

Model Policy for Spirituality in Church of England Primary Schools

Guidance from the Diocese of Gloucester's Board of Education

February 2021



Life

**"I have come that they may have life,
and have it to the full"**

(WORDS OF JESUS FROM JOHN 10:10)

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Schools/academies should note that where ‘school’ appears in the document it can be substituted for ‘academy’ as appropriate.

This suggested policy could be used as a template for governing bodies of Church of England schools in the Diocese of Gloucester to discuss, amend and adopt in the light of their unique school context before being signed by the Chair of Governors.

Text in red is for guidance purposes and should not be included in the policy.

Name of School:

Legal Framework: Links to OFSTED and SIAMS expectations

The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook, November 2019 No. 190017, page 59 & 60, 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 but draws together many of the areas covered by the personal development judgement.

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.

The SIAMS Evaluation Schedule for Schools and Inspectors, April 2018, includes the question:

- How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development, enabling all pupils to flourish? (Strand 2)

School Statement on Spirituality

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. To make conversations about spirituality more accessible to every member of our school community, **(insert name of school)** has chosen to follow ideas developed by the Education Department at the Diocese of Gloucester.

This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet, in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.

Cracks may be caused when something so good and breath-taking happens that the pot expands and cracks – the **wows** of life.

Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday – the **ows** of life.

Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday – the **nows** of life, when a moment of stillness, a pause or prayer creates a crack in the normal, physical everyday.

In these special moments there is a spiritual opportunity. Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery or glue, creates something that has been broken into something even more beautiful. Using this metaphor, the **wows**, **ows** and **nows** of life offer the possibility of cracks that are filled with gold and make the pot even more beautiful. The gold in the cracks reflect a little of the wonder of spirituality.

(Insert name of school) uses this language and the concepts of **wows**, **ows** and **nows**. These are used to explore relationships with:

- ourselves
- others
- the wider natural world and beyond
- and offering the invitation to relate to God

Aims

School's Name
School's Christian Vision:

Outline how your school's Christian vision links to and, is a driver for, spirituality in your school and the impact this has.

Organisation

The spiritual growth of pupils is not only dependent on learning in RE, opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners are developed in every aspect of our school life.

We support the whole school community to share this responsibility and to develop the shared language of spirituality. Opportunities are available for all to develop spiritually in our supportive and nurturing school inspired by our vision and lived out through our Christian values.

Consider how the physical environment of the school supports opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection for pupils in your school.

We have identified specific areas which contribute to the spiritual growth of pupils: collective worship, the whole curriculum, including RE and the general ethos of the school within daily life,

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of (insert name of school). 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 (**now** moments) 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 the **ow** 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 (insert name of school) is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

Spirituality in Religious Education

The Church of England's *Statement of Entitlement* outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality.

Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils' ideas of spirituality and the language of **wows**, **ows** and **nows** where appropriate.

For further details, please refer to (insert name of school) Religious Education Policy and The Church of England's *Statement of Entitlement*.

Spirituality within the Curriculum

Outline how your school's Christian vision is a driver for the curriculum design in your school and the impact this has on pupils' spiritual growth.

Drawing on the language of **wows**, **ows** and **nows**, conversations around spirituality will be included in classroom teaching when appropriate from Reception to Year 6/EYFS/Key Stage 1/Key Stage 2/Key Stage 3/Key Stage 4.

Amend ideas below to fit with the curriculum design and culture of your school setting.

Maths

Points to consider:

- The wonder of number patterns
- What cannot be measured? For example, love
- What cannot be accurately counted? For example, the difference an act of kindness makes.

Reading

Points to consider:

- How do you frame questions around a text? For example
 - What inspired you in this text?
 - How did a character cope with a challenge in life?
 - How did the actions of a character surprise you? How do you think you would have responded to that **wow** or **ow** moment?
 - What do you think makes these words so powerful/beautiful/painful?

Writing

Points to consider:

- If pupils are invited to write about things that have profound meaning to them, how is this writing valued? How can it be recognised as having value, rather than simply be reduced to an evaluation of SPAG?

DT

Points to consider:

- What motivates designers and their decisions? For example, is it a desire to make money or a desire to help and make improvements to daily life for everyone?

Music

Points to consider:

- What style of music 'invites you to explore the mystery that dances within your soul' (K. Hall)?
- What styles of music have the opposite effect?
- How does music encourage creativity, delight, and curiosity?

MFL

Points to consider:

- What motivates language learning? For example, buying an ice cream on holiday or welcoming and comforting a stranger in our country?
- What does it feel like to genuinely communicate with someone in a new language?

Geography

Points to consider:

- The **wow** of physical geography.

- The **ow** of discovering different physical regions do not provide the same opportunities.
- What options/opportunities are there to respond and take responsibility in a challenging world?

History

Points to consider:

- Which stories tell historical **wows**?
- Which stories tell historical **ows**?
- What lessons for future decisions and choices do they provide?

PE

Points to consider:

- How do you celebrate a new skill? How does it feel to be proud of your whole self?
- What does it feel like to be completely focused on a task or challenge?
- How do you recognise the delight in movement, connectedness, and creativity?
- Encourage the awareness of one's own strength and limitations.
- Recognise/celebrate equality, freedom, respect and trust.

