

*Shine like stars in the world.'*  
*Philippians 2:15*



## **St Paul's CE Primary School**

### **Spiritual Development**

#### Vision

Our school is one family, united in love and deeply rooted in our Christian values, where together on life's journey we flourish, striving for excellence in all that we do. Inspired by the transformation of St Paul, and enlightened by the glory of God, we will shine like stars to make the world a better place.

#### Values

*Love, Forgiveness, Faith, Friendship, Hope and Peace.*

# Spiritual Development Policy

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

This policy is designed to enable us to ensure that, at St. Paul's, all areas of school life and the curriculum contribute to pupils' and staff's spiritual development and that it is deliberately encouraged and celebrated. Spirituality is finding God in all things and spiritual development relates to seeking answers to the fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. We believe that staff and children are on a journey together, deepening their spirituality and following the example of St Paul. Like him, they will face challenges and achieve triumphs along the way as they seek answers and develop their understanding.

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We believe our approach to spiritual development embodies and lives out our Christian vision because:

- **It is to do with searching for identity and how a person responds to the challenges of life.** The greatest example of this for us at St Paul's is the Conversion of Saint Paul himself and his reaction to the challenge of losing his sight and realising his calling from God. His example helps inspire children to face the challenges that they experience on their journey throughout our school, both academically and otherwise.
- **It is to do with being open to change and reflection.** Throughout their time at St Paul's and their experiences here, their understanding and appreciation of the importance of non-material aspects of the world around them will grow as they experience life in all its fullness.
- **It is to do with living our best lives, being the best version of ourselves, considering others and the impact we have on them.** A developing sense of empathy, concern and compassion and an ability to reflect on how our values and principles affect our relationships with others. Again, the example St Paul sets for us after his conversion and during his life as a missionary is central to children and staff who strive to follow this example in their interactions with each other and the wider community.
- **The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and praise, in endeavor and enquiry.** Spirituality is an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful, and, in relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving.
- **It is about creating a better world, '... shining like stars to make the World a better place' leaving our mark in a positive way.**

## 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."*<sup>1</sup>

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

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<sup>1</sup> 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)

*“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.”<sup>2</sup>*

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 Paul’s 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.

### 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.*

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

## 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."<sup>3</sup>*

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 Paul's has chosen to use the following shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development.

At St Paul's we believe that Spirituality is finding God in all things and that spiritual development relates to seeking answers to the fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. Spirituality is a part of us; a window to look outwards on the world, a mirror to look inwards on our belief and values, and a door to how we can live in response inspired by the story of the conversion of St Paul (Acts 9:1-19) See Appendix 1.

## 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.

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

- 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.

Using a variety of resources both within and external to the curriculum we encourage increased awareness of the world around us, locally, nationally and internationally to inspire a sense of awe and wonder as well as to allow questioning about the challenges people face in life. Central to this approach is finding ways in which this can be reflected on and discussed and exploring ways to develop in both children and adults the belief that they can make a difference and put the 'faith' which is growing from this, into practice.

As well as these planned opportunities within the curriculum teachers are also equipped through the school's shared language of spiritual development to respond to, encourage and build on unplanned moments that are opportunities for spiritual development. There are reflection areas within each classroom to allow the children to contemplate key ideas and questions and class Big Books to collate ideas and discussions. All members of the community have the opportunity to use our Garden of Reflection as an area set aside for contemplation and reflection and there are displays around school designed to allow our community to engage and reflect.

#### **Within the curriculum:**

- **RE** – thinking about 'big' questions, learning respect and tolerance, feeling empathy with others
- **Personal, Social and Health Education** – learning about communities, feeling valued, looking after our bodies, understanding right and wrong
- **Creative Arts**
  - Art – being creative and imaginative, expressing appreciation of other's work
  - Design and technology – learning to be creative, appreciating the work of others and how problems can be solved
  - Music – responding to music with our emotions, using imagination, creating our own music and appreciating the skill of others
  - Drama & Dance – exploring feelings and relationships through speaking, listening, role play etc appreciating and responding creatively through dance
- **English** – being inspired and excited by literature, using our imagination, asking questions
- **Geography** – developing a sense of community, expressing awe and wonder at the natural world, discovering the immensity of distances
- **History** – learning about brave and determined people from the past who have done what they believed to be right, developing the ability to empathise, being amazed at how life has changed
- **ICT/Computing** – feeling amazement at things computers can achieve and how we can find and access information across the world
- **Maths** – developing an understanding of patterns and order, understanding symbols

- **Physical Education** – having a sense of achievement at becoming better, faster, more skilful, learning to work with others
- **Science** – feeling excitement and a sense of awe and wonder, asking questions

## 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 Clare Cresswell, Head of School, Cathryn Mann, Executive Head, and Martha Hawting, RE lead and Assistant Head. through:

Curriculum design, monitoring of planning, learning walks, book looks, pupil and staff voice exercises, pupil and staff surveys, work scrutiny etc.

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. Some examples of opportunities for adults to flourish include for staff participation in and leadership of collective worships, CPD sessions, particularly those focussed around wellbeing and courageous advocacy, our staff wellbeing group who meet to discuss and identify opportunities for staff to grow and flourish together and staff participation in the orchestra and choir. For our parents there are also a range of activities. Parents are invited to attend collective worship within school and at our local churches to celebrate with the children, there are regular parent prayer meetings, neurodiversity coffee mornings organised by the SENCO to support parents and help them build support networks and a very dedicated and effective Friends group who meet regularly and organise social events and fundraising for the school. The school fund is used to support parents who might struggle with the cost of trips, for instance with the cost of school journeys, to ensure access for all to the cultural capital and enrichment opportunities we offer. For the wider community we look to initiatives such as supporting the local food bank and visiting care homes as well as encouraging our children to become outward facing active citizens identifying needs in the local area and global community and undertaking work to support those in need.

## Evaluation/Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and/or designated senior teacher and ratified every *three years* by the Governing Body.

Date of validation..... Signed.....  
Chair of Governors

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

## 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.