

St Paul's Church of England Primary School

Spirituality Policy

Adopted by Governing Body – February 2024

Review schedule- Every 3 yrs (or as necessary)

Next review- Autumn 2027

School Vision



At St Paul's, we will nurture and inspire all children to enjoy a life-long journey of discovery and friendship. Through God's love and Jesus' teachings, our school community will support each child to flourish as curious, compassionate and resilient citizens with a love of learning.

"Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it."

Proverbs 22:6

Introduction

At St Paul's, we recognise that developing the spirituality of our pupils and adults is a fundamental aspect of enabling pupils and adults to flourish. Provision for developing spirituality is well planned and of high quality so that the whole community is engaged on a journey of discovery.

Spiritual development differs from person to person and is a very personal experience. For this reason, it is difficult to put into words. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith. For Christians in church, spirituality is about developing a deeper understanding of and connection with God. Through this we are able to respond to the loving nature of God as revealed through the Trinity: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. A school is not a church, but it is a collection of people who come from a variety of backgrounds for the purpose of education. Family backgrounds may be very different and spiritual development must take account of the varied circumstances of staff and pupils.

Therefore, in light of this and in light of our school's distinctively Christian vision, at St Paul's we define spirituality as: having concern or care for the human spirit or soul, rather than material or physical things. It can include ideas about or belief in God. (*The Children's Trust, 2023*)

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1 Legal Framework: Links to OFSTED and SIAMS expectations

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook, November 2019 No. 190017, pages 59 and 60 states:

Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This a broad concept that can be seen across the school's activities but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

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.

The SIAMS Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors, April 2018, includes the question:

- How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development, enabling all pupils to flourish? (Strand 2)

2 School Statement on Spirituality

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. To make conversations about spirituality more accessible to every member of our school community, St Paul's CE Primary School has chosen to follow ideas developed by the Education Department at the Diocese of Gloucester.

This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet, in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.

Cracks may be caused when something so good and breath-taking happens that the pot expands and cracks – the **wows** of life.

Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday – the **ows** of life.

Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday – the **nows** of life, when a moment of stillness, a pause or prayer creates a crack in the normal, physical everyday.

In these special moments there is a spiritual opportunity. Kintsugi, the Japanese arts of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery or glue, creates something that has been broken into something even more beautiful. Using this metaphor, the **wows**, **ows** and **nows** of life offer the possibility of cracks that are filled with gold and make the pot even more beautiful. The gold in the cracks reflect a little of the wonder of spirituality.

St Paul's CE Primary School uses this language and the concepts of **wows**, **ows** and **nows**. These are used to explore relationships with:

- ourselves
- others

- the wider natural world and beyond
- and offering the invitation to relate to God

3 Aims

Through establishing the right learning environment in which spiritual development can be fostered, we aim to support pupils and adults to:

- develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value
- develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos at St Paul's, 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 a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others)
- develop strategies to build good mental health
- foster self-awareness and the ability 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
- 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
- develop a love of curiosity, creativity and imagination
- develop the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion and beauty
- develop a capacity to value the natural world, a sense of awe and wonder and a commitment to care for creation.

These objectives will enable pupils and adults to have a quality of life that encompasses respect, awareness, compassion, curiosity, understanding and relationships that reflect order, reason, balance and integrity within the context of Christian faith.

4 Organisation

The spiritual growth of pupils is not only dependent on learning in RE, opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners are developed in every aspect of our school life.

We support the whole school community to share this responsibility and to develop the shared language of spirituality. Opportunities are available for all to develop spiritually in our supportive and nurturing school inspired by our vision and lived out through our Christian values.

Every classroom has a quiet Reflective Area for quiet, contemplative thoughts, and staff and children tend to our gardens as calm spaces for spiritual reflection.

We have identified specific areas which contribute to the spiritual growth of pupils: collective worship, the whole curriculum, including RE and the general ethos of the school within daily life.

5 Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of St Paul's. It provides the opportunity for our school community to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality, which we use as a school, is regularly and explicitly shared.

Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present (**now** moments) which are often linked to invitations to pray.

Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for hearing the Christian story. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or observe, Christian spiritual practices such as: prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy and are introduced to different musical traditions.

Opportunities to reflect on the **wows** of life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise of the **ow** moments of disappointment or pain. Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time is given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark seasonal Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. Collective Worship in St Paul's is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

6 Spirituality in Religious Education

The Church of England's *Statement of Entitlement* outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality.

Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils' ideas of spirituality and the language of **wows**, **ows** and **nows** where appropriate.

