

# **St Michael's CE Primary School Sydenham**



## **Spirituality Policy**

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Agreed by the Governing Body on: Autumn 2026

Signed (Chair): Mrs Beryl Fielder

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## 1. Purpose and scope

This policy explains what spirituality means at St Michael's CE Primary School and how we intentionally nurture the spiritual development of pupils and adults. Spiritual development is not confined to Religious Education or Collective Worship. It is woven through the curriculum, relationships, reflection, creativity, the school environment and the everyday experiences of our community.

Our intention is that every child and adult has opportunities to notice, question, reflect, make meaning and respond to life's experiences. Rooted in our Christian character, we seek to enable everyone to flourish and, in the words that shape our school vision, for every child to live an abundant life.

## 2. Theological and statutory context

Our Christian understanding begins with the belief that every person is made in the image and likeness of God (Genesis 1:26–27) and therefore has inherent dignity and worth. Spirituality concerns the whole person and the relationships we form with ourselves, with others, with the wider world and, for Christians, with God.

The Education Act 2002 requires maintained schools to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development through a balanced and broadly based curriculum. Spiritual development also forms part of the wider expectations for pupils' personal development. As a Church of England school, our approach is additionally shaped by the Church of England Vision for Education and SIAMS, which place flourishing, Christian vision and the spiritual development of pupils and adults at the heart of Church school life.

The school also promotes respect for people of different faiths, beliefs and worldviews and has due regard to its duties under the Equality Act 2010. Spirituality is offered in a way that is invitational and inclusive; no pupil or adult is required to adopt a particular belief.

## 3. Our understanding of spirituality

Spirituality can be difficult to define because it is personal and may be experienced in different ways. At St Michael's, we understand spirituality as the way people explore meaning, purpose, identity, connection and the deeper questions of life. It may be expressed through faith and prayer, but it may also be experienced through relationships, creativity, nature, beauty, stillness, challenge, compassion, wonder and reflection.

Rebecca Nye describes children's spirituality as "God's way of being with children ... and children's way of being with God." We recognise that members of our community may understand spiritual experience differently. Our role is to create rich and safe opportunities for exploration rather than to prescribe an individual response.

## 4. St Michael's shared language: Wows, Ows and Nows

Our shared approach is inspired by Isaiah 64:8, which describes God as the potter and people as clay, and by the image of kintsugi: the Japanese art of repairing broken pottery so that the joins become visible and valued. The image helps children and adults recognise that experiences can open moments for reflection, meaning and growth.

- Wows – moments of joy, beauty, achievement, awe or wonder that make us stop and notice.
- Ows – experiences of sadness, difficulty, disappointment, injustice or loss that prompt questions, empathy and reflection.
- Nows – moments of stillness, presence, prayer or quiet attention when we notice what is happening within and around us.

We use Wows, Ows and Nows to help pupils and adults explore four dimensions of relationship: with ourselves; with others; with the wider natural world and beyond; and with the Divine Creator (God). This language is a tool for reflection, not a checklist, and responses are respected as personal.

## **5. Aims for spiritual development**

Through planned and spontaneous opportunities, we aim to help pupils and adults develop:

- the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, values, experiences and perspectives;
- curiosity about life's big questions, meaning and purpose;
- a sense of awe, wonder, gratitude and fascination with themselves, others and the world;
- knowledge of and respect for people of different faiths, beliefs, feelings and values;
- imagination, creativity and the confidence to express ideas in different ways;
- empathy, compassion, hope and a sense of responsibility towards others and creation;
- the capacity to be still, to notice, to reflect and, where appropriate, to pray;
- the ability to respond thoughtfully and purposefully to what they encounter.

## **6. How spirituality is developed across school life**

Spiritual development is everyone's responsibility. Opportunities may be planned, such as Collective Worship, RE, curriculum reflection and use of reflective spaces, or spontaneous, arising from a conversation, event, question, achievement, difficulty or moment of wonder.

Staff make space for pupils to think and respond rather than rushing to provide answers. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, listen respectfully, make connections, express uncertainty and recognise that people may reach different conclusions.

## **7. Collective Worship**

Collective Worship is the beating heart of our school and a key place in which our shared language of spirituality is explicitly developed. Daily worship provides opportunities to encounter the Christian story, reflect on the school's Christian vision and values, celebrate, be still, consider the needs of others and respond.

