



A FAMILY, A FOUNDATION, A FUTURE

Whitminster Endowed C of E Primary School

Spirituality Policy

Written by: Diocese of Gloucestershire Board of Education
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Class Kintsugi pots – May 2021

Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery, makes something broken into something differently beautiful and even more valuable. Using this metaphor, the ups, downs and nows of life offer the possibility of becoming cracks that are filled with gold, adding significance and value to life

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Our Ethos Statement

Our school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. Each child is recognised as an individual and encouraged to develop his or her varying talents, interests and potential. We aim to provide an ethos in which pupils can learn and be happy, providing them with a firm and lasting foundation of knowledge and values to serve them as they grow up and take their place in society.

Christian Vision:

A Family, A Foundation, A Future

Our vision begins with Jesus' commandment 'to love one another, just as I have loved you'.

We are A FAMILY, loving and caring for each other; our own family, our friends, our neighbours, our school, our local and global communities. We all flourish because of these relationships.

We ensure children have A FIRM FOUNDATION. This is built on Christian values and enables all to develop an inner strength to live courageously, embrace their own and others uniqueness and love as Jesus did.

We aim to ensure that all have A FUTURE where they look outwards and become the very best they can be to live life to the full.

Associated values:

Wisdom (New Day, New Start) The Two Houses	Courage (Aspire, be challenged and confident in all you do) David, the Shepherd Boy
Peace and Joy (New day, new start) Story of St Francis	Compassion (Give Respect, gain respect) Loaves and Fishes
Dignity (and Respect) Give Respect, gain respect) Moses and the Burning Bush	Thankfulness (Embrace, Enthuse, Enjoy) The man who came back
Community (and Service (Value yourself and others) Queen Esther serves her people	Forgiveness (New Day, New Start) The Lost Son
Hope (Aspire, be challenged and confident in all you do) The Rainbow (Noah's Ark)	Perseverance (Create, Learn, Achieve) The Lost Sheep
Friendship (living well together) (Value yourself and others) Through the Roof	Trust (Embrace, Enthuse, Enjoy) Storm on the Lake

OUR SCHOOL VALUES:

Celebrate and be proud

Give respect, gain respect

Create, learn and achieve

Aspire, be challenged and confident in all you do

Value yourself and others

Embrace, enthuse, enjoy

New day, new start

Theological grounding firmly rooted in Christian narrative

A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.

John 13:34

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, Whitminster Endowed C of E Primary 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 every day.

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.

Our 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

To develop the children's personal beliefs, and how these make someone what they are.

To develop self-awareness, self-knowledge and self-respect.

To develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery inspired by the natural world.

To develop the children's ability to express their own thoughts and feelings creatively.

To develop the recognition and value of the worth of each individual including themselves.

To develop the way the children use their imagination, and their experience of inspiration, intuition and insight.

To develop the children's ability to recognise their own feelings and emotions.

- To develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child made in the image of God;
- To develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith;
- To develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- To develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community.
- To develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life;
- To develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth;
- To understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others.

Organisation

Special attention will be given to the quality of RE and Collective Worship as significant, although not exclusive, contributors to pupils' spiritual development. We aim to bring spirituality into all aspects of pupils' everyday education across our broad curriculum. We aim to give our pupils opportunities for silence, stillness and reflection. 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. 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 within the Christian Vision

Our Christian vision starts with the commandment 'Love as I have loved you'. We are a FAMILY loving and caring. We want our children to develop a broad and rich sense of living together through all the ups and downs of life (**ows, wows and nows**). We want them to go into the world feeling loved, enabled, supported and championed with a deep sense of belonging. Our children will finish school with firm FOUNDATIONS, academically, morally and spiritually. They will embrace uniqueness, with the understanding that, for Christians, God as creator made everything in his image just as he intended them to be. They will develop an understanding of themselves, others and the world with time for the stillness of self-reflection (**nows**), the difficulties of disappointment or pain (**ows**) and the joy for awe and wonder moment in life (**wows**). We aim to ensure that all have A FUTURE where they look outwards and become the very best they can be to live life to the full.

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of our 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**) 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 liturgy 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 flourish spiritually. Collective Worship in our school is inclusive, inspirational and invitational.

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 our Religious Education Policy and The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement.

Spirituality in our Physical Environment.

Our outdoor environment provides children with opportunities to explore their spiritual curiosity in the natural world around them. Our wellbeing garden is a place for children to investigate the world around them, they have planted it themselves with both flowers and vegetables and can spend the year watching with awe and wonder as they grow. Likewise they can spend their time fascinated by the frogspawn in our pond as it develops into frogs. (**wow**). Our spiritual garden provides a quiet time for reflection, mindfulness and stillness. It is designed with areas for children to have times of peaceful contemplation. Our playground offers children the space for them to develop their sense of self awareness. To take joy in the success of climbing on the monkey bars, or shooting hoops with the netballs, or to learn how to cope with the frustration or disappointments of losing a game (**ow**) They learn to play cooperatively and how to develop key values of compassion, respect and love through interactions with their friends. (**now**)

Spirituality in the Curriculum

- the curriculum and all areas of our community life will be explicitly rooted in Christian values, such as forgiveness, thankfulness, peace and trust, as documented in school policies;
- opportunities for spiritual development will be pro-actively planned into the curriculum and actively encouraged in all areas of school life;
- Collective Worship will celebrate the love of God for every individual and provide opportunities for children to respond to this;
- the school building and outdoor environment will provide appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer.
- that children's spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight will be fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies;
- that children's moral development will be linked to spiritual development through strategies such as Windows, Mirrors, Doors (see Reflection Journals);
- that the RE curriculum will deliver knowledge and understanding about a range of faith perspectives relating to spirituality;
- that children will be 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.

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

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?
 - o How did a character cope with a challenge in life?
 - o How did the actions of a character surprise you? How do you think you would have responded to that **wow** or **ow** moment?
 - o 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 our 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**.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Ethos Governor committee review the policy in partnership with the Head Teacher 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.

The Head Teacher and the RE subject leader are 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:

- 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.

This policy is shared on the school's website.

This policy is reviewed every 2 years, or more frequently, as required.

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...

