

# SPIRITUALITY IN SCHOOL POLICY



**St John's**  
CofE Primary School

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## **Spirituality in School**

'Celebrate life in all its fullness. Let's learn together in God's love'.

### **Our vision**

At St John's we inspire our whole school to love learning and work together so everyone can reach their full potential.

Through shared Christian values we recognise the skills and talents of all, nurture creativity and contribute to our community.

With engaging lessons, exciting opportunities and challenging experiences we deepen knowledge and understanding, have fun and succeed.

Our vision influences the ethos of our school and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is a core thread that runs through our school and we attach great importance to it for both children's development and for the growth and well-being of all within our school community.

### **We aim for children, and adults, to grow in their ability to:**

- be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others
- be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life like friends and family, and show generosity towards others

### **Our working definition of 'spirituality'**

As a staff and governor team, we have agreed on a definition of spiritual development in our school community to support us as we talk about spirituality. Spirituality is not something you can see;

It is...

- Something we feel and learn about ourselves (loving learning)
- A connection to others (loving each other)
- Awe and wonder in life (loving life itself)

*Spirituality is delighting in all things, being absorbed into the present moment, not too attached to self, and eager to explore boundaries of 'beyond' and 'other', searching for meaning, discovering purpose, open to more. (Rebecca Nye)*

#### **Legal requirements:**

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.

The SIAMS Schedule (2018) references spirituality in both the RE and Collective Worship strands but the main focus is as part of strand two on Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills. The Church of England Vision for Education has a core desire for 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) which requires educating the whole person.

The OFSTED framework 2019 states that pupil's spiritual development is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faith, 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

#### **We support pupils in their spiritual development by:**

- providing opportunities for spiritual development in collective worship
- providing opportunities for spiritual development in RE
- providing opportunities for spiritual development in the wider curriculum
- capturing opportunities for awe and wonder as they arise
- providing 'Sacred Spaces' in classrooms, public spaces, outside, and by using the church building, and through the 'Prayer Spaces in School' website
- offering pupils opportunities to develop their own spiritual leadership, through leading collective worship and other opportunities

#### **As a staff team:**

- We have a staff understanding of spiritual development.

- We have a culture within our school that recognises the importance of spirituality to individuals, both children and staff.
- We revisit spirituality as an area for consideration in our staff meetings and offer training.
- Our governors monitor the impact of our spirituality focus through regular ethos committee meetings and learning walks.
- We have staff guidance accessible to continue to support staff in this aspect of our curriculum. These guidance, resources and reading are accessed from the diocesan website.
- We ensure new staff are aware of our school policy on spiritual development.
- We use models to support our own thinking in spirituality, such as the 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors, Candle' approach.
- We have a variety of spiritual spaces both inside and outside the school building.
- We are aware of spiritual development shown across four key areas of Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond (Andrew Rickett / Rebecca Nye).
- We recognise that children will have different 'Spiritual Temperaments' or 'Sacred Pathways, through the work of Gary Thomas (2010) and Myra Perrine (2007). This will influence our planning as we look to nurture spirituality across the curriculum, not just in RE and Collective Worship. *We encourage staff who are specialist subject leads to identify opportunities for spiritual development in their subject, and to share them with colleagues.*
- We actively use the language we have agreed on with staff to nurture an awareness of spirituality and its importance to well-being and development with the children.
- We aim to help each pupil to develop a spiritual understanding in terms of their own cultural context.
- We share with parents, whenever possible, the outcomes of our focus on spiritual development through newsletters, displays and our website.
- We discuss spirituality with our church and others who can further support this thread.

Our awareness and understanding of spiritual development will enrich what we offer to the children and to all in our school community.

## **PROMOTING SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT IN OTHER AREAS OF SCHOOL LIFE**

### **Environmental Education**

Environmental Education provides opportunities for children to

- Reflect on the relationship between the human spirit and the Earth on which it dwells
- Consider the way different environments can produce a range of responses
- Consider a range of issues
- Discuss the views of world faiths

### **Collective Worship**

Collective Worship provides daily opportunities for children to:

- Experience times of mental and physical stillness
- Experience regular times when they can be receptive to their own inner worlds of thoughts, feelings and imaginings, and to reflect on them
- Consider the value of religious belief, prayer and worship
- Experience the deepest concerns of their own spirits in reflection, or offer them up in worship and prayer, if they wish to do so.
- Experience a sense of community

### **The Ethos of the School**

The ethos of the school will be displayed in:

- Celebration of individual and collective success
- Ways in which the school helps children deal with difficulties such as conflicts with others, grief and loss
- Values and attitudes promoted
- The school culture
- The extent to which children believe they are listened to
- Staff attitudes to children
- Children's attitudes to all staff
- The extent to which bullying is treated with the utmost seriousness
- The way children interact in the playground
- Attitudes towards visitors
- The management of children's behaviour
- The way that conflicts are resolved
- Systems for rewards and sanctions
- The pastoral system
- Admissions e.g. the attitude towards children with special needs
- Home-school links

### **Teaching and Learning Strategies**

Teaching and Learning Strategies can promote children's spiritual development when there are opportunities for:

- Active learning
- Questions about meaning, purpose and value to be addressed in different curriculum subjects
- Consideration of ultimate questions in different contexts
- Children to give a personal response to what is being learnt
- Building children's self-esteem
- Children to communicate with staff both formally and informally about their concerns and questions, both personal and academic
- Children to talk with each other in lessons
- Times for quiet, stillness and silent reflection in contexts outside collective worship
- The suspension of planned lessons to address matters of pressing concern, or to respond spontaneously to unplanned opportunities

### **Relationships between staff and children**

Relationships are more likely to foster children's spiritual development when all staff are willing to:

- Give due regard to developing the ethos of the school
- Accept the responsibility and their status means that they are significant role models for children
- Encourage and inspire children
- Trust, respect and listen to children
- Take seriously the need to develop a child's spirit as well as its mind, heart and body, and learn about ways in which this can be achieved.

**Other related policies:**

Collective Worship

Teaching and Learning

Positive Behaviour

All subject specific curriculum policies

**Referenced reading:**

Church of England Education Office (CEEO) Spiritual Development – Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom (2019)

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-effectiveness/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/spiritual-development/>