



St. Nicholas Church of England (VC)
Primary School

Spirituality Policy



'Love your neighbour as yourself.' Matthew 22:37

Love Friendship Courage Hope

Our Vision

St Nicholas Church of England (VC) School is a nurturing, Christian school in the heart of the community which aims to inspire life-long learning. We will encourage every individual to find their passion and achieve excellence.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength. Love your neighbour as yourself." (Matthew 22:37–39)

Legal Framework:

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook, November 2019 No. 190017, page 59 & 60, 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 but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

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.

The 2023 SIAMs Evaluation framework has 5 Inspection Questions for Voluntary Controlled schools, some of which overtly refer to spirituality and some merely infer the place of spirituality within a flourishing community;

IQ1 How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?

IQ2 How does the curriculum reflect the school's theologically rooted Christian vision?

IQ3 How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

IQ4 How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create a culture in which pupils and adults are treated well?

IQ5 How does the school's theologically rooted Christian vision create an active culture of justice and responsibility?

School Statement on Spirituality

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. To make conversations about spirituality more accessible to every member of our school community, St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School has chosen to follow ideas developed by the Education Department at the Diocese of Gloucester. This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet, in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God. Cracks may be caused when something so good and breath-taking happens that the pot expands and cracks – *the wows of life*. Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday – *the ows of life*. Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday – *the nows of life*, when a moment of stillness, a pause or prayer creates a crack in the normal, physical everyday. In these special moments there is a spiritual opportunity. Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery or glue, creates something that has been broken into something even more beautiful. Using this metaphor, the wows, ows and nows of life offer the possibility of cracks that are filled with gold and make the pot even more beautiful. The gold in the cracks reflect a little of the wonder of spirituality. St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School uses this language and the concepts of wows, ows and nows. These are used to explore relationships with:

- ourselves;
- others;
- the wider natural world and beyond and
- offering the invitation to relate to God.

Spirituality in our school: At St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School we describe spirituality as:

“A reflective, imaginative and evolving journey which is unique to each of us. It enables us to flourish through questioning and appreciating ourselves, others, the world and beyond.”

At St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School we view learning and spirituality as an intertwined reflective and life-long processes in which we develop an increased understanding of ourselves, other people, the wider world and beyond. We guide this journey for our children through a broad and balanced curriculum with deliberately planned opportunities for stillness and reflection as well as spaces provided during unstructured times.

Organisation

The spiritual growth of pupils is not only dependent on learning in Religion and Worldviews Education, opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners are developed in every aspect of our school life. We support the whole school community to share this responsibility and to develop the shared language of spirituality. Opportunities are available for all to develop spiritually in our supportive and nurturing school inspired by our vision and lived out through our Christian values.

We have identified specific physical areas which contribute to the spiritual growth of pupils:

Indoor reflection area with opportunities for awe and wonder (images of the natural world) and the indoor reflection space offers resources for creating prayers for the prayer tree which are then shared in Collective Worship. The outdoor peace garden which has been developed with the School Council provides a reflection area at break and lunchtimes as well as during planned slots in selected lesson times. Whilst our outdoor environment is surrounded by beautiful views and farm land, our playing field has numerous trees and other plants for immersion in the natural world, our wildlife area is reserved for special curriculum moments including Forest School.

Collective worship is sometimes in our church or the chapel, the communities of which we have a close relationship with, but usually in our school hall which children recognise is where we assemble for Collective Worship which can be a time for reflection and to develop our spiritual thinking.

Spiritual development:

Spiritual development involves an increasing awareness of the concepts of self which includes the search for identity and responses to experiences such as death, suffering, beauty and other varied encounters. A growing sense of others is encouraged through developing a sense of empathy, concern and compassion with reflection on how individual values affect their relationships with others.

