



Holy Trinity CE Primary School

*Strength for today,
Bright hope for tomorrow*

Policy: Spiritual Development

This Review: March 2025

Next Review: March 2028

Frequency of Review: Every 3 years

Responsible Committee: FGB

Holy Trinity Spiritual Development Policy

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



School Vision

Our school vision is rooted in the book of Isaiah chapter 40 verse 31 which tells us that those who have hope in the Lord will renew their strength.

Our hope in God leads us to have high aspirations for our learning community. We value the uniqueness of each child, made in the image of God, and seek to provide a holistic, enriched curriculum and pastoral care, empowering everyone with the strength, knowledge and wisdom to succeed and flourish.

There are 3 core drivers that help us to realise our vision:



This policy is a reflection of our theologically rooted Christian vision as it acknowledges that spiritual development is an essential part of human flourishing. In order for our community to truly 'soar on wings like eagles' we must develop good relationships with ourselves, others, the world & beauty and the beyond. Our vision sets out that spiritual development is an on-going journey, during which we may face challenges and set-backs, but if we approach the journey with hope we will find the strength we need to carry on from our relationship with God.

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. It 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 at Holy Trinity 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.
- 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.

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)

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 (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.*

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 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, Holy Trinity has chosen to use the following shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development ...

Spirituality enables us to become aware of God, ourselves, one another and the world around us. It is an ongoing, reflective journey throughout which we form our responses to what we encounter along the way.

5. Provision

The school pursues the aims by ensuring:

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

- 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.

Our approach to Spiritual Development

Our approach is influenced by the Salisbury Diocesan's Board of Education's work with Andrew Rickett & Derek Holloway (2012) on developing Spirituality in Schools.

In essence this definition includes four areas:

- **Self** (one's understanding of being a unique person)
- **Others** (how empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships; and that each of us is unique and special)
- **World and/or Beauty** (how we see and relate to the physical and creative world – this might be through responses to nature and art, for example)
- **Beyond** (relating to the 'unanswerable questions'/ the transcendental; considering our responses to experiences that might be 'outside' of those that are 'everyday')

We chose this definition because it was easy for the school community to understand and has a clear focus on relationships.

We believe that relationships are central to spiritual development at Holy Trinity. Our relationships are what give us a sense of worth and are vital to our well-being, our wholeness and our self-image. At Holy Trinity we aim to nurture relationships that demonstrate that everyone is significant, so that pupils develop a healthy relationship with themselves. Self-worth is crucial to pupils' attitudes to learning and is the bedrock upon which healthy relationships with others and the wider world are built. We aim for all our pupils to understand that they are "wonderfully made" (Psalm 139:14) and are loved by God.

Reflecting on how we relate to 'the other' is also central to spiritual development at Holy Trinity, whether that be with other members of our community, the environment around us, or with God. It is the sense that we are part of something bigger than ourselves and have a part to play in shaping the future.

Spiritual Development – Encounter, Reflection and Transformation

Central to The Church of England's Vision for Education is the desire that pupils will experience "life in all its fullness" (John 10:10). The spirit, just as the body, has needs that must be met if it is to develop healthily. Therefore we aim to educate the whole child by providing a broad, enriched curriculum that encourages an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful. Moments of wonder, discovery and creativity can be the catalyst for spiritual development. Hence, we seek opportunities for pupils to experience these regularly throughout their time at Holy Trinity. We refer to experiences of this type as an **encounter**, as they provide an opportunity for pupils to meet with a new experience or discover another perspective on the world. Subject leaders have mapped opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum. We have also planned encounters that challenge and stimulate pupils to reflect on themselves, others, the world & beauty and the beyond.

Reflection allows pupils to see things more clearly, ask questions and clarify their responses to ideas, phenomena and situations. It is as a result of these reflections that spiritual development happens. Pupils have regular opportunities to reflect alone and with others. Daily acts of worship and Religious Education provide time for pupils of all faiths to consider their individual responses to life's big questions. Equally, listening to the perspectives of others is important to developing healthy relationships and there are planned opportunities to do this throughout the curriculum. Encounter days are designed to focus their reflections

Spiritual development takes place when a pupils' responses to ideas, situations and experiences show that their understanding of how they relate to God, others and the world around them has matured. We call this a **transformation**. Transformation can be evidenced in a variety of ways. For example, a pupil may make better choices about their own behaviour, develop more nuanced attitudes, allow for differences of opinion, or take on more responsibility. It can also be seen in purposeful responses to an encounter, for example, through the arts, social action or an act of giving.

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 Keeley McCleave, Head of School, through:

- Monitoring of planning
- Monitoring of outcomes e.g. book looks, artwork
- Learning walks
- Pupil voice e.g. questionnaires, House Captain meetings, meetings with specific groups of pupils
- Staff voice e.g. staff meetings, briefings, INSET, questionnaires

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) 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.