Pupils may be invited to take part in Christian practices including prayer, Bible reading, reflection, liturgy and music. Worship is invitational, inspirational and inclusive: pupils are given space to participate, observe and reflect in ways appropriate to them. Wows, Ows and Nows help pupils connect worship with their own experiences and with life beyond school.

## **8. Religious Education**

Religious Education provides a particularly rich context for spiritual development. In line with the Church of England's expectations for RE, pupils encounter Christianity as a living and diverse faith and learn about a range of religions and worldviews. They are given a safe space to explore questions of believing, living, thinking and belonging, while respecting the religious freedom and integrity of every person.

RE encourages meaningful and informed dialogue. Where helpful, pupils may use the language of Wows, Ows and Nows to make connections between learning, experience and their developing understanding of spirituality.

## 9. Spirituality across the curriculum

Every curriculum area can create opportunities for spiritual development. We use the complementary language of Windows, Mirrors and Doors to help make these opportunities purposeful:

- Windows – looking out: encountering the world, its beauty, complexity, suffering and wonder; noticing and asking questions.
- Mirrors – looking in: reflecting on experience, beliefs, feelings, values and life's big questions; listening to and learning from the responses of others.
- Doors – stepping out: responding creatively, ethically or practically to what has been encountered and reflected upon.

Examples include wonder at pattern in mathematics; powerful language and human experience in literature and poetry; interdependence and discovery in science; the beauty and fragility of the earth in geography; achievement, conflict, injustice and change in history; creativity in art, music and drama; and the possibilities of movement, perseverance and teamwork in PE. These examples illustrate opportunities rather than prescribe a separate spirituality lesson in every subject.

## 10. Daily life, relationships and the environment

Spiritual development happens throughout the day. Staff, including teaching, support, administrative and midday staff, understand the school's shared language and are able to recognise and respond appropriately when pupils identify a Wow, Ow or Now. Pupils should know that their questions and reflections will be heard and treated seriously.

The school provides places and routines that allow people to pause and reflect, including classroom reflection areas and the spiritual garden. Restorative approaches, playtimes, relationships, service, celebration and responses to local or global events may all provide meaningful opportunities for reflection and growth.

## 11. Inclusion, dignity and freedom of belief

Spiritual development is for everyone. Opportunities will be accessible and adapted where needed so that pupils with SEND and pupils of different ages, backgrounds, faiths and worldviews can participate meaningfully. We recognise that spirituality is personal and that pupils and adults may express it through religious faith, a non-religious worldview, uncertainty, questioning or other forms of reflection.

No pupil should be made to disclose personal beliefs or experiences. Sensitive issues are handled with care, and any disclosure that raises a safeguarding concern is managed in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy.

## 12. Roles and responsibilities

### Governing Body

The Governing Body ensures that the school's Christian vision and statutory responsibilities for pupils' spiritual development are reflected in policy and practice and that leaders evaluate their impact.

### Headteacher and senior leaders

The Headteacher and senior leaders ensure that spirituality is understood across the school, staff receive appropriate support and development, and opportunities for spiritual growth are evident within the curriculum, Collective Worship and wider school life.

## **Staff**

All staff contribute by modelling respectful reflection, recognising opportunities for spiritual development, using the school's shared language appropriately and creating an environment in which questions and different responses are valued.

## **Pupils**

Pupils are encouraged to engage thoughtfully, listen respectfully, ask questions, reflect on experience and contribute to the spiritual life of the school in ways appropriate to their age and understanding.

## **13. Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The school will evaluate the impact of this policy through appropriate evidence rather than treating spirituality as something that can be measured by a single outcome. Evidence may include pupil and staff voice, curriculum and Collective Worship evaluation, learning conversations, displays and reflection spaces, examples of pupil response and governor monitoring.

Leaders will consider whether pupils and adults can articulate the school's approach to spirituality, whether opportunities are meaningful and inclusive, and how the school's Christian vision enables people to flourish. Findings will inform staff development and future provision. The policy will be reviewed by Autumn 2029, or earlier if relevant statutory or Church of England guidance changes.

## **14. Related policies and guidance**

- Collective Worship Policy
- Religious Education Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy
- Equality information and objectives / Equality Policy
- SEND Policy and SEND Information Report
- Church of England Vision for Education and current SIAMS framework/guidance
- Department for Education guidance on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development and fundamental British values