Our aim is to enable children to become more attuned to and to develop their spirituality through use of the 'self, others, the world and beyond' structure in lesson time (e.g. PSHE, RE, Science, Geography, Reading - some deliberate choice of texts to support this, Forest School sessions), unstructured times (break and lunch times outdoors with space for social interaction and solo contemplation and events such as themed reflection days).

Ourselves

Our spirituality shapes us. Everyone is spiritual whether they have a faith and follow a religion or not. We seek to nurture and celebrate the unique value and self-worth of each member of our school family and to develop confident individuals. We use Kapow as our PSHE/RSE scheme which supports understanding of ourselves and how we relate to others.

Others

We are all part of various types and levels of community: home, school, parish, locally, nationally and globally. Spirituality and appreciation of the perspectives of others aim to develop compassion for others.

Throughout school life we encourage consideration of others by discussing the impacts of our actions at a personal level but also globally, questioning conflict and celebrating diversity.

The World

Aspects of our curriculum and Collective Worship programme encourage deep thinking about how we are all part of the global community and environment encouraging wise and loving decisions in our everyday lives through considering our impacts on other global citizens and the environment.

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School. It provides the opportunity for our school community to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality, which we use as a school, is regularly and explicitly shared.

Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present (now moments) which are often linked to invitations to pray.

Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for hearing the Christian story. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or observe, Christian spiritual practices such as: prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy and are introduced to different musical traditions.

Opportunities to reflect on the joys of life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise with the low moments of disappointment or pain. Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service.

Time is given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members especially in Celebration Worship and to mark seasonal Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually.

Collective Worship in St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

Spirituality in Religion and Worldviews Education

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality. Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils' ideas of spirituality and the language of joys, sorrows and nows where appropriate.

For further details, please refer to St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School Religion and Worldviews Education Policy and The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement.

Spirituality within the wider curriculum

Our Christian vision and values aim to develop a life-long love of learning. At St Nicholas we recognise that we are all continually learning on our journey through life and that opportunities are all around us. Spirituality cannot be easily measured but it can be nurtured and opportunities for children and adults to grow in this respect are a key part of our curriculum design. The selective use of enquiry-based learning allows children to question and explore using the framework of 'Self, Others, The World and Beyond' in all subjects within the school. Through carefully selected enquiries, within our broad and balanced curriculum, pupils are encouraged to reflect on their ideas and think about how these fit into the wider world around them. We want our pupils to be curious, reflective learners who aspire to achieve excellence.

Teaching and learning:

Through teaching and learning, the school focuses on the encouraging spiritual growth described above by ensuring:

- The curriculum and all areas of our Christian community life are driven by our vision and associated Christian values;
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life with some being gloriously unplanned and spontaneous;
- 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;
- That children's 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;
- The Religion and Worldviews Education curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives;
- Children 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;
- Promotion of strategies for positive mental health.

Spirituality within the Ethos of the Daily Life of the School

In St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School we view spiritual growth as becoming more and more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality. These opportunities happen throughout each and every day as children deal with delight, disappointment and the chance to be present with themselves.

For this reason, every member of the school community, including MDSA and administrative staff are familiar with the school's shared language of spirituality and will respond to pupils appropriately.

We have a strong tradition of inclusivity of children with a range of needs and spiritual development is seen as an area which transcends differences.

Throughout the daily life of the school, including lunch times and playtimes, pupils know that their references to wows, ows and nows will be heard and taken seriously. They will be encouraged to reflect on these experiences and be comfortable about talking about the golden glue of spirituality.

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:

- 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;

- Providing opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness;
- Sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement;
- Encouraging children to develop relationships based on the school's Christian vision and associated values;
- Enabling children to make the links between the Church and Biblical teachings, the life of the school and the wider community and how these impact on their own understanding of themselves and their place within the world today;
- Providing an environment that promotes space to reflect, think and wonder. The appendices to this policy show our progression and links to the curriculum as well as the transformation progression which supports us in measuring progress. These are based on the Ricketts grids – see appendix.

