

Our vision - Good ground grows well.



ST MARYS CHURCH OF ENGLAND 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:	Summer 2026
Date for review:	Summer 2029

School Vision

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 weaknesses. 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 many times over. We aim to provide a stimulating curriculum with an environmental focus that will prepare our children both intellectually and spiritually for the challenges of the 21st century.

Spirituality at St Mary's Church of England School Supported By our School Vision

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 towards the understanding of self and others. It has to do with feelings, emotions, attitudes and beliefs. It is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith and spiritual development is therefore accessible to everyone. This supports the multicultural and multi-faith context in our school, which we celebrate.

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 St Mary’s Church of England School move forward on that journey during their time here.

At St Mary’s Church of England School our aim is 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 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.

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)

- 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.

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).

- *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?*

In The Ofsted School Inspection Toolkit (2025), the evaluation area of personal development and well-being considers:

'pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development, which can be seen across the school's activities'.

To meet the 'Expected standard' in this area:

'A coherent and appropriate programme of personal development extends across the taught curriculum and wider opportunities and experiences. It makes a positive difference to pupils and enables them to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally.'

Shared Understanding and Spiritual Development

As a church school, it is our 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 Mary's Church of England School has chosen to use the following shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development. *Window's, Mirror's and Door's* by Liz Mills.

At St Mary's Church of England School, we recognise spirituality as the connection between our inner life and the delight, meaning and purpose found beyond ourselves. Spirituality is an important part of human development and is nurtured through relationships, reflection, creativity, faith, and experience.

At the heart of our approach is the belief that every person is unique and valued. Through the Christian faith, the teachings of the Bible, and shared Christian practice, pupils are encouraged to grow spiritually and morally within a caring and inclusive community. We look outwards to appreciating and valuing the wonder and awe of the world. We learn to look inwards to reflect on our experiences, to build resilience and courage, and explore life's big questions. We look onwards to discover the meaning and creative impact of our lives on those around us. Spirituality is a part of us; a **window** to look outwards on the world, a **mirror** to look inwards on our beliefs and values, and a **door** to how we can live in response.

Provision

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues the aims and objectives by ensuring:

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- 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.

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 by:

- 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 through Windows, Mirrors, Doors by Liz Mills

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.

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 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. reflection in RE books and Wonder books, creative writing, art;
- Regular inclusion in both the whole school SEF and the RE SEF
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice and training with other schools.

Provision for spiritual development is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

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.

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.....
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