



St Gabriel's C of E Primary School



Spiritual Development Policy Autumn 2025



1. How is this policy a reflection of our theologically rooted Christian vision?

St Gabriel's Mission Statement *Excellence with Compassion*

'Whatever you do, work at it with all of your heart. Clothe yourselves with compassion.' (Colossians 3 verses 23 and 12).

Excellence with compassion is at the heart of St Gabriel's. We are a church school and value our strong links with the parish church of St Gabriel's and the Pimlico community. We seek to provide an excellent education for all our pupils which is rooted in compassion, understanding, respect and equality for all.

The aims of our school are:

- To foster and encourage our children's self-awareness, beliefs and **spirituality**, and develop their sensitivity to other people and respect for other religions,
- To help children to develop their skills in reading, writing, mathematics, science and ICT through learning which is broad, balanced and inspiring,
- To help children fulfil their potential by creating a happy, healthy, safe, nurturing environment,
- To provide children with the academic, social, emotional and **spiritual** foundations which will give them the best start to secondary school and which will give them a wide range of opportunities and the chance to pursue their personal aspirations.

2. Introduction

The Church of England Vision for Education is rooted in Jesus' desire that we should have 'life in all its fullness' (John 10:10). As our spiritual nature is such a fundamental part of our humanity, spiritual development is a key part of this holistic view of education:

*"Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework."*¹

As Derek Holloway writes, spiritual development is intrinsic to every part of our work:

*"I would strongly contend that in all schools, and certainly in Church schools, that spiritual development is not something you should hide away in a couple of curriculum boxes or treat as an afterthought. It must be something that should influence all areas of education as it does all areas of life."*²

We believe that spiritual development is a core thread that runs through our school, and we see it as vital for the flourishing of all within our school community. In Acts 17:28, the Apostle Paul says that in God "we live and move and

¹ The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office 2016)

² Derek Holloway et al, *Spiritual Development : Interpretations of spiritual development in the classroom* (The Church of England Education Office April 2019)



have our being”; becoming more aware of our innate spirituality is a life-long journey and it is our desire that all at **St Gabriel’s** move forward on that journey during their time here.

3. Aims

Our aim is to establish the right learning environment to enable the spiritual flourishing of all pupils through the following objectives:

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school’s Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them, as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith.
- Develop an awareness of and respect for other people’s beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own.
- Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions.
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts in the service of others), understanding the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others.
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life, and upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc.
- Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life, including an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth.
- Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination.

Aims in policy	How and where?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - through our ethos and positivity and within our behaviour policy – concentration on the positive not the negative, focus on rewards and success - in collective worship, whole school recognition of success and valuing us as individuals and our individual achievements, star of the week, mentions book, courtesy book, Good Work - end of term music assemblies, celebrating children’s achievements with their piano performances etc - Prize Day – individual recognition of achievements, progress prizes, subject specific awards, kindness awards - resources we use – books representing our different cultures and ethnicities - within the curriculum – art, RE valuing our uniqueness in how we look, what we believe and our personalities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop knowledge and understanding of the school’s Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them, as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - one value is focussed on each term and is reflected on the displays in the hall and in class prayers. Each is linked to specific bible verses. Focus on what it means as a class, then is looked at throughout the term - RE revisits different aspects of Christianity in every year group - symbolism is reinforced through RE, through Collective worship and within the whole school environment - bible timeline reinforces language of Christianity - Disciplinary knowledge is taught through RE - Nativity and Easter productions - Prayer corners in classrooms and in the playground - Act of worship in class on Wednesdays
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an awareness of and respect for other people’s beliefs and faiths and the ability to articulate their own. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - in RE (and other areas of the curriculum) we explore different faiths, provide opportunity for discussions enabling a reflection of the importance of our own and others experiences - our uniform policy reinforces a respect for others, accepting the wearing of hijabs, long sleeves. - we ensure there are female only spaces for changing