Monitoring and evaluation

The Governing Body review the policy every three years in partnership with School Leaders and consider any views expressed by parents, children and staff in order to make any changes or recommendations. Recommendations are fed back to the full governing body and are then actioned as appropriate.

Governors ensure that this policy is fully implemented and that practice is consistent with the school's Christian vision, in line with the school's monitoring policy and schedule for governors

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

- Use of the transformation progression and observing and listening to children;
- 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 spirituality means in this school by providing them with induction and development training;
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflective diaries, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art;
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

Roles and Responsibilities

Recognising there are opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners in every aspect of our school life, every member of our staff team is committed to support this spiritual growth wherever appropriate.

The Headteacher is ultimately responsible for supporting and leading spiritual development in our school, including monitoring opportunities for spiritual growth in collective worship, the whole curriculum (including RE) and the general ethos of the school within daily life although our RE Subject Leader and other adults play an active part.

This role also includes:

- Ensuring personal knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by participating in CPD and shared good practice;
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary;
- Ensuring all staff are familiar with the shared language of spirituality;
- Acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary;
- Monitoring the opportunities for spiritual growth through regular observations and learning walks in both formal and informal contexts, discussions with colleagues and pupil voice;
- Contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process.

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. ECTs and staff who are new to St Nicholas Church of England (VC) Primary School will receive training and support from the staff member identified as leading on spirituality.

This policy is shared on the school's website and is part of the induction pack for new staff and new governors.

This policy is reviewed every 3 years, or more frequently, as required.

Date of issue:	November 2023
Review Date	November 2026
To be reviewed	Headteacher, Staff and Governors
Authorised by	Headteacher and Governors

Appendix: Ricketts grid for primary schools – PTO.

Spiritual development - self

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of self – the inner person and the way that this shapes an individual's perception of themselves as a unique human being. Spiritual learners reflect on the relationship that they have with their sense of being a unique person.

Reception	Year 2	Year 4	Year 6
Encounter: Learning about life: providing openings for spiritual development through an exploration of identity and personal values.			
RE – Being special <i>Exploring puzzling questions through persona dolls</i>	SEAL 3: Say no to bullying. SEAL 1: New beginnings RE – Myself <i>Engaging in Godly Play: I wonder questions.</i>	SEAL 5: Good to be me – understanding emotions and controlling them. <i>Stilling activities such as 'Problem in a Puddle' from Stilling</i>	SEAL 4: Going for goals – identifying strengths and weaknesses. Resilience – recovering from mistakes. <i>Creating spiritual pictures: e.g. entering Spirited Arts competition</i>
Reflection: Learning from life: understanding an inner meaning of self and identity – critical reasoning and big questions.			
What makes me happy? What do I do in my spare time that I like? What things do I value?	Who am I? What am I worth? What is right and wrong? How do I decide what is right and wrong?	What are feelings? Don't we deserve to be happy? What should I do about right and wrong? What do I deserve in life? Who should I look up to? What type of person do I want to be? What difference does being loved make? Is belief in something important? What rights do I have?	Should you respect yourself over all other things? Where does your identity come from? Does more mean being happier? Is my understanding self a selfish concept? Are the opinions of my friends important to me? Are my beliefs important?
Transformation: Learning to live life: responding as a means of expressing an idea of self: developing a personal set of beliefs.			
A growing awareness of knowing what I like and what I don't like both materially and in the way that I want to be treated. Can say what I like and what I am good at.	An evolving awareness of the concept of self as more than purely physical characteristics. A growing realisation that being content with who you are is important for personal happiness. Know how to apologise and to try again. Beginning to recognise mistakes and how to deal with them in a positive way.	The awareness that the growing development of a personal identity is an important aspect of being human. A growing realisation that an emphasis on self alone is not sufficient as a means of living out the self. An evolving sense of the concept of identity as more than purely physical characteristics or our likes and hobbies. Can set goals for my work and behaviour that will help me to progress.	The awareness of the value of reflection to explore deeper responses to thoughts that help shape the 'inner self'. An understanding that we express our personal values in the way that we approach our relationship with others and the world around us. The ability to express an interpretation of this verbally. Can explain my opinions.

