



All Saints C of E Infant and Nursery School

Selston C of E Infant and Nursery School

Spirituality Policy

*“Opening hearts and minds through
the grace and love of God”*

**Reviewed: September 2023
Next Review Date: September 2026**

ALL SAINTS CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VA) INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

SELSTON CHURCH OF ENGLAND (VC) INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

MISSION STATEMENT

Opening hearts and minds through the grace and love of God

At All Saints Infant and Nursery School and Selston Infant and Nursery School children always come first and we try to nourish, challenge, prepare and inspire them within a Christian ethos.

We believe in valuing all who contribute towards the successful running of our schools including children, parents, carers, governors, teaching and non-teaching staff.

This Mission Statement lies at the heart of our schools' aims. It is the philosophical basis for all of the schools' policies and through these, for everything that happens in and round our schools. Our aspiration is for everyone at All Saints and Selston to:

- feel happy, secure, safe and valued at school
- develop a growing awareness of their own inner self and spirituality, and of the power of the Christian faith to transform lives
- develop healthy relationships based on care, trust, compassion and forgiveness
- show acceptance for and understanding of others who may have different beliefs or needs
- strive for the highest standards of achievement, developing the confidence and skills to be independent, motivated and self-disciplined learners
- have a positive approach to life, contributing to the well-being of the community and building hope for the future

We hope that children will leave our schools with open hearts and minds, ready to respond to the opportunities that lie before them and to experience the joy of life in all its fullness.

Spirituality Policy

Aims

We aim to promote the spiritual development of all our children by:

- developing an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;
- developing an understanding of the distinctive ethos of our schools as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;
- developing knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- developing an awareness of and respect for other people's beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own;
- developing 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);
- developing strategies to build good mental health;
- fostering self-awareness and supporting children to make informed decisions;
- developing the skills and language required to enable children to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;
- helping children to understand and make sense of their feelings and emotions about events that occur in their lives;
- developing an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;
- understanding the value of difference and diversity through engagement with others;
- encouraging curiosity, creativity and imagination;
- developing the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe and wonder, compassion, beauty etc.;
- developing a capacity to value the natural world and a commitment to care for creation.

We seek to achieve these aims by:

- ensuring that our Christian vision and values permeate all aspects of school life;
- planning opportunities for spiritual development into the curriculum;
- recognising and celebrating unplanned and spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development;
- ensuring Collective Worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond to this;
- nurturing and developing an understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, of prayer and of the Bible;
- providing spaces for silence, stillness and prayer;
- fostering children's spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight through the creative arts, making use of the outdoor environment and educational visits;

- providing 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;
- developing the capacity for children to live with both their own and others' successes and failures;
- developing children's knowledge and understanding of spirituality from a number of world faith and world view perspectives through the RE curriculum;
- providing 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;
- fostering children's spiritual capacities, e.g. imagination, insight and empathy;
- providing opportunities for children to explore and express feelings and emotions and celebrate diversity in a safe environment;
- sharing feelings and experiences that foster hope, joy, reassurance and encouragement;
- encouraging children to develop healthy relationships.

Introduction

As Church of England schools, our spirituality is expressed through our understanding of the Christian Gospel, rooted in the person of Jesus Christ. We fully respect that our children belong to Christian families, families of other faiths and families of no faith, and that they will hold beliefs and values of their own. Our aim is to enable all our children to reflect deeply on what it means to be human and to ascribe meaning and value to human existence.

Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. Whilst these questions are not dependent on religious affiliation or on the prerogative of religions, as Church schools we set this development within a Christian framework, encouraging all to have a positive approach to life and build hope for the future.

We describe spirituality as finding God in all things. We want our children to become aware of God, of one another and the world around them. We aim to nurture the inner life of our children, encouraging and embracing their questions, doubts and the wonder of existence. We want our children to reflect on what it means to be in relationship with God and to develop their awareness of God's presence with them.

Spirituality can also be described as an appreciation of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful, and in relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving. The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and success, in endeavour and enquiry. Spirituality is something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses or expressed through everyday language. It is to do with the universal search for individual identity and truth and can often be found in our challenging life experiences, such as death or suffering.

The Wows, Ows and Nows of Life

Our view 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. We use 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.

Windows, Mirrors, Doors

The imagery of windows, mirrors and doors is used to help children and adults explore and express their responses to the wows, ows and nows of life.

Windows:

- looking out to the world in new ways
- thinking about life's wows and things that are amazing
- thinking about life's ows that take us by surprise
- learning about life in all its fulness

Mirrors:

- reflecting on experiences
- looking inside ourselves
- considering life's big questions and looking for answers
- learning from life and exploring our own insights and those of others

Doors:

- responding in different way
- moving onto a new path or situation
- doing something creative to develop and apply our ideas
- learning to live out our beliefs and values

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of our schools. It provides the opportunity for our school communities to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality is regularly and explicitly shared. Collective Worship provides the opportunity for children 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, children 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 with the ow moments of disappointment or pain. Children 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 children are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. Collective Worship in our schools is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

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 our schools' approach to RE and spirituality. Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all children, 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 children's ideas of spirituality and the language of wows, ows and nows where appropriate.

Spirituality within the Curriculum

Our Christian vision is a driver for the curriculum design in our schools in the following ways:

1. We design thematic units that explore spiritual themes such as love, kindness, forgiveness, and community.
2. We plan opportunities for spiritual development in different subjects. For instance, in art, children can create pieces that express their understanding of God's creation, while in science, discussions can include the wonder of nature and the universe.
3. We allocate curriculum time for pupils to reflect on their experiences and feelings. This could be through journaling, prayer, or quiet contemplation.
4. We implement Godly Play sessions where children engage with biblical stories in a way that invites them to explore their own spiritual questions and understandings.

5. We create an environment where children feel safe to ask big questions about faith, existence, and morality. We facilitate discussions that allow them to explore their beliefs and those of others.
6. We introduce age-appropriate philosophical questions related to spirituality and ethics, encouraging children to think critically and reflect on their beliefs.
7. We engage children in community service projects that embody Christian values, such as charity work or environmental stewardship. This helps them understand their role in the wider community and the importance of caring for others.
8. We recognise and celebrate the diverse beliefs and backgrounds of all children, through workshops or discussions about different faiths, promoting respect and understanding.

Drawing on the language of wows, ows and nows, conversations around spirituality will be included in classroom teaching when appropriate from Nursery to Year 2.

Spirituality within the Ethos of the Daily Life of the School

In our schools, 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, our staff have become familiar with our shared language of spirituality and will respond to children appropriately. Throughout the daily life of the school, including lunch times and playtimes, children 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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues to grow throughout our lives. However, we will monitor and evaluate the quality of our provision for spiritual development in the following ways;

- observing and listening to children;
- discussions at staff and governors' meetings;
- sharing of classroom work and practice;
- ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spirituality means in our schools through induction and CPD;
- reviewing children's work, e.g. Collective Worship feedback, RE portfolios, PSHE, creative writing, art and music;
- reviewing planning;
- inclusion in the school's self-evaluation process.

Governors ensure that this policy is fully implemented, reviewed regularly and that practice is consistent with the school's Christian vision.