



St. Nicholas and St. Laurence
CE Primary School

‘Inspire to Aspire – life in all its fullness’

St Nicholas and St Laurence CE Primary School

Spirituality Policy

Our school is part of the DSAT academy trust and as such we follow the guidance of the DSAT spirituality approach as outlined below.

Spirituality – a framework for our shared language and approach

As a Trust of Church of England Schools, with a strong Christian foundation, we are focused on the development of the mind, body, and spirit to enable all to flourish. We believe that spirituality should influence all areas of education and life, therefore we aim that all areas of the curriculum contribute to pupils' spiritual development. Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life. The language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God. For us, this is not about a policy, but about having a framework that develops a shared language and approach. That is what this document seeks to achieve.

Spiritual development is about becoming 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 an on-going process. No-one ever reaches a finished state of spiritual development but participates in a spiritual journey of realisation. We strive as a Trust to provide a firm and well-established foundation for life in all its fullness, underpinned by the biblical foundation of the Trust: 'Doing everything through Christ who strengthens us', Philippians 4:13, and the biblical foundation of every school within the Trust. Our Christian vision is the driver for spiritual growth for all children and adults associated with the Trust, whilst being an inclusive Trust to those of other faiths or none.

How we provide children with openings for developing spirituality

Our children explore relationships with:

- Themselves
- Others
- The wider world and beyond

In addition, they are offered an invitation to engage in collective and individual worship of God.

We sometimes speak about engaging in spiritual exploration through the concepts of windows, mirrors, and doors.

Windows: For children to notice and look at God's word in new ways, with children learning about life, 'in all its fullness,' (John 10:10)

Mirrors: For children to reflect on their experiences; to meditate on life's big questions and to consider some possible answers. This enables them to learn from life by exploring their own insights and perspectives and those of others.

Doors: For children to open up ways to respond creatively as a means of expressing their thoughts and convictions. This enables them to put into action what they are coming to believe and value.

The curriculum in each of our schools is enhanced by opportunities to develop spirituality, influenced by our Christian tradition but enabling opportunities for spiritual reflection for

all. Each school seeks to provide occasions to explore a range of spiritual opportunity when reflecting on issues of faith and meaning as expressed throughout the world by a range of words, symbols, emotions, and actions. Sometimes, these opportunities arise incidentally but should equally be explored as moments of 'awe and wonder'. This encourages all stakeholders to develop an understanding of spiritual character in themselves and others.

Vision and values

Each school within the Trust is driven by their theologically rooted Christian vision based on an understanding of the context of each school community. Each school aims to ensure that their Christian vision impacts positively on every stakeholder, ensuring that everyone can flourish.

This document, other guidance, and Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL), help us to develop a shared understanding and language of spirituality. Staff are committed to supporting spiritual growth whenever appropriate.

Each school within the Trust ensures opportunities for every child to progress in reflection, thought and belief. Children are encouraged to reflect on every experience provided by staff and as they progress through the school, iterate their own thoughts on spirituality.

This is never about persuading anyone to follow a particular religion or set of beliefs, nor to oppose any particular background, culture or upbringing. Instead, it is about experiencing those windows, mirrors and doors that help us understand ourselves and the world around us. We also talk about 'disagreeing well' – respecting others regardless of where our opinions may differ.

Where appropriate, school policies support the growth and development of spirituality for every child, particularly through the positive approach to behaviour that is key to every school within the Trust.

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is central to every school within the Trust, in that it provides opportunity for the community to come together to share experiences and ideas, to reflect, to wonder in the present moment, to join in invitational prayer and to share the Christian story and perspectives from other world faiths, including those represented within the school. As a school community, everyone is enabled to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time is given to celebrate Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths and to be able to contemplate and develop spirituality in an invitational, inspirational and inclusive way.

Spirituality in RE

Each school is guided in their teaching of RE by the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement, the Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE, and the resources used by our schools – mainly the Emmanuel Project and Understanding Christianity. Learning in RE is accessible for every learner and provides every child with a safe space to explore religious and spiritual ways of thinking and belonging, through the key concepts of the nature of God, faith, creation, incarnation, salvation, worship and witness, and afterlife.

Spirituality across and beyond the curriculum

Where appropriate, conversations with children around spirituality will take place and be included in classroom teaching. Each school within the Trust will ensure that their approach to spirituality is woven through the curriculum and fits with their curriculum drivers and design, their culture and values. Children may be supported with sentence starters framed around the concept of spirituality in the curriculum and what children have learned from positive, challenging, or new experiences.

In relation to curriculum design, themes relating to spirituality, such as Christian ethos, the environment, inclusivity, stewardship and citizenship can be incorporated into the curriculum offer. This ensures that children at our Trust schools, understand the importance of our British Values, find out about the world around them and reflect on their own experiences and beliefs. This supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of every child.

