



# St Mary's Church of England Junior Academy

## Spirituality Policy

<b>Policy Type:</b>	
<b>Approved By:</b>	Academy Policy
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<b>Person Responsible:</b>	CEO (DoNESC)
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## **Our vision**

Our school vision is:

At St Marys, we **nurture respectful** and **responsible global citizens** who contribute to their communities with **compassion** and **courage**.

Young minds grow with God's love and an **ambitious** curriculum for all, to enable everyone to flourish as they 'soar on wings like eagles' and 'live life in all its fullness'

*We feel this is the foundation for our children to ensure they fulfil their full potential. The Isaiah 40:31 passage 'They will soar on wings like eagles' theologically underpins our vision as we trust in God's love to give us the strength to persevere, maintain our ambition, 'running and not growing weary' so that we 'soar on wings like eagles'. We have a shared vision and aspiration for all children.*

## **Our core values underpins everything**

**Respect shapes us:** we value ourselves, each other and the world, we celebrate and understand difference

**Responsibility enhances us:** we take responsibility for ourselves, our learning and our actions. We always strive to make the impossible possible

**Community and love guides us:** we are kind and supportive and we have a love of learning. We are good citizens who play a positive role in our communities.

**Courage builds us:** we are resilient, we work hard, we practise and we learn from our mistakes as we grow in the world around us. We stand up for what is right even in the face of adversity.

**Ambition drives us:** we value knowledge and skills, we accept challenges and celebrate achievements. We persevere to overcome challenges and barriers enabling us to show resilience.

**Nurture and love protects us:** we openly show love and kindness to our peers, adults and community. We are not afraid to talk about our mental health, emotional or physical needs with trusted adults so we can be supported to be the best version of ourselves.

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.



*"They will soar on wings like eagles"*

**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

(From David Smith's work on Spiritual Capacities)

**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.

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)

**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 Schedule (amended September 2021) references spirituality in both the RE and Collective Worship strands but the main focus is part of strand two on Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills. 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.



**"They will soar on wings like eagles"**

The OFSTED framework 2021 states that pupil's spiritual development is shown by their:

- 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 experiences

**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 they arise
- providing 'Sacred 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, through leading collective worship and other opportunities

**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.
- We have staff guidance accessible to continue to support staff in this aspect of our curriculum.
- We ensure new staff are aware of our school policy on spiritual development.
- We have a variety of spiritual spaces both inside and outside the school building.
- We encourage staff who are specialist subject leads to identify opportunities for spiritual development in their subject, and to share them with colleagues.
- 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.
- We use models to support our own thinking in spirituality, such as the 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors, Candle' approach.



**"They will soar on wings like eagles"**

The windows, mirrors, doors analogy clarifies this meaning. We gaze out through windows onto the world, responding with our emotions and trying to make sense of what we see. We use mirrors to reflect on our thoughts and feelings, and how what we see through the window connects with our inner selves, and how we connect with what we see and understand. This becomes a spiritual experience when it transforms us and so we walk out through the door into life differently from before. For some, this spiritual experience leads to a sense of transcendence: in other words a feeling or belief that something exists beyond what can be directly seen. Christians would describe this state as God.

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

**Other related policies:**

Collective Worship  
Teaching and Learning  
Relationships and Behaviour  
SMSC  
All subject specific curriculum policies

**Referenced reading:**

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

<https://www.bathandwells.org.uk/supporting-children/school-effectiveness/re-collective-worship-and-spirituality/spiritual-development/>



“They will soar on wings like eagles”