



Spiritual Development Policy

Adopted by	Full Governing Body
On date	September 2024
Next review date	September 2027

Introduction

Spiritual development is one of the stated purposes of schooling since the 1944 Education Act. It is a term which is difficult to define. But it is important to do so, to enable a shared understanding and to ensure that spiritual development is a central thread of our Church of England school.

This policy defines what we mean by the terms, spirituality and spiritual development. It also describes how we seek to 'create spaces where spirituality is affirmed and spiritual growth can happen.'

Dave Smith: Making sense of spiritual development 1999

Legal Framework: Links to OFSTED and SIAMS expectations

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook, 2024 (paragraph 332) states that Ofsted will evaluate the effectiveness of a school's provision for the spiritual development of pupils which 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 Framework, 2023, assessed spirituality through the following enquiry questions:

IQ2 How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?

IQ3 How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

What is Spirituality?

Spirituality is the way in which we combine our thoughts and emotions to reflect, respond to, and seek to give meaning and purpose to the experiences that we encounter in life. It has to do with human wholeness, to our responses to both the awe filled and awful moments of life, it is part of our capacity for profound and significant thinking and being. It is entwined with a person's morals and may or may not encompass a relationship with God. Put simply, to be human is to be spiritual.

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 as 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 art 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.

How do we support Spiritual Development at St Leonard's Lower School?

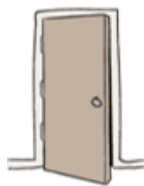
We have adopted Liz Mills' windows, mirrors, doors framework which enables us to plan purposefully for spiritual development across the whole school curriculum and beyond.



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 consider life's big questions and their 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.

Effective learning in itself is a spiritual experience. This is because learning involves engagement with and exploration of a new concept [windows], thinking deeply about it, trying to connect it to what we already know [mirrors]. If we can successfully fit this new concept to our pre-existing web of understanding, this evokes a positive emotional response [we often describe this as: the penny drops!] With each new concept acquired, we transform ourselves [doors], moving forward in life a little altered, intrinsically motivated, fulfilled and inspired by the experience.

Why is spiritual development important to us?

At St Leonard's VA Lower School our Christian faith and values form the basis of everything we do. We are **'growing and learning together with God's love'**.

Our school community is inspired by the Parable of the Sower. We are encouraged to think about and understand that the smallest things have the greatest potential when they are provided with the best conditions for growth.

We aim to create a school community built on the foundations of our 'Christian values', where all children feel safe, secure, welcome, included, challenged and nurtured and where they can grow and flourish personally, academically, socially and spiritually.

As a Church school we believe that our role is to educate the whole child and that the spiritual growth of our children is as important as, and indeed is a vital contributor to, their academic development.

The themes developed each week through our collective worship, our school vision (above), as well as opportunities woven throughout our curriculum underpin all we seek to develop in the lives of our children to help them to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

Organisation:

We have highlighted below some of the ways in which spiritual development is planned for and encouraged across the curriculum and life of the school. Equally important are the events that cannot be planned for and which rely on spiritually a-tuned teachers taking the opportunity, as the situation presents itself, to give a moment of spirituality the space and time in an otherwise busy day.

Collective Worship provides opportunities for:

Reflection and response

Thinking deeply and drawing links between ideas

Stillness and prayer

The respect of personal and collective beliefs

Sharing and celebrating common beliefs

Celebrating success and talent

Sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear, etc.

Shared activities such as singing, listening, laughing, reflecting on a theme

Remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance

Emphasizing common purpose and values

Experiencing emotions

Creative responses to experience such as music, drama, poetry, story

The use of visual stimulus such as religious symbols, candles, art, icons, photos, video

Religious Education is a subject that looks at the spiritual experiences of others and how these change and shape their lives. RE allows children to use what they find out about other people and their beliefs to reflect on their own experiences. Through this process, children can engage with ultimate questions of meaning and purpose and begin to shape their own beliefs. RE allows children to engage with the idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.

The wider curriculum also provides opportunities for spiritual development:

In Physical Education: Being a team member. Pushing yourself to the limits. Extremes of skill, endurance and achievement. Emotion in sport such as those evoked through success and failure. Personal limitation and acceptance that others may perform better, appreciation of perfection. Sportsmanship.

In Design and Technology: Discovering how something works. Appreciating ingenuity. Beauty in design. Perseverance to solve problems. Personal achievement. Learning from others and nature.

In English: Empathy with authors and the characters in stories and plays. Inference. The appreciation of beauty in language. Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech. The values of great works. Heroes and heroines in literature. The reading and writing of poetry. Imagining oneself as someone else. Escaping into other worlds through literature. The element of wonder in literature. Pleasure derived from the creative process.

In Maths: 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, real life problems.

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

In ICT: The wonder of worldwide instant communication. The speed of the growth of knowledge. The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.

In the Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance): 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. The arts as means of expressing mood. Skill in creation and performance, and particularly in personal reflection upon their own creativity using various art forms. Effects on the emotions and senses. Personal response and preference. The sense of fulfillment and transcendence through performance.

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

In History: Being in touch with past people, things and ideas. Being part of history. Handling artefacts. Influential events and people. The commitment of significant people in history. War and peace. Interpretation in history. The nature and importance of invention and exploration. Empathy with people from other times in history.

In MFL: What motivates language learning? For example, buying an ice cream on holiday or welcoming and comforting a stranger in our country? What does it feel like to genuinely communicate with someone in a new language?

PSHCE & RSE Points to consider: As you explore topics such as relationships, feelings & attitudes, keeping safe and 'your body' where are the natural links with the wows, ows and nows? Opportunities for mindfulness through calm me time.

Forest School: Forest School is the perfect setting to foster spiritual development because being in the natural world is the easiest way to feel awe and a sense of being connected to something bigger. Seeing flowers burst into life, watching flames flicker on a fire, exploring habitats or finding a dead animal all provide opportunities to be in awe, wonder and understand the flow and balance of the natural world. Nature also provides a calming environment that allows us to more deeply connect to ourselves and the world around us.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Standards and Curriculum committee will review this policy in partnership with Senior/ Middle Leaders and considering 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.

Roles and Responsibilities

Every member of our staff is committed to supporting spiritual growth wherever appropriate, recognising there are opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners in every aspect of our school life. Sarah Bowley, Headteacher 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/or 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

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. NQTs and staff who are new to St Leonard's Lower School 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 is reviewed every 3 years, or more frequently, as required.