Every school within the Trust evaluates all areas of the curriculum to consider the specific knowledge and skills that children should acquire when studying various curriculum subjects. As church schools that value spiritual development, we seek opportunities across the curriculum, and within extra-curricular activities, to pause, reflect and wonder. In every subject, our children are taught how to celebrate achievement and success, and to be resilient and resourceful when things do not go to plan.

Responsibilities

The Leader for Church School Flourishing reviews this approach to spiritual development, in conjunction with the Trust's Standards and Ethos Committee. This is shared for adoption by each school and Academy Standards and Ethos Committee (ASEC) across the Trust – there is scope for them to develop and personalise this according to need. Each ASEC ensures that practice is in line with the biblical foundation of the school. Senior Leaders, and curriculum leaders, including the RE Leader, monitor the development of spirituality throughout school life by learning walks and pupil conferencing, providing support where appropriate.

Spiritual development is everyone's responsibility. Headteachers, senior leaders and the RE Leader are particularly well placed to support the development of Christian vision and values, as well as Collaborative Professional Learning (CPL), in conjunction with the Trust's Leaders for Church School Flourishing and those with responsibility for supporting the development of RE and Collective Worship across the Trust. These, in turn, are supported by our friends within the Diocesan Board of Education.

Monitoring and Evaluation

We seek to develop spirituality because we believe it is the right thing to do, for the good of all our children, helping them to develop understanding, empathy and values. We do not do so in order for it to be monitored and evaluated. However, the inspection frameworks under which we operate, rightly acknowledge the place of spiritual development in the lives of young people and provide a useful guide to what we are seeking to cultivate.

The Ofsted Handbook 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 2023 Framework (church school inspection) includes the questions:
 - How does the schools theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?
 - How does the curriculum reflect the schools theologically rooted Christian vision?
 - How is collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

School leaders will capture their approach to developing spirituality through their on-going self-evaluation evidence in preparation for these inspections. This document will be reviewed periodically as required.

Spirituality at St Nicholas and St Laurence

In addition to following the DSAT approach we also follow the ensuing beliefs and practices. Spiritual development is essential to all children. At St Nicholas and St Laurence, we seek to ensure spiritual development is woven into daily life through educating the whole child in fullness across broad, rich curriculum opportunities. Spiritual development is not specific to one curriculum area or activity. This is supported by our school vision, "Life in all its fullness", which looks to ensure children enjoy and experience all that they can in life. It is also said that: " For a human being, especially a child or young person, to have full quality of life, spirituality in all its aspects must be nurtured and affirmed " (John Bradford)

St Nicholas and St Laurence is a church school that is committed to encouraging the exploration of the Christian faith and values, while being open to other faiths, beliefs and values.

Pupils' spiritual development is shown by their:

- Beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's feeling and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences

Our Christian Values

Our Christian Values of love, perseverance, resilience, hope, compassion and fellowship are firmly rooted in our Christian vision. *For further details regarding our values, please see our website.*




Spiritual Development at St Nicholas and St Laurence

Our belief about spiritual development can best be captured in our spirituality curriculum driver statement:

Spirituality

Our children need to understand themselves and take ownership of their thoughts and emotions. We will nurture all children, who through their learning and reflection can ‘still’ themselves. Our children will take an interest and delight in the world around them; they will be open to what lives beyond the material, which may manifest itself in faith. They will understand that differences between people should be celebrated and learned from. Our children will want to question the world around them in increasingly sophisticated and articulate ways and will seek to answer big questions.

As a church school, St Nicholas and St Laurence believes that spiritual development is essential to the development of the whole child; we seek to offer a range of opportunities for children to develop their spiritual understanding. Opportunities for spiritual development are both planned and unplanned for as well as being exploited spontaneously. We are beginning to develop children’s understanding of how to reflect on their own development using the “Windows, Mirrors and Doors” concept, which we plan our acts of collective worship around.

Opportunity	What is involved?
 Windows on the world	Opportunities to look out on the world to gaze and wonder: The “Wow” and “Ows” moments. The things we find amazing and bring us up short. We can wonder at the world, technology, art, music, scientific advances all around us. We may work outside, visit places of interest, celebrate inspirational people. We can reflect on injustice and inequality in the world. We can wonder at the beauty, technology, art, music, scientific advances all around us. We may work outside, visit places of interest and celebrate the achievements of inspirational people. We can reflect on injustice and inequality in the world.
 Self / Mirrors	Giving opportunities for children to reflect, to look inward to consider some of the big questions of life: To explore their own insights and those of others. This could be compared with looking in a mirror. Look at yourself in a situation... How would you react, what would you say or do? These are questions which may arise through PSHCE lessons as well as daily life throughout school.
 Beyond / Doors	Giving opportunities to children to respond, to do something to go through the door of a creative expression of their own thoughts and convictions. Children would be living out our Christian values, considering how our own beliefs and faiths drive changes in the wider world and begin to seek to address injustice.

