

Spirituality Policy

Our vision:

Jesus grew in wisdom, in health and in favour with God and people. Luke 2 v 52

Preamble

This verse from the New Testament gives us a picture of how Jesus grew through his own childhood and education. He grew in understanding, in well-being, in spiritual ways and socially. He presents us with a model that is robust both theologically and educationally.

Vision Statement

At St Denys we are seeking to build a school founded upon Christian values in which children can grow in wisdom through learning and reflection, stay safe and well under the care and guidance of passionate and well-trained staff and volunteers, and develop a healthy spirituality that is demonstrated through our values, and which form the basis for a compassionate, inclusive and generous hearted community.

As we seek the holistic development of each child, we will recognise their unique potential and the part they can play in building a loving, learning community. When Jesus met Simon the disciple he said to him, you are Simon, you will be Peter, my rock. (John 1 v 42) He saw the potential for good in the person before him. All our staff and governors strive to look on our children in the same way and we encourage the same vision for all members of our community.

By embedding our Christian values deep into our curriculum, our policies, our collective worship, and our relationships both within and without the school community we will seek to set children on a path that will lead them to becoming wise, kind and caring members of society. The story of the Good Samaritan carries the command to go and do the same. (Luke 10 v 37) That is both our challenge and our inspiration.



Gy3L
Grow in Wisdom
Live Well
Love God
Love Others

Our vision influences the ethos of our school and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is a core thread that runs through our school, and we attach great importance to it for both children's development and for the growth and well-being of all within our school community.

We aim for children, and adults, to grow in their ability to:

- be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others
- be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life like friends and family, and show generosity towards others

Our working definition of 'spirituality':

As a staff and governor team, we have agreed on a definition of spiritual development in our school community to support us as we talk about spirituality.

Spirituality is delighting in all things, being absorbed into the present moment, not too attached to self, and eager to explore boundaries of 'beyond' and 'other', searching for meaning, discovering purpose, open to more. (Rebecca Nye)

Legal requirements:

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.

The SIAMS Framework 2023:

IQ2: How does the curriculum reflect the school's theologically rooted Christian vision?

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

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

IQ3a: How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/Methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?

IQ3b: How do partnerships with the DBE and/or MAST, and partnerships with parish/local church/es enhance this?

IQ3c: In what ways is the worship life of the school inclusive, invitational, and inspirational?

IQ3d: 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?

The Church of England Vision for Education:

Has a core desire for 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) which requires educating the whole person.

The OFSTED Framework 2024:

The latest School Inspection Handbook for S5 inspections looks at the spiritual development of pupils under the Personal Development judgement. It can be interpreted in many diverse ways and inspectors will consider how the school supports and develops pupils' spiritual development quite broadly. This includes being reflective about their religious beliefs and having respect for other people's beliefs and values. It also looks at how a school encourages and develops a much wider sense of spirituality- perhaps an appreciation of music, poetry, nature, etc. An important aspect would be how pupils are able to reflect.

Provision includes developing pupils:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faith, 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 experience

Organisation and Implementation:

Spiritual development is an important element of a child's education and fundamental to all other areas of learning.

Without curiosity, without the inclination to question, and without the exercise of imagination, insight and intuition, children would lack the motivation to learn.

In view of this teaching styles are adopted which:

- Value the children's questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.
- Enable the children to make connections between aspects of their learning.
- Encourage the children to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference, e.g. asking 'why?', 'how?', and 'where?' as well as 'what?'.

Spirituality is not taught but is an inherent interwoven part of all aspects of school life and is nurtured and promoted as a natural element of the curriculum.

The following opportunities will be made available, as an integral part of the school's practice, in order to facilitate the development of spirituality:

- To explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives.
- Where children already have religious beliefs, to support and develop these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them as an integral part of the school's practice. We recognise the importance and value of recognising, discussing and learning from all beliefs held within our school.
- To engage in enquiry and exploration as part of experiential, first hand learning.
- To look attentively and observe carefully.
- To be creative and imaginative.
- To listen with discernment.
- To reflect and respond to issues in moments of quiet or inspired through music, art, text, film or artefacts.
- To explore and develop what animates themselves and others.
- To understand human feelings and emotions, the way they impact on people and how an understanding of them can be helpful.
- To value what is good and worthwhile and to make value judgements through discussion and exchange of views.
- To work collaboratively with peers, valuing the contribution made by others.
- To respect all, as modelled by staff in their relationships with others.
- To experience silent, calm and tranquil moments which afford time for reflection.
- To work and live in harmony with others in the school and wider community.
- To have confidence to express ideas, views and opinions, even if others do not agree.

Opportunities for spiritual development are presented or naturally arise and are promoted in all aspects of the curriculum and school life as the children become actively engaged in our broad and balanced curriculum, which provides a wide range of experiential learning opportunities that enables them to question, consider, reflect and respond, and consider their own values, beliefs and feelings and those of others, with whom they are working alongside or with.

