



Jolesfield Church of England Primary School

Policy of Spiritual Development

What is our approach to 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, Jolesfield 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.



Jolesfield uses this language and the concepts of **wows**, **ows** and **nows** to explore relationships with ourselves, others and the wider natural world and beyond. These opportunities are seen as offering an invitation to relate to God.

What does spiritually flourishing mean at Jolesfield?

We aspire for every child to develop their own spiritual life through experiencing the wonder of creation and their own potential creativity, based upon the premise that we are all made in the image of God. We encourage a deep sense of reflection and create opportunities to ask 'the big questions' linked to identity and purpose. We support every child to develop an understanding and practice of compassion and nurture sensitivity towards the needs of others locally and globally. Children, who are spiritually flourishing, recognise the **wows**, **ows** and **nows** as an opportunity to relate to God.

What is our Christian Vision?

Our vision is that Jolesfield Church of England Primary School enables every child and adult to flourish as individuals and collectively for the good of all.

'Jesus said, "I have come that they may have life and have it to the full." John 10 v10

We create an inclusive school community where children feel rooted in the knowledge of God's love for all people. We aim for every child to develop a curiosity for learning and celebrate achievement in all its forms, as well as the effort that goes into making progress. The concept of flourishing, linked to 'have it to the full' is rooted in our belief that we all inhabit God's world and he gave it to us to explore and cherish. Therefore, we embrace the full breadth of the curriculum and move beyond in order that our children flourish spiritually, socially, emotionally and academically. As pioneers, children develop a passion for learning, grow in confidence without fear of failure and inspire the adults around them.

Our vision is communicated through our school values of:

- kindness
- thankfulness
- teamwork
- positivity
- respect

How Does Our Physical Environment Support Spiritual Growth?

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.

We are fortunate enough to have amazing school grounds. Forest School is used to help teach children a variety of skills but also to see the wonderful world God has created as one of the 'wows' in life. Whether this is through pond dipping, cooking over an open fire, identifying wildlife or using fire lighters, children are encouraged to appreciate and take care of the natural world as a gift from God. A sense of responsibility and 'stewardship' is encouraged through having children assist with gardening, use litter pickers to collect rubbish and treat insects with care and respect.

Our reflection garden with its wooden cross is used as a quiet space for children to sit and contemplate - a moment of 'now' amongst the bustle of a school day. Class worship is sometimes held here.



In order to ensure the physical environment provides the right conditions for children to flourish within, consideration is given to every aspect of Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs from ensuring every child has a water bottle (Physiological Needs) to the wearing of school uniform (Love and Belonging) to individual contributions to class reflection captured in a Class Worship book (Self-Actualization).

Every classroom has a reflection area. This is a physical reminder of the centrality of the Christian vision in our classes. Teachers personalise each area but they all include a Bible, a cross, a class worship book and prayers written by the children.

We want our children to experience a sense of love and belonging, which underpins self-esteem. Therefore, in our classrooms, all children have a named peg and/or tray, which provides a safe space for belongings. The 'Zones of Regulation' display also identifies each child and provides an individual way for children to share their emotional well-being at any given point throughout the school day and access a personalised toolkit of support.

Self-esteem is bolstered through the displaying of named pieces of work in order to celebrate progress and attainment. A RAISE display shows the names of children, who have been identified as consistently reflecting our school values. The collective celebration of this in our Celebration Worship helps boost self-esteem whilst celebrating our school values.

The entrance hall to our school includes a wooden cross, displaying the memory verse central to our half-termly worship theme and a prayer tree. In addition, a display board reflects the worship themes for the year and captures some of the key tools and actions associated with these themes. This serves as a reminder to our pupils and helps to develop a shared language of Christian values and teaching. A large frieze with thought-provoking questions captures the narrative of the Bible.

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

How is Spirituality Developed Through Collective Worship?

Collective worship is the beating heart of Jolesfield. 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. Our vision of creating 'an inclusive school community where children feel rooted in the knowledge of God's love for all people' is brought alive through our daily act of worship.

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 and adults experience worship. 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. Through the structure of a welcome, followed by learning, reflecting and responding we ensure collective worship at Jolesfield is invitational, inspirational and inclusive. In addition, worship at Jolesfield is also challenging as our weekly class worship, values and expects individual engagement and response. It 'opens the door' for children to make a difference by applying their learning to their lives and attitudes and by doing so, impact those around them.