Spirituality section of Curriculum Progression Document:

	Novice	Intermediate	Expert
			
<p>Spirituality</p> <p>To be global citizens, our children need to understand themselves and take ownership of their thoughts and emotions. We will nurture all children, who through their learning and reflection can 'still' themselves: Our children will take an interest and delight in the world around them; they will be open to what lives beyond the material, which may manifest itself in faith. They will understand the differences between people should be celebrated and learned from.</p>	<p>I can talk about how I feel</p> <p>I know what makes me special</p> <p>I am starting to think about what I may believe in</p> <p>I sometimes try to answer 'big questions' (e.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God)</p> <p>I know that I am lucky in some ways</p> <p>I show an understanding that one's own behaviour affects other people</p> <p>I listen to other people's point of view</p> <p>I find it hard to trust others</p> <p>I stop and notice things in the world around me</p> <p>I use reflection time to be quiet</p>	<p>I am able to talk and reflect about my feelings</p> <p>I am happy with who I am</p> <p>I am beginning to be able to explain my beliefs</p> <p>I enjoy answering 'big questions' and sometimes think of my own. (E.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God)</p> <p>I can talk about what I am grateful for</p> <p>I think of the effect of behaviour on others before acting</p> <p>I can describe the points of view of others</p> <p>I am respectful of different viewpoints to my own</p> <p>I have a core group of people who I trust</p> <p>I enjoy the miracles of everyday life in the world around me</p> <p>I use reflection time to think and be still quietly</p>	<p>I am able to reflect on my own feelings and change my behaviour based on these reflections</p> <p>I am proud of the things that make me special and know that it is ok to be different</p> <p>I have a strong sense of what I believe in</p> <p>I am able to discuss and challenge the 'big questions' respectfully (e.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God)</p> <p>I am aware that others do not always have what I do and am sensitive about this</p> <p>I change behaviours to suit different situations</p> <p>I describe and understand others' points of view</p> <p>I have a wide circle of people who I feel safe with and can trust</p> <p>I make time to stop and reflect on the miracles of life in the world around me</p> <p>I am able to 'still' myself and reflect when I feel it will help me</p>

The four elements of spiritual development

Spiritual development can be encouraged through a range of activities. These will include both planned and unplanned learning opportunities. Children are encouraged to ask questions and explore topics, discussing and responding to issues around them. Whilst spiritual moments can just happen, at St Nicholas and St Laurence we are increasingly planning provide high quality, thought provoking and purposeful opportunities for spiritual development.

The four elements of spiritual development form the basis of our work with children in developing a strong sense of spirituality. We also believe that it is vital that all of the adults in school also see the need to develop their own spirituality for their own wellbeing and so that they can effectively support and help our children help each other.

Element	What does this involve?
Self	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Awareness of feelings; ability to reflect and express• Awareness of our uniqueness; happiness with who we are• Gratitude for the things we have and the person we are• Exploration of personal faith• Development of imagination and creativity
Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Empathy and understanding; respect, tolerance• To love and be loved (loving your neighbour)• Making a difference; duty
World	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Developing a sense of awe and wonder• Enjoying the miracles of everyday life• Taking time for what really matters• Appreciating beauty in art, music, nature
Beyond (transcendence)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Encountering/experiencing God (having a sense of what lies beyond the material/ physical)• Ability to formulate and discuss the 'Big Questions' (e.g. about life, death, suffering, nature of God)• Opportunities for prayer, connecting with God• Making sense of the world

Opportunities to develop and support spirituality

Children will:

- Have regular times in the day for quiet and reflection. This might be listening to a story, lighting a candle in worship, engaging in reflection activities in spaces around school.
- Be provided with many opportunities for creativity and imagination.
- Be provided with purposeful and regular opportunities for prayer. This can take many forms, but should include being thankful and allow the children an opportunity to open themselves up to God.
- Have regular opportunities to explore, express and share feelings.
- See positive relationships role modelled around school. The importance of relationships will be reaffirmed to them. This will include clear exploration of how we talk to and relate to each other.
- Have opportunities to express awe and wonder, appreciate beauty in all its forms and appreciate connections and unity in the world.
- Be encouraged to reflect on mistakes and say sorry, where appropriate.

- Be encouraged to show perseverance, respect and trust and express these in practical ways.
- Have opportunities to explore 'Big Questions', particularly through RE learning, but also throughout our developing curriculum based on Big Questions.

Monitoring this policy

The impact of this policy will be monitored by the Headteacher and the Governors. Discussions with all stakeholders will seek to identify how spiritual opportunities are being established and how these are impacting upon children's understanding and development.