



## **Spirituality Policy**

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Reviewed by:	P Cuncarr	Responsibility:	Leadership
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Signature (FGB)		Signature ( Head )	<i>P Cuncarr</i>

### **VISION & VALUES OF ST JOHN AND ST JAMES**

Our vision is to create an inclusive community of aspirational learners, children, families and colleagues, working collaboratively and respectfully within a happy, nurturing environment where all flourish and achieve. Pupils are given extensive opportunities through an exciting and engaging curriculum, through which our Christian values are woven.

‘I have come that they may have life, life in all its fullness’.

John 10 verse 10

## Our Vision

Our vision is to create an inclusive community of aspirational learners, children, families and colleagues, working collaboratively and respectfully within a happy, nurturing environment where all flourish and achieve. Pupils are given extensive opportunities through an exciting and engaging curriculum, through which our Christian values are woven.

‘I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness. - John 10 verse 10

## What is spirituality?

Spirituality is a core component to ‘living life in all its fullness’ as the mind, body and soul needs to be nurtured equally. It relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone and is not dependant on a religious belief. It is also based on the search for ways to answer questions about life and a search for identity. At this school we describe spirituality as an innate sense of awe and wonder; there is something or someone more than just me. We pride ourselves on providing opportunities and experiences for our children that allow them to experience life in all its fullness.

## What do we aim to achieve for all children?

In order to foster spiritual development, the school aims to provide children with opportunities to:

- 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 core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- Experience feelings of awe and wonder;
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people’s beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others);
- Develop strategies to build good mental health and wellbeing
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions;
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life and show empathy for others’;
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others;
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination in all areas of life;

- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation through positive action.

These objectives enable our pupils to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity.

### How do we do it?

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues these 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 experiences are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and children;
- Collective worship celebrates God's love for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this;
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer;
- The school, church and other sacred places are used across the curriculum, giving children the opportunity to explore their own spirituality;
- 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;
- That moral development is linked to spiritual development through strategies such as 'windows, mirrors and doors'
- Our RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and worldview perspectives;
- That 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;
- When planning for spiritual development we focus on 3 areas: Windows, Mirrors and Doors.

A) **WINDOWS: Encounter** - The Learning about life. We give children opportunities to become aware of the world in new ways, to wonder about life's 'Wows' (things that are amazing) and 'Ows' (things that bring us up short).

B) **MIRRORS: Reflection** - The learning from life. We provide children with time for REFLECTION. We give children opportunities to reflect on their experiences, to look inward & consider the big questions of life. In this they are learning from life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others. Give emotional, physical and auditory space.

C) **DOORS: Transformation** - The learning to live by putting into action what they believe. We give children opportunities to respond to all of this; to do something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to live by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value

#### How do we monitor and evaluate the impact?

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

- Observing and listening to children;
- We use Padlets to capture, monitor and reflect on how our children live out our John 10:10 vision
- Opportunities for children to reflect and create their own thoughts and comments on collective worship
- 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 diary, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art;
- Regular inclusion in the SEF;
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

## **Appendix 1: Examples of a variety of definitions of spirituality**

**The examples below are intended to be a starting point for discussion as ‘the school community applies its own understanding of spiritual development so that teachers have the confidence and ability to move beyond planned opportunities to make the most of questions raised by the curiosity of pupils and opportunities that occur spontaneously across the curriculum’ SIAMS schedule April 2018. It should be developed with the church to ensure that it is within the tradition of the parish. These definitions will not be appropriate for everyone but we believe something in here resonates with everyone.**

- Spirituality is finding God in all things.
- Spirituality is about being contemplative in action (or enabling reflective practice).
- Spirituality is about freedom and detachment, helping us not being tied down by unimportant things and keep mindful of important things such as God and other people i.e. not ‘things and accomplishments’
- Spirituality is the inward journey, a move towards the depths of our being, where, according to the mystics, God is experienced.
- Spirituality enables us to become aware of God, one another, the world around us and ourselves.
- Spirituality is the nurturing the inner life of the soul of a child, enabling and embracing their questions, doubts and wonder of existence.
- Spirituality is a way of living in relationship with God
- ‘Within the Christian tradition all spiritualities have the same focus, union with God, an emphasis on love and a belief in Jesus as the Son of God.
- ‘Spirituality is like a bridge. Every bridge does pretty much the same thing - gets you from one place to another, sometimes over perilous ground, or a river, or great heights. But they do so in different ways (caveat: some bridges wobble!)
- Christian spirituality is a life nurtured on the example of Jesus Christ and his care for others
- Our capacity for being – God’s ways of being with us and our ways of being with God. ·

Or our capacity for:

- being in a relationship with God and God with us,
- nurturing our awareness of God being with us,
- being attentive to God being with us.
- Our capacity for being and recognising and supporting God's ways of being with children, and their ways of being with God.
- Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone.
- Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. Whilst these questions are dependent on religious affiliation or on the prerogative of religions, religion explains and addresses the fundamental questions which affect everyone.
- The term spiritual and moral development needs to be seen as applying something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and /or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – with our responses to challenging experiences, such as death or suffering. It is a way of coping with challenges and recognising success and happiness, enabling a child to flourish.
- Delighting in all things, being absorbed in the present moment, not attached to self.

**Appendix 2: Windows, mirrors and doors approach to spirituality.**

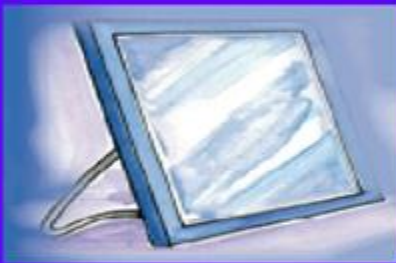
(Taken from Salisbury Diocese Spirituality Policy – Derek Holloway/Andrew Rickett 2012)

## WINDOWS:



giving children opportunities to become *aware* of the world in new ways; to *wonder* about life's 'WOWs' (things that are amazing) and 'OWs' (things that bring us up short). In this children are learning *about* life in all its fullness.

## MIRRORS:



giving children opportunities to *reflect* on their experiences; to *meditate* on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. In this they are learning *from* life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

## DOORS:



giving children opportunities to *respond* to all of this; to *do* something creative as a means of expressing, applying and further developing their thoughts and convictions. In this they are learning to *live* by putting into action what they are coming to believe and value.