the importance of all pupils' emotional development and well-being. This is highlighted in our values of respect, compassion, forgiveness, endurance, confidence and justice, ensuring that we promote an inclusive school. At the heart of our school, we value the strengths of all members of our school community, building positive relationships and belonging to a caring and nurturing school community. We believe in providing all children with the skills for lifelong learning through engaging children in a rich, challenging curriculum within a shared culture of safety and respect. At St. John's we believe that all learners are unique individuals who are entitled to realise their full potential and in doing so develop the gifts that God has given them. We believe that Jesus' journey can serve as an inspiration for our mindfulness and our own personal learning journeys; just like Jesus we too can be an inspiration to others.

As we embed an understanding of the vision across our school, we are exploring and developing the Biblical text and teaching that sit as a foundation to our vision and to the culture of the school and therefore, ultimately, to who we are encouraging the children to become.

We want our school to be a place where spiritual growth and development are central to our learning and community life together, knowing that it is when we stop and listen, children and staff are able to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

Your light must shine before people, so that they will see the good things you do and praise your Father in heaven.' Matthew 5:16

2. Introduction

The Church of England Vision for Education is rooted in Jesus' desire that we should have 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). As our spiritual nature is such a fundamental part of our humanity, spiritual development is a key part of this holistic view of education:

*"Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework."*¹

As Derek Holloway writes, spiritual development is intrinsic to every part of our work:



"I would strongly contend that in all schools, and certainly in Church schools, that spiritual development is not something you should hide away in a couple of curriculum boxes or treat as an afterthought. I must be something that should influence all areas of education as it does all areas of life."²

We believe that spiritual development is a core thread that runs through our school, and we see it as vital for the flourishing of all within our school community. In Acts 17:28, the Apostle Paul says that in God "we live and move and have our being"; becoming more aware of our innate spirituality is a life-long journey and it is our desire that all at **St. John's Church of England Primary School** move forward on that journey during their time here.

3. Aims

Our aim is to establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual flourishing of all pupils through the following objectives:

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them, as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith.
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own.
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions.
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts in the service of others), understanding the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others.
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life, and upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc.
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life, including an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination.

These objectives will enable the pupils to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, and understanding, and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance, and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

As over-arching aims, our approach to spiritual development will:

- Reflect the school's Church of England status.
- Reflect and strengthen the school's Christian vision and ethos.
- Take place within a school environment which enables pupils and adults to flourish.

¹ The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office 2016)

² Derek Holloway et al, *Spiritual Development : Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom* (The Church of England Education Office April 2019)



4. Legal requirements

The importance of spiritual development in schools is recognised in legislation.

Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 states:

The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which: (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and (b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Section 48 of the Education Act 2005

Spiritual development is a particular focus of Church school inspections under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS) which asks:

- *How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/Methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?*
- *How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?*
- *How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?*
- *In the context of the school as a Church school, what do pupils and adults understand to be the meaning of spirituality? How does this enhance and enrich collective worship and individuals' spiritual development?*
- *How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?*

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook (2019) states:

Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school's activities ...

Provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- *ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life.*
- *knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings, and values*
- *sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them.*
- *use of imagination and creativity in their learning.*
- *willingness to reflect on their experiences.*



5. Shared understanding of spiritual development

Philip Sheldrake writes:

“In Christian terms, spirituality refers to the way our fundamental values, lifestyles, and spiritual practices reflect particular understandings of God, human identity, and the material world as the context for human transformation...We shall see that all Christian spiritual traditions are rooted in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, particularly in the gospels and in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Christian spirituality is fundamentally concerned with following the way of Jesus Christ.”³

As a church school, it is this Christian framework that shapes our shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development. We recognise the importance of engaging with our linked church/es in determining this shared understanding in the context of our school’s Christian vision and values.

To make conversations about spiritual flourishing more accessible to every member of our school community, St. John’s Church of England Primary School has chosen to use the following shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development ...

Look up! Look down! Look all around!

2 Corinthians 4:18

‘As we look not to the things that are seen but to the things that are unseen. For the things that are seen are transient, but the things that are unseen are eternal.’