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Spiritual development - others

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of others – a growing empathy, concern and compassion for how to treat others. Spiritual learners reflect on how their values and principles affect their relationships with others.

Reception	Year 2	Year 4	Year 6
Encounter: Learning about life: providing openings for spiritual development: recognising the values and worth of others			
RE - Being special	SEAL 2: getting in and falling out – building successful relationships. SEAL 6: Relationships RE – Belonging <i>Engaging in Godly Play: I wonder questions.</i>	SEAL 2: Developing positive behaviour towards others. SEAL 7: Changes – how influence can be both positive and negative. The importance of decision making. <i>Engaging with parables and the teachings of Jesus i.e. Good Samaritan/ Sermon on the mount</i> <i>Reflection on stories such as If the world were a village</i>	SEAL 4: Going for goals – understanding other peoples' views. Learning to get on with different types of people. SEAL 7: Changes – learning to accept different opinions and beliefs. <i>Stilling activities such as The conflict from Stilling</i> <i>Exploring the role of Christian reformers in combating slavery in the past (and today).</i>
Reflection: Learning from life: understanding an awareness of the affect of others– a search for meaning, critical reasoning and big questions			
What makes a good friend? Why are my friends important to me? What do I like in my friends? How do my friends make me feel? How do I look after my friends and family?	Why do people bully others? How do I treat others? Do I treat other people in the same way? Should I treat everyone in the same way? Should I treat my friends differently to others? Why do we fight and argue? Should we always be loyal to our friends? How can I demonstrate compassion?	Why do people ignore others when they need help? Is being a good friend easy? Why do we sometimes hurt the feelings of our friends? How sincerely can I care for those who may be in need but I have never met? Why should we care for them? Will we ever live in a world without fighting? What responsibilities do I have for others?	Is it better to please oneself first; or others? Why do people have to suffer? What is pain? Is there such a thing as a bad person? What is worth striving for? Why isn't life always fair? Is being fair always that right thing to do? Does more mean being happier?
Transformation: Learning to live life: responding as a means of expressing an idea of relationship with others: expressing innermost thoughts through words, art or actions.			
Understanding that other people have their own views and opinions and may value different things to you.	A growing appreciation that the views and opinions of others should be listened to with respect whether those views are similar to your own or different.	Acknowledgement and respect for the rights of others to have their own deep thoughts that shape their inner self. A developing ability to enter into discussions with others about their values and opinions.	A growing empathy with the values of others and developing an understanding of the need to appreciate them to build meaningful relationships. A growing ability to express how understanding the value of others is an important part of building meaningful relationships.

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Spiritual development – world and beauty

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of a physical and creative world – a growing relationship with beauty through the ability to respond emotionally to experiences of the wonder of the natural world and the results of human creativity. Spiritual learners explore their understanding beauty and the affect this has on their perception of and relationship with the world.