For further details, please refer to St Paul's Religious Education Policy and The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement.

7 Spirituality within the Curriculum

St Paul's school values of curiosity, compassion and resilience are a driver in our whole school curriculum design and these values inspire pupils' spiritual growth.

Drawing on the language of **wows**, **ows** and **nows**, conversations around spirituality will be included in classroom teaching from EYFS to Year 6.

Outlined below are some ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted as part of the curriculum:

In English

Points to consider:

- Empathy with authors and the characters in stories and plays
- The appreciation of the beauty in language

- Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech
- Heroes and heroines in literature
- Imagining oneself as someone else
- Escaping into other worlds through literature
- The element of wonder in literature
- The values of great works

In Maths

Points to consider:

- Infinity and nothing
- Pattern and order
- Shape and regularity
- Truth, certainty and likelihood
- The universality of mathematics over time and space
- The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations

In Science

Points to consider:

- Wonder as the basis of science
- Questions of beginning, creation and evolution
- Birth, life, death and renewal
- The universe and beyond
- Discovering the limits of experimentation
- Regularity and order in science
- Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists
- The impact of scientific achievements

In Geography

Points to consider:

- Wonder at the diversity of environments and people
- Land formation
- Questions about the care of the environment
- World (economic) development
- Empathy with people from other parts of the world
- The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns

In History

Points to consider:

- Being part of history
- Handling artefacts
- Influential events and people
- The commitment of significant people in history
- The nature and importance of invention and exploration

- Empathy with people from other times in history

In the Creative Arts (Art and Design, Music, Drama and Dance)

Points to consider:

- The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places
- Beauty, truth and goodness
- Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs
- Artistic creativity
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses
- Skill in creation and performance
- Personal response and preference

In Design and Technology

Points to consider:

- Discovering how something works
- Appreciating genius
- Beauty in design
- Perseverance to solve problems
- Personal achievement
- Learning from others and nature

In Computing

Points to consider:

- The wonder of worldwide instant communication
- The speed of the growth of knowledge
- The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide

In Physical Education

Points to consider:

- Being a team member
- Pushing yourself to the limit
- Extremes of skill, endurance and achievements
- Emotion in sport
- Personal limitation and failure
- Appreciation of perfection
- Sportsmanship

In PSHCE and RSE

Points to consider:

- Relationships with others, feelings and attitudes, keeping safe
- Ideas of honesty and sensitivity needed for gentle reflection

In addition

Pupils have opportunities to:

- visit places of beauty, interest and challenge
- admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts
- work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations
- experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level
- engage in activities that promote courageous advocacy
- participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches, etc.

8 Spirituality within the Ethos of the Daily Life of the School

At St Paul's we view spiritual growth as becoming more and more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality. These opportunities happen throughout each and every day as children deal with delight, disappointment and the chance to be present with themselves.

For this reason, every member of the school community is familiar with the school's shared language of spirituality and will respond to pupils appropriately.

Throughout the daily life of the school, including lunch times and playtimes, pupils know that their references to **wows**, **ows** and **nows** will be heard and taken seriously. They will be encouraged to reflect on these experiences and be comfortable about talking about the **golden glue of spirituality**.

9 Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The governing body review the policy in partnership with Senior Leaders and consider any views expressed by parents, children and staff in order to make any changes or recommendations. Recommendations are fed back to the full governing body and are then actioned as appropriate.

Governors ensure that this policy is fully implemented and that practice is consistent with the school's Christian vision, in line with the school's monitoring policy and schedule for governors.

10 Roles and Responsibilities

Recognising there are opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners in every aspect of our school life, every member of our staff team is committed to support the spiritual growth wherever appropriate.

Sarah Wilkinson is responsible for supporting and leading spiritual development in our school, including monitoring opportunities for spiritual growth in collective worship, the whole curriculum (including RE) and the general ethos of the school within daily life.

This role also includes:

- Ensuring personal knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by participating in CPD and shared good practice
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- Ensuring all staff are familiar with the shared language of spirituality
- Acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary
- Monitoring the opportunities for spiritual growth through regular observations and learning walks in both formal and informal contexts, discussions with colleagues and pupil voice
- Contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process particularly around Strand 2

11 Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. ECTs and staff who are new to St Paul's will receive training and support from the staff member identified as leading on spirituality.

This policy is shared on the school's website and is part of the induction pack for new staff and new governors.

This policy will be reviewed by the Governing Body on a 3-yearly basis.