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - we celebrate our differences and with our differences we are stronger – through Collective worship, PSHE, International Week, Geography themes - we explore artists from different religions and prominent scientists - we look at Christianity in other countries - as a staff we model behaviour of how we talk to each other - through trips we provide an opportunity for children to explore how other faiths worship - we ensure our books represent our diverse community and our resources e.g. flip charts used in lessons have images which reflect our diverse community - through Collective Worship we have inspirational figures who demonstrate our values, from a range of cultures and religions - RE lessons have learning from and learning about - the school meals reflect a range of cultural dishes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Foster self-awareness and encourage pupils to make informed decisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - reflective time woven into CW - through trips (e.g. Junior Citizenship, visit to the Houses of Parliament and developing understanding of democracy) - voting for school council and sitting as a rep for the class - house captains and positions of responsibility for Yr 6 - through the curriculum, RE, PSHE, Art - developing a greater awareness of physicality through PE and RSE - Zones of regulation focuses on self awareness - work with MIND and other partners (e.g. police with Awareness Academy – supporting children to make informed decisions) - Reflecting on big questions in history, geography, RE - Through our school values – wisdom particularly encourages making the right choices, doing the right thing - social interventions (e.g. Art therapy, ELSA, lego therapy) providing children space to talk and become more self aware - encouraging pupils to be inquisitive/have a growth mindset - responding to feedback - Computing curriculum and e-safety – making pupils aware of issues around cyber bullying etc - walking home alone
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts in the service of others), understanding the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - We hold events which the community are invited to e.g. Prize Day, International Week, Weekly Family Assembly, family discos, Christmas Fair - We take part in community events out of school (e.g. singing with other local schools in Pimlico Musical Foundation, singing in the square at Christmas) - We have visitors from the local community (e.g. reading volunteers, ex students, church youth pastoral lead coming into school weekly and organising youth group trips) - We supported a local organisation who work with young adults with physical and other disabilities and invited them into do work shops with the children - Collecting for local community organisations (e.g. The Passage Homeless Charity, Mary's Pantry) - We celebrate diversity through our curriculum and collective worship - We have trips into the community/local walks through geography and history, creating an awareness of what is around them - Advertising and encouraging participation in events laid on in the community (e.g. half term events with others in the community)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life, and upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - opportunities within the curriculum (e.g. life cycles in science – birth to death, looking in depth at works of art and exploring the creation of such pieces – developing awe and wonder) - RE curriculum is led through 'Big Questions' and much is taught through discussion - curriculum is adapted for SEN to ensure all get the opportunity to develop skills and language - PSHE provides much opportunity explore the bigger questions - trips to local iconic landmarks help to develop a sense of awe and wonder, and further afield (such as Sayers Croft) providing an opportunity to experience environments and landscapes that they would not ordinarily explore - providing new experiences through trips (e.g. leaving Pimlico, going on the tube, going on buses, sailing) - enquiry based curriculum - learning is supported with visual images - using specific language to encourage reflection in collective worship and in the curriculum (I see, I think, I wonder – wow and ow moments)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Begin to understand and make sense of their own feelings and emotions around certain encounters and events that occur in their life, including an awareness that experiences of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - PSHE - building resilience in the classroom when faced with a challenge – within the language we use with the children - school staff making mistakes and celebrating these - Working through friendship conflicts and giving children the tools to do this



disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Zones of Regulation - Collective Worship - Playground interaction s- encouraging children to resolve differences and adults only stepping in as a last resort - social stories - Friendship group interventions - Lego therapy - ELSA - MIND - Art therapy - Within the texts we explore in lessons - Modelling behaviour and dealing with emotions in a positive way - Teaching strategies to deal with emotions -
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage curiosity, creativity and imagination. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - visitors (e.g. visit from children's author Louise Wannier – sharing her book, Tree Spirits a book about nature, imagination and observation, with children in years 1,2 and 3. The children enjoyed having the story read to them and hearing all about her inspiration. They also had fun later drawing some of their own tree spirits.), actors for history projects bringing learning alive with creativity and involving the children in the acting - trips and visits (art galleries, plays) - child led approach to learning across the curriculum - enquiry approach in lessons such as geography/history Learning environment – displaying work and celebrating expression International Week – celebrating different cultures and encouraging greater curiosity about each others - Wholes school Art exhibition - Imagination – through the books we read and the sptrioies and poems we write - RE – 'I wonder.....' - Giving praise for creativity - Star of the week

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

As over-arching aims, our approach to spiritual development will:

- Reflect the school's Church of England status.
- Reflect and strengthen the school's Christian vision and ethos.
- Take place within a school environment which enables pupils and adults to flourish.

4. Legal requirements

The importance of spiritual development in schools is recognised in legislation.

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.

