

Our vision - Good ground grows well.



## ST MARY'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

*Through our Christian ethos, we teach children to hear, understand and live the word of God, helping them to give back to the world as global citizens. As every child is uniquely created in God's image, we nurture their individual development through a holistic approach to all aspects of life.*

### Spirituality Policy

Date policy accepted by the Governing Body:	Autumn 2024
Date for review:	Autumn 2027

### **Our Vision - 'Rooted, Grow, Flourish'**

The vision of St Mary's is grounded in the Parable of the Sower. Through collective and personal prayer, children are taught how to communicate with God in both good and difficult times. Through teaching and lived example, children learn to look to the Gospels for inspiration and develop a secure understanding of what it means to hope, persist, forgive, and be forgiven. We acknowledge that every member of our school community is unique, with their own particular interests, strengths, and needs. However, through listening to God, everyone at St Mary's seeks to grow in His grace, becoming more open to His love and giving back to the world in meaningful ways. We aim to provide a stimulating curriculum with an environmental focus that prepares our children both intellectually and spiritually for the challenges of the 21st century.

At St Mary's, spirituality is the inward journey—a move towards the depths of our being, where God is experienced. We describe spirituality as the quest for individual identity and the search for meaning and purpose in our existence. It leads to a deeper understanding of self and others. Spirituality involves feelings, emotions, attitudes, and beliefs. It is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith and is therefore accessible to everyone. This inclusive approach supports the multicultural and multi-faith context of our school, which we celebrate.

**St Mary's aims** to establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual development 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 an understanding of the distinctive vision of the school, as well as the context, language, and symbolism of the Christian faith.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them.

- 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 part of a community (e.g., using their gifts and abilities to inspire others to grow and flourish).
- Develop strategies to build good mental health (see Mental Health Policy).
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions.
- Develop the skills and language required to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life.
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around encounters and events in their lives.
- Develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure, and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth.
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity, and imagination.
- Develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty, etc.
- Develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder, and a commitment to care for creation.
- Develop the skills to reflect on life, relationships, and the wider world.

These objectives enable pupils to live a full life encompassing respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, and understanding, and to develop relationships reflecting order, reason, balance, and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

### ***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).*

### **Teaching and Learning**

Through teaching and learning, St Mary's pursues its aims and objectives by ensuring that:

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life are 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 opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged, and/or celebrated by staff and children.
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect.
- 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.

- 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.
- Opportunities are provided for children 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 is given for learning to live with success and failure, both individually and alongside others.
- The RE curriculum delivers knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a range of world faith and worldview 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, for example through Forest School.
- Strategies to promote positive mental health, such as Wellbeing Days for children, are implemented (see Appendix 1).
- The curriculum and collective worship provide opportunities for reflection, response, and action.

### **Approaches**

At St Mary's, we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to children's spiritual development and highlight opportunities for this in our planning by:

- Encouraging children to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life, and fostering an interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings, and values.
- Supporting a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others, and the world around them.
- Promoting the use of imagination and creativity in their learning.
- Encouraging a willingness to reflect on their experiences.
- Fostering spiritual capacities, such as imagination, insight, and empathy.
- Providing children with the security and opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions, and to celebrate diversity.
- Offering opportunities for prayer, including moments of silence and stillness.
- Sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance, and encouragement.
- Encouraging children to develop relationships grounded in the school's Christian vision and associated values.
- Enabling children to make links between Biblical teaching, the life of the school, and the wider community, and to understand how these impact their understanding of themselves and their place in the world today.
- Creating an environment that promotes space to reflect, think, and wonder, in the centre of the school's main building, outdoor learning areas, and prayer spaces in each classroom.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

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.
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values.
- Sharing classroom work and practice.
- Ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in this school through induction and ongoing development training.

- Reviewing evidence from pupils' work, including RE books, Learning Journeys, SMSC activities, creative writing, and art.
- Regular inclusion in the SEF.
- Evaluating how worship is being used to provide opportunities to look outward, reflect inward, and take meaningful action.

We recognise that spirituality extends beyond formal religion and often becomes more important in times of emotional stress, physical or mental illness, loss, bereavement, and as life approaches death. Schools should provide opportunities for **inclusive spiritual development** that supports good mental health, while also offering chances to learn from people of different faiths and beliefs about how their spirituality shapes them and contributes to their wellbeing. Religious Education, which encourages engagement with diverse perspectives, can support this. Schools are also encouraged to build relationships with religious leaders in their community to enrich spiritual development and provide support that acknowledges pupils' faith where relevant.

- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.

### **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.

## **Appendix 1: Extract from the Mental Health and Wellbeing Guidance; Advice for Schools and SIAMS Inspectors 2018**

### **1. Spirituality and Mental Health**

The Royal College of Psychiatrists has published guidance on spirituality and mental health, identifying ways in which aspects of spirituality can offer real benefits for mental health. Recognising and supporting pupils' spiritual needs- including opportunities to reflect, explore, and take positive action can be an important part of promoting overall wellbeing.