



Spiritual Development Policy

Policy produced by LDBS and Go Shine CE Federation

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Our School Vision Statement

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived.

Our School vision is based upon Matthew 5:14-16

Our school offers a distinctly Christian education in an inclusive environment, welcoming children and staff of all faiths and none.

The vision is for all in the school community to flourish academically, socially, spiritually so that they can 'shine in the world' now and in the future where they can be economically independent adults who have all of life's opportunities and can make a contribution to society. Thus the school vision complements the Church of England's vision to 'Serve the Common Good' and have 'life in all its fullness'.

"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." Church of England Vision for Education - Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good

As a community, we have identified **nine core values that stem from our Vision and** are woven in to the very fabric of the school. We expect all members of the school community-pupils, staff, governors, clergy- to model these. These are also closely linked to the **four foundations** of our **curriculum design**.

1. Educating for Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills (value link- excellence)
2. Educating for Hope and Aspiration (value link- determination and inspiration)
3. Educating for Community and Living Well Together (value link-compassion, integrity, friendship)
4. Educating for Dignity and Respect (value link- honesty, integrity, respect)

Determination This means resolution, resolve, willpower. **"Stand firm, and you will win life."** (Luke 21:19)

Respect This means regard highly, value, honour. **"And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."** (Luke 6:31)

Friendship This means mutual trust and support. **"Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth."** (1 John 3:18)

Inspiration This means the process of being given passion and/or ideas for a task. **I can do all things through him who strengthens me."** (Philippians 4:13)

Excellence This means being outstanding or extremely good. **"Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart as working for the Lord."** (Colossians 3:23-24)

Community This connects us with each other. **We who are many, are one body in Christ."** (Romans 12:5)



Compassion This means having a deep awareness and sympathy for another's suffering. **When Jesus went ashore, He saw a large crowd and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things."** (Mark 6:34)

Honesty This means truthfulness, loyalty, fairness, sincerity. **The Lord detests lying lips, but he delights in people who are trustworthy."** (Proverbs 12:2)

Integrity This means having strong moral principles e.g. honesty, decency, fairness, equality; having pure and balanced moral character. **Whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."** (Philippians 4:8)

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values, our Collective Worship, our grounded Christian ethos and in our Religious Education.

As a Church of England school we believe **every** child is made in the image of God, and therefore we want the best for them. We value our school community as a place where love can flourish.

Our vision and values are at the core of everything we do. In order for us to think about and understand how Jesus lived his life, we underpin our teaching and learning with the stories and parables from the Bible. We also provide an environment which fully prepares the children to be confident, compassionate, honest and happy human beings so that they can:

Go, shine in the world and live as Jesus lived.

Where does our school vision come from?

Our school vision has its roots in the gospel of St Matthew who walked with Jesus during his ministry

"You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

1. 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 in our school move forward on that journey during their time here.

2. 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.

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)



- 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.

3. 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 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.*

4. 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, our school has chosen to use the following shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development ...

We recognise spirituality as the connection between our soul (or inner life) and the delight, meaning and purpose which is found outside or beyond self. We look outwards to appreciate and cherish the wonder and awe of the world. We learn to look inwards to reflect on our experiences, to build resilience and courage, and explore life's big questions. We look onwards to discover the meaning and creative impact of our lives on those around us. Spirituality is a part of us; a window to look

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



outwards on the world, a mirror to look inwards on our belief and values, and a door to how we can live in response.

Spirituality is a unique experience for every person involving stillness, appreciation, reflection and/or prayer. It is a feeling, sense or belief that there is something greater than our physical existence, something more to being human than the things they can see, hear, smell, taste or touch, helping them to consider how it affects the way they live. In our Christian context it means that the divine nature of God affects their lives beyond our daily sensory experiences.

5. 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.



The spiritual development of pupils can be shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their 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

6. 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.

7. 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 the Head of School through:



Evaluating collective worship, evaluating lessons, scrutiny of work, pupil, parent and staff surveys, learning walks

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

8. 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/or designated senior teacher and ratified every **three years** by the Governing Body.