Section 48 of the Education Act 2005



Spiritual development is a particular focus of Church school inspections under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS) which asks:

- How do the theologically rooted Christian vision and the Anglican/Methodist foundation of the school shape worship and spirituality in the school?
- How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?
- How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?
- 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?
- How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook (2019) states:

Inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural education. This is a broad concept that can be seen across the school's activities ...

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.

5. Shared understanding of spiritual development

Philip Sheldrake writes:

*"In Christian terms, spirituality refers to the way our fundamental values, lifestyles, and spiritual practices reflect particular understandings of God, human identity, and the material world as the context for human transformation... We shall see that all Christian spiritual traditions are rooted in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures, particularly in the gospels and in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ. Christian spirituality is fundamentally concerned with following the way of Jesus Christ."*³

As a church school, it is this Christian framework that shapes our shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development. We recognise the importance of engaging with our linked church/es in determining this shared understanding in the context of our school's Christian vision and values.

To make conversations about spiritual flourishing more accessible to every member of our school community, **St Gabriel's** has chosen to use the following shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development ...

At St Gabriel's our spirituality and spiritual development recognises that there is more to our universe and more to us than the material and the non-material. We aim to provide - through our school vision of 'Excellence with Compassion,' our 6 core Christian values, and through awe inspiring moments (the wows) and knowing how to endure and work through the moments of pain or hurt (the ows), - the opportunities for reflection and the nourishment needed to ensure that our children's spirituality is fed and nurtured alongside their wellbeing and academic progress.

³ Philip Sheldrake, *Spirituality, A Brief History*. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2013) p.7



We believe, spiritual development is the continual nourishment and development of the entire self, making connections, and developing the understanding of oneself and our relationship with others and with the world around us. In the context of Christian belief that will include our relationship with God.

6. Provision

The school pursues the aims by ensuring:

- The curriculum and all areas of our community life will be driven by the school's Christian vision statement and associated values.
- Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into the curriculum and encouraged in all areas of school life.
- Unplanned and spontaneous spiritual opportunities for spiritual development are recognised, acknowledged and/or celebrated by staff and pupils.
- Collective worship celebrates the love of God for every individual and provides opportunities for children to respond and reflect on this.
- A solid understanding of the Christian concept of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit; of prayer and of the Bible is nurtured and developed.
- The school building and outdoor environment provides appropriate spaces for silence, stillness, and prayer.
- Pupils' spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight are fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies making use of the outdoor environment and relevant educational visits.
- The provision of 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.
- Support for learning to live with success and failure for themselves and with others.
- Moral development is linked to spiritual development.
- Pupils are given 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.
- The delivery and content will be made accessible to all pupils including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND).
- Consideration of Early Years curriculum and how the curriculum for younger children can support spiritual development.
- The religious background of all pupils will be taken into consideration when planning teaching.

7. CPD and training

This is a complex area and staff should be trained and equipped to provide for the spiritual development of pupils within the context of a Church of England school. We access diocesan-led training for those with a particular role in planning for and evaluating spiritual development.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

Spiritual development cannot be measured and continues throughout our lives. However, opportunities offered to pupils for spiritual development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- Observing and listening to pupils.
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings alongside the school's Christian vision and values.
- Sharing of classroom work and practice.



- Ensuring that staff have a clear understanding of what spiritual development means in this school by providing them with induction and development training.
- Evidence from pupils' work, e.g. reflective diary, RE books, SMSC work, creative writing, art.
- Regular inclusion in the SEF.
- CPD opportunities and sharing examples of good practice with other schools.
- Seeking to evaluate, formally and informally, with pupils and adults, activities with a particular focus on spirituality and spiritual development (e.g. collective worship)

Provision for spiritual development is monitored by *the Headteacher* through:

- *planning,*
- *scrutiny of work,*
- *pupil surveys,*
- *learning walks*

Provision for spiritual development is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 (SIAMS).

9. Opportunities for spiritual flourishing of adults

Under the SIAMS framework, it is also the intention that the spiritual flourishing of adults should be enabled and enhanced by the work of the school. We consider ways in which our routines and practices (e.g. staff meetings, CPD, collective worship, church services, staff retreats) can contribute to the spiritual life of adults in our community.

Evaluation/Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the Headteacher and/or designated senior teacher and ratified every *three years* by the Governing Body.

Date of validation..... Signed.....
Chair of Governors

Date of review..... Signed.....
Chair of Governors