Spirituality in the curriculum:

Outlined below are some of the key ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted as part of the curriculum at St Denys Church of England Infant School:

We promote spiritual development:			
Maths	English	Science	History
<p>By making connections between pupils' numeracy skills and real life; for example, pie charts could compare how a child in Africa spends her day with how children in the UK spend their time.</p> <p>By considering pattern, order, symmetry and scale both manmade and in the natural world.</p>	<p>In responding to a poem, story or text; pupils can be asked 'I wonder what you think happens next?' 'How would you feel if you were the person in the story?' 'Where have you met these ideas before?'</p> <p>By appreciating the beauty of language.</p> <p>Escaping into other worlds through literature.</p>	<p>By demonstrating openness to the fact that some answers cannot be provided by Science.</p> <p>By creating opportunities for pupils to ask questions about how living things rely on and contribute to their environment.</p>	<p>By considering how things would be different if the course of events had been different.</p> <p>By looking at local history and investigating the reasons why there is a landmark, building or museum.</p> <p>By speculating about how we mark important events from history and the people who shaped them.</p> <p>By displaying empathy with people from other times in history.</p> <p>By recognising the commitment of significant people in history.</p>

Geography	Religious Education	PSHE	Art & Design
<p>By using Google maps and asking pupils to imagine what it might be like to live in different parts of the world.</p> <p>By making links with history when exploring the environment and speculating on why the landscape is as it is.</p> <p>By comparing their lives with pupils living in other countries or other part of the UK, possibly through a schools linking programme</p>	<p>By experiencing wonder and joy through learning about and from stories, celebrations, rituals and different expressions of religion and worldviews.</p> <p>By asking and responding to questions of meaning and purpose.</p> <p>By considering questions about God and evaluating truth claims.</p> <p>By exploring spiritual practices such as worship and prayer, and considering the impact of these on believers and any relevance to their own life.</p>	<p>By developing awareness of and responding to others' needs and wants.</p> <p>By exploring meaning and purpose for individuals and society.</p> <p>By developing resilience and inner strength</p>	<p>By providing plenty of rich opportunities for pupils both to explore the spiritual dimension and natural phenomena.</p> <p>By exploring different artists' interpretations of a key figure or event and asking what the artist was trying to convey.</p> <p>By allowing pupils to show what they know through their own expression of big ideas about life e.g. morality, ethical issues.</p> <p>By promoting the process of 'reviewing and evaluating'</p>

Music	Drama	Design & Technology	Computing
<p>By allowing pupils to show their delight and curiosity in creating their own sounds.</p> <p>By making links between their learning in literacy (or other curriculum area) with music being played as background.</p> <p>By considering how music makes one feel and can 'move us' deeply</p>	<p>By allowing for insight, self-expression and the chance to walk in someone else's shoes.</p>	<p>By enjoying and celebrating personal creativity.</p> <p>By reviewing and evaluating created things.</p> <p>By discovering how things work and an appreciation of genius.</p>	<p>By wondering at the power of the digital age e.g. use of the internet.</p> <p>By considering the wonder of worldwide instant communication.</p> <p>By appreciating the speed of the growth of knowledge.</p> <p>By understanding the accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.</p> <p>By understanding the advantages and limitations of ICT.</p> <p>By using the internet as a gateway to big life issues.</p>

Physical Education			
By delighting in movement, particularly when pupils are able to show spontaneity.			
By taking part in activities such as dance, games and gymnastics which help pupils to become more focused, connected and creative.			
By being aware of one's own strengths and limitations.			

Spirituality in Collective Worship:

Collective Worship is the beating heart of St Denys. 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 (the sense of stillness) 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 with 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 Denys is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

As a staff team:

- We have a staff understanding of spiritual development.
- We have a culture within our school that recognises the importance of spirituality to individuals, both children and staff.
- We revisit spirituality as an area for consideration in our staff meetings and offer training.
- Our governors monitor the impact of our spirituality focus through regular Christian Ethos Committee meetings, learning walks, and other monitoring activities.
- We ensure new staff are aware of our school policy on spiritual development.
- We use models to support our own thinking in spirituality, such as the 'Engaging the Senses Model' by Steve Younger.
- We are continually developing and enhancing spiritual spaces both inside and outside the school building.
- We recognise that children will have different 'Spiritual Temperaments' or 'Sacred Pathways'. This will influence our planning as we look to nurture spirituality across the curriculum, not just in RE and Collective Worship.
- We actively use the language we have agreed on with staff to nurture an awareness of spirituality and its importance to well-being and development with the children.
- We aim to help each pupil to develop a spiritual understanding in terms of their own cultural context.
- We share with parents, whenever possible, the outcomes of our focus on spiritual development through newsletters, social media, displays and our website.
- We discuss spirituality with our church and others who can further support this thread.

Our awareness and understanding of spiritual development will enrich what we offer to the children and to all in our school community.