Reception	Year 2	Year 4	Year 6
Encounter: Learning about life: providing openings for spiritual development: challenging experiences of beauty			
Art Music Science RE: What makes a special place? <i>Collect and make a creation table of natural objects found outside</i>	Art Music Science Geography RE: Have people spoiled a good earth? <i>Engagement with creation stories from Christian and other traditions</i>	Art Music Science Geography <i>Exploring diversity within the created world environments; Natural world DVD</i>	Art, Music, Science Geography <i>How have we made Gods world ugly? What can we do? Explore through stories like The man who planted trees by Jean Giono</i> <i>Plan and design a spiritual garden for the school</i>
Reflection: Learning from life: reflecting on experiences of beauty – a search for meaning, critical reasoning and big questions			
What types of weather do you like the most and why? What is your favourite colour and why? What sounds do you like to listen to? What makes you afraid? What is your favourite time of day/season?	Do different colours have different moods? What gives them these moods? What is the most beautiful thing in the world? Why should I care about animals and plants? How/why does the weather affect our mood?	How do we know we've found all the colours in the world? What season do you feel most reflects your personality What is the difference between hearing and listening? Should we try to tame nature? What does it mean that beauty is in the eye of the beholder? What would it be like without seasons?	What is a perfect world? Why is there ugliness in the world? Can you love something that is ugly? Why do you like certain types of music? What response do you get when you look at a piece of art? Is beauty something that you can learn, or do you just have to feel it? What is the point in being creative?
Transformation: Learning to live life: responding as a means of expressing an idea of the meaning of beauty: expressing innermost thoughts through words art or actions. Being moved emotionally by beauty.			
Have an instant response to something wonderful/ exciting and awesome happening. Evident in expression and simple phrases. Respond to sensory feelings and be able to show it.	Give a verbal response that explains a reaction to something wonderful/ exciting or awesome. Be seen to respond to a stimulus and begin to explain in simple terms verbally or through body language.	Be able to understand and give meaning to something wonderful/ exciting or awesome. Be able to verbalise their sensory responses and begin to explore their reactions to stimuli. A growing confidence to explore concepts orally.	Be able to explain/ give an emotional response to stimuli and begin to articulate this from a personal perspective. Be able to display shades of meaning when verbalising sensory responses and understand and interpret their reaction. A developing appreciation that some things don't have answers.

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Spiritual development – beyond

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of the beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday. Spiritual learners search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.

Reception	Year 2	Year 4	Year 6
Encounter: Learning about life: providing openings for spiritual development: a growing appreciation of the intangible – truth, love			
Art Music Drama <i>Becoming aware of worship through collective worship in school.</i>	RE – Beliefs <i>Engaging in Godly play, I wonder questions.</i> <i>Visiting local church; exploring the senses of worship in church touch, colour, smell sound, stillness.</i>	Science – life processes <i>Exploring children's stories that deal with death ie Heaven by Nicolas Allen / Badgers Parting Gifts by Susan Varley</i> <i>Explore Symbolism of The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe.</i> <i>Visiting different churches comparing senses of worship.</i>	RE - Easter RE - Beliefs and questions RE - Journey of life and death: what difference does belief in life after death make? <i>Creating Spiritual pictures to express ideas about God. ie entering Spirited Arts competition</i> <i>Reflecting on Death rituals connected with Christian and other traditions</i> <i>Visiting Salisbury Cathedral exploring senses of worship.</i>
Reflection: Learning from life: reflecting on the beyond – a search for meaning, critical reasoning and big questions			
What are the stars for? Why do we have rainbows? How big is the sky? What is the smallest thing there is? Why are people different? What does God look like?	Where is God? What might heaven be like? Is there such a thing as an angel? If you can't see something, is it still real? What is true happiness? When have you experienced moments of awe and wonder?	What is the purpose of the earth? Is God alive now? Why is there illness? Why do destructive things, like earthquakes, have to happen? Which is stronger – love or hate? Is it good that scientists can't explain everything? Why are there religions? What is beyond the universe?	Do we come back after death as a different being? Is there life after death? Where do our spirits go when we are dead? Do we have a soul? If so, what happens to it after death? Why do we love? What lasts forever? What is unknowable? What else is there to discover? How do we know what we don't know? What is worth dying for?
Transformation: Learning to live life: responding as a means of expressing the need to understand the purpose of life.			
Have the confidence to ask questions that have no answers.	Have a sense of enjoyment in devising and discussing questions that have no answer. Use imagination to interpret responses to big questions.	Understand what big questions are. Be able to explain imaginative responses to questions of meaning.	Can generate big questions. Begin to express through a personal vocabulary responses to questions of meaning. Begin to be able to use critical reasoning in responding to a big question

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