Science

Points to consider:

- Delight in discovering how things work.
- Opportunities to linger longer on the wonder!
- What questions cannot be answered by science?

Art

Points to consider:

- How does art invite you to explore the mystery that dances within your soul?
- What are the **wows** and **ows** in the stories behind the artists you study?
- How do you celebrate and respect different responses to art?

PSHCE & RSE

Points to consider:

- As you explore topics such as relationships, feelings & attitudes, keeping safe and 'your body' where are the natural links with the **wows**, **ows** and **nows**?
- How can the honesty and sensitivity needed to explore these topics gently reflect the language of spirituality already used throughout the school?

All Subjects

Points to consider:

- How do you celebrate the achievement and break-through **wows** of success?
- How do you support the **ows** of difficulty and frustrations?
- How do you maximise the everyday moment of concentration and being in the present, creating a sense of calm and completeness?

Spirituality within the Ethos of the Daily Life of the School

In (insert name of school) we view spiritual growth as becoming more and more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality. These opportunities happen throughout each and every day as children deal with delight, disappointment and the chance to be present with themselves.

For this reason, every member of the school community, including MDSA and administrative staff are familiar with the school's shared language of spirituality and will respond to pupils appropriately.

Throughout the daily life of the school, including lunch times and playtimes, pupils know that their references to **wows**, **ows** and **nows** will be heard and taken seriously. They will be encouraged to reflect on these experiences and be comfortable about talking about the **golden glue of spirituality**.

Outline any specific ways your school supports spiritual growth eg through behaviour policies, playtime protocol or the use of prayer spaces activities etc.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The (Standard and Ethos Committee/ name of appropriate committee) review the policy (insert regularity of policy review) in partnership with Senior/ Middle Leaders and consider any views expressed by parents, children and staff in order to make any changes or recommendations. Recommendations are fed back to the full governing body and are then actioned as appropriate.

Governors ensure that this policy is fully implemented and that practice is consistent with the school's Christian vision, in line with the school's monitoring policy and schedule for governors.

Roles and Responsibilities

Recognising there are opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners in every aspect of our school life, every member of our staff team is committed to support this spiritual growth wherever appropriate.

(Identify staff member or role) is responsible for supporting and leading spiritual development in our school, including monitoring opportunities for spiritual growth in collective worship, the whole curriculum (including RE) and the general ethos of the school within daily life,

This role also includes: (amend as appropriate)

- Ensuring personal knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by participating in CPD and shared good practice
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- Ensuring all staff are familiar with the shared language of spirituality
- Acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary

- Monitoring the opportunities for spiritual growth through regular observations and learning walks in both formal and informal contexts, discussions with colleagues and pupil voice
- Contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process particularly around Strand 2

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. NQTs and staff who are new to (insert name of school) will receive training and support from the staff member identified as leading on spirituality.

This policy is shared on the school's website and is part of the induction pack for new staff and new governors.

This policy is reviewed every 3 years, or more frequently, as required.

Other generic statements the school would normally include in any curriculum policy eg links to other policies

Approval/review by governing body

Headteacher signed:

Date:

Chair of Governors signed:

Date:

Date of next review:

Date:

Additional Support Material

Useful questions for the school to consider:

- How does the school's Christian vision provide opportunities to meet the spiritual needs of learners?
- How does an awareness of spirituality permeate school life?
- What is the impact of this for the learner (and staff and the wider community)?
- How are staff inducted and supported so that they have a shared understanding of spirituality and spiritual development?

Prayer used by the School:

Mysterious God,
Most of the time we can explain what happens in the world by science
But sometimes we may see a glimpse of something beyond:
The joy of making a new friend,
The excitement of being able to do something today which we couldn't do yesterday,
The delight of warm sun on our faces or splashing in cold puddles.
In these **wow** moments, when we're aware of something beyond,
Help us to be open to the idea of you, God.

Comforting God,
Most of the time we feel safe and secure
But sometimes life can be difficult and painful and we long for something beyond:
Someone who understands what it's like to be alone,
Or let down by friends,
Or feel like they have nowhere to call home.
In these **ow** moments, help us to be open to something beyond
And brave enough to reach out and pray.

Constant God,
Most of the time we are busy running or learning or playing,
But sometimes it's good simply to be, help us then to glimpse something beyond the
everyday:
When we are still,
When we are present to ourselves,
When there is nothing to distract us.
In these **now** moments, help us to be open your possibility God
And help us to pray.
Amen

Spirituality Conversation Starters

Learning from **wow** Experiences

What I've learnt from this wonderful **wow** experience...
I think this is amazing because...
The biggest day in my life was...
A person who I think is really good is...
What matters most to me is...
I am most thankful for...

Learning from **ow** Experiences

What I've learnt from this difficult **ow** experience...
What I've learnt about forgiveness is...
What I've learnt about truth is...
Lying is wrong because...
No one is perfect because...
There would be less trouble if...

Learning from **now** Experiences

What I've learnt from this **now** experience...
What I've learnt about love is...
The world would be a better place if...
I can find peace by...
I think God is like...
One thing I wonder about God is...
I felt God was near me when...
Silence makes you feel...