We understand spirituality as the connection between our inner selves, with God and with everyone around us. It is something we feel but cannot touch!

Cultivating a healthy spirituality is a journey we take through our vision.

We look up as we draw strength and guidance from the Bible and Christian practices, grounding us in our beliefs and spirituality.

We look down as we explore the world around us with wonder and appreciation, while also reflecting on our experiences to build resilience and courage, and to ponder life's deeper questions.

We look all around as we seek to understand the impact and meaning of our lives on others.

³ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality, A Brief History*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) p.7



6. Provision

The school pursues the aims by ensuring:

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values.
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life.
- Unplanned and spontaneous spiritual opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and pupils.
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this.
- A solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed.
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness, and prayer.
- Pupils' spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies making use of the outdoor environment and relevant educational visits.
- The provision of opportunities to listen attentively and observe carefully, listening with discernment, valuing what is good and worthwhile and making judgements through discussion and exchange of views and ideas.
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others.
- Moral development is linked to spiritual development.
- Pupils are given as many opportunities as possible to explore the wonder of the natural world and to develop an understanding of the Christian belief that creation is a gift from God to be enjoyed, cherished, and protected.
- The delivery and content will be made accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Consideration of Early Years curriculum and how the curriculum for younger children can support spiritual development.
- The religious background of all pupils will be taken into consideration when planning teaching.

Approaches

In our school we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to children's spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning by:

- Seeking to foster spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy;
- Allowing children, the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions and to celebrate diversity; (e.g. working in partnership with other schools on an art project, debating, science project and festivals with other schools, visitors in from other faiths, visiting places of worship of different faiths)
- Providing opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness; (e.g. encourage pupils to use write prayers for prayer time, RE Days opportunity for them to understand the power of prayer, to volunteer to lead the prayer in daily collective worship, in services, time of stillness to reflect, to appreciate)
- Sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement; (e.g. speakers from The Bridge of Hope Charity, global projects, sponsoring children in Uganda, fundraising for the church).



- Encouraging children to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values; (e.g. quality time spent on exploring our value for each half-term, certificates for values, linked to all aspects of school life, weaving the vision statement through all aspects of school life, e.g. competitive sporting activities, activities linked to the ETSP, partnership work with the local LDBS schools)
- Enabling children to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school, the wider community and the global community. Thinking about how these impact on their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today; (e.g. Bible Study Group, incorporated into daily collective worship and services, partnership work with the church, global work with the bridge of hope charity)
- Providing an environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder (e.g. activities that are captured in our vision book, reflections incorporated into RE lessons, daily collective worship, PSHE, literacy activities)

7. CPD and training

This is a complex area and staff should be trained and equipped to provide for the spiritual development of pupils within the context of a Church of England school. We access diocesan-led training for those with a particular role in planning for and evaluating spiritual development.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to pupils for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- Observing and listening to pupils.
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values.
- Sharing of classroom work and practice.
- Ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spiritual development means in this school by providing them with induction and development training.
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflective diary, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art.
- Regular inclusion in the SEF.
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.
- Seeking to evaluate, formally and informally, with pupils and adults, activities with a particular focus on spirituality and spiritual development (e.g. collective worship)

Provision for spiritual development is monitored by Mrs. Notley through:

Parent Questionnaires, Governors' Learning Walks, looking at children's work including Religious Education books, talking to pupils, parents and staff, Headteacher's termly report to the Governors, reading pupils' reflections and questions being raised by pupils.

Provision for spiritual development is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).



9. Opportunities for spiritual flourishing of adults

Under the SIAMS framework, it is also the intention that the spiritual flourishing of adults should be enabled and enhanced by the work of the school. We consider ways in which our routines and practices (e.g. staff meetings, CPD, collective worship, church services, staff retreats) can contribute to the spiritual life of adults in our community.

Evaluation/Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and ratified every **three years** by the Governing Body.

Date of validation...21st March 2024 Signed.....
Chair of Governors

Date of review..... Signed.....
Chair of Governors

