



Spiritual Development in School

Date of review – November 2025

Date of next review – November 2028

Our vision Be well; Learn well; Live Well; Offwell

Our vision drives and supports the ethos of our school and the policies and practices within it. We believe that spirituality is the golden thread that runs through our school. We attach great importance to it for both children's development and for the growth and well-being of all within our school community. Spiritual development is supported through collective worship, the curriculum, the school environment and how we interact with ourselves, others, the world and God/divine being through stillness, creativity, curiosity and big questions.

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 definition and explanation of 'spirituality'

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

Spiritual development is the development of an awareness that there is "something more to life than meets the eye, something more than the material, something more than the obvious, something to wonder at, something to respond to." (Terence Copley)

Spiritual development is not about becoming, more spiritual (in a measurable or expansive sense). It is about realising or becoming more and more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality. This is sometimes a slow and gradual process, at other times there might be significant stages of realisation, which are part of the ongoing 'developing' process. Unlike the development of a photograph, people don't reach a finished state of spiritual development, but participate in the ongoing process of spiritual realisation. If spirituality were something which developed or grew in a quantifiable sense, then surely adults would be more spiritual than children. Many would argue that children seem to be far more spiritually aware

than adults. Perhaps as a part of growing older, the pressures of life can distract and distort our interests so that as adults, our spiritual awareness is dulled and we do not 'realise it' to the full.

Legal requirements:

The requirement to promote pupils' spiritual development is statutory, originating in the Education Act 1944 and restated in Section 78 of the Education Act 2002.

Although the Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (from November 2025) no longer lists 'spiritual development' as a separate evaluation area, the accompanying inspection toolkits confirm that schools must still provide a coherent programme of personal development which enables pupils to develop *spiritually, morally, socially and culturally*.

Our school therefore continues to view the spiritual development of pupils as a core legal and educational responsibility."

Evidence may be gathered by Ofsted inspectors from anywhere relevant to ensure that schools are promoting 'Personal Development and Well-being' (including SMSC); and prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

To fulfil their legal obligations under section 48 of the 2005 Education Act, SIAMS inspections make judgments on SMSC education in Church of England and Methodist schools.

The SIAMS Framework (2024) references spirituality implicitly and explicitly in two of the inspector questions:

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

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

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

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

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

c) In what ways is the worship life of the school inclusive, invitational, and inspirational?

d) 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?

e) How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?

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.

Taking the legal requirement into consideration, this policy is part of our strategic approach to ensure that spiritual development is a visible, embedded and impactful part of our school's offer.

We support pupils in their spiritual development by:

- providing opportunities for spiritual development in collective worship
- providing opportunities for spiritual development in RE
- providing opportunities for spiritual development in the wider curriculum
- capturing opportunities for awe and wonder as planned moments and as they arise
- providing 'reflection spaces' in classrooms, public spaces, outside, and by using the church building, and through the 'Prayer Spaces in School' website
- offering pupils opportunities to develop their own spiritual leadership, *eg through leading collective worship, Ethos group, Torbay and Devon Civic Award and other opportunities*

As a staff team:

- We have a staff understanding and shared language 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. *This forms part of the work of the Ethos Group who report to governors at every Full Governing Board meeting.*
- We have staff guidance accessible to continue to support staff in this aspect of our curriculum. *E.g. Diocese of Exeter Spirituality [page](#)*
- We ensure new staff are aware of our school policy on spiritual development.
- We use models and language to support our own thinking in spirituality. This includes the use of our theologically rooted vision and values.
- We have a variety of reflection areas both inside and outside the school building.
- We are aware of spiritual development shown across four key areas of Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond (Andrew Rickett / Rebecca Nye).
- We take account of recent, relevant research (e.g. the work of Gary Thomas (2010) and Myra Perrine (2007)) and use this to influence our planning as we look to nurture spirituality across the curriculum, not just in RE and Collective Worship.
- We have identified opportunities for spiritual development and deeper thinking across the curriculum, for all age groups (see examples in SMSC policy)
- We actively use the language we have agreed on with staff to nurture an awareness of spirituality and its importance to well-being and personal development with the children.
- We aim to help each pupil to develop a spiritual understanding in terms of their own cultural context and personal worldview.
- We share with parents, whenever possible, the outcomes of our focus on spiritual development through newsletters, displays and our website.
- We discuss spirituality with our church and the Diocesan Education Team and others who can further support this golden thread.

Our awareness and understanding of spiritual development will enrich what we offer to the children and to all in our school community, supporting the development of the whole child beyond the physical and the academic.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Senior leaders, governors and children will support pupils and adults to share their experiences and opportunities for spiritual development through *eg discussions, focused days, Personal Development (Vision) journal, reflection spaces*. This will impact on the opportunities and experiences that are available to children and adults across the school community enabling all to flourish.

Other related policies:

Collective Worship

Teaching and Learning

Relationships and Behaviour

SMSC

All subject specific curriculum policies

Referenced reading:

Church of England Education Office (CEEEO) Spiritual Development – Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom (2019)