Pupils are actively involved in worship rather than passive observers. For example, our School Ambassadors promote direct pupil involvement in worship through sharing prayers, lighting the candle, speaking, leading in drama activities etc. In addition, our School Ambassadors help shape the themes explored in worship and lead a worship on a theme of their choice, every term. Plus, our school ambassadors regularly evaluate worship to help us recognise our strengths and identify aspects to improve.

How is Spirituality Developed Through our RE Curriculum?

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.

The teaching of Christianity is underpinned by the scheme, 'Understanding Christianity' which was developed by the Church of England. All faiths are explored through three avenues: 'Making sense of the text' - exploring why a particular belief is held; 'Understanding the Impact' - considering the difference the belief makes to an

individual's actions and 'Making Connections'- discerning possible links between pupils' own lives and their understanding of the world

For further details, please refer to Jolesfield's Religious Education Policy and The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement.

How is Spirituality Developed Across the Curriculum?

Our curriculum design is driven by our Christian vision underpinned by the verse 'Jesus said, " I have come that they may have life and have it to the full."' We want children to have a 'full curriculum experience' so the curriculum is not narrowed at all. All subjects are equally valued as is attainment or progress in any curriculum area. Our inter-connected approach encourages children to think deeply, make connections, ask questions and seek understanding of experiences and knowledge outside of their own understanding. Where appropriate, the language of **wows**, **ows** and **nows** is used to develop conversations on spirituality.

Across the curriculum, points are identified where opportunities for spiritual development might arise:

Maths

- The concept of infinity
- Considering the unknown through discussions linked to probability
- The wonder of number patterns and the natural world, for example, hexagons in honeycomb; symmetry in butterflies

English

- The power and beauty of language
- Different perspectives on daily life and world views
- Responses of fictional characters to adversity, persecution etc

History

- Universal human experiences across time, ethnicity, gender etc
- Moral issues, for example, an archaeological dig on a grave
- Faith and values that inspired action and societal change
- Sense of time and significance of past decisions on the future
- Issues of fairness, for example, slavery, crime and punishment

Design and Technology

- Appreciation of human ingenuity
- Ability to improve the lives of others through design
- Connection between purpose and design choices

Geography

- The beauty and power of our physical world
- The very different lived experiences of people within the same or different regions
- Fragility and complexity of our world

Music

- An expression of spirituality, e.g. Requiems and Masses
- Develop fascination, awe and wonder, leading to creativity
- Music as a story with layers of meaning of personal emotional resonance

RSHE

- Awareness and celebration of God's creation through our individual uniqueness
- Sense of identity and belonging through being all God's children
- Understanding of how our actions impact others, linked to 'What would Jesus do?'
- Concept of stewardship

How is Spirituality Reflected Within the Ethos of the Daily Life of the School?

At Jolesfield, all staff are aware of how we define spirituality and what spiritually flourishing looks like. As underlined by our vision, we firmly believe that in all aspects of life including spirituality, adults can learn from children. For this reason, every member of the school community, including MDMS 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 feel comfortable talking about **wows**, **ows** and **nows**.

Our curriculum intent and implementation is underpinned by the concept of 'living life to the full.' Our curriculum is rich and progressive, full of purposeful learning that enables children to know more, do more and remember more. There are many opportunities built in for personal reflection in order for children to consider their own learning journey and aspirations for the future.

Our approach to behaviour is based on the Christian teaching of 'love thy neighbour as yourself.' (Matthew 22 v. 37 & 39). We expect everyone to be kind, respectful, generous, thankful, humble and compassionate. We create a culture, using our school values, where children and staff recognise their roles and responsibilities within the school community and the wider world and be equipped to live life to the full. The Christian value of forgiveness also underpins our approach to behaviour management. We aim for all behaviour to be dealt with on the same day allowing every day to be a fresh start. Linking behaviour to the teachings of Jesus encourages pupils to have a '**now**' moment where a sense of 'otherness' can break through. By setting the expectation that every member of the school community will feel cared for and respected, we are reinforcing the value of all God's children.

The way we value our children and recognise their ability to inspire adults is reflected in our decision to create several pupil groups. Children volunteer to participate in these and give up part of their lunchtimes as an act of service towards their school community. Pupil groups are interwoven into the fabric of our school. Our groups consist of: School Ambassadors; Sports Crew; Buddies; Digital Leaders; Librarians and Eco-Team. This idea of supporting and serving each other is underpinned by Matthew 7 v12, 'Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.' This is often referred to and reflected in the simple acts of service that run through the daily life of the school, for example, the bell rings 5 minutes before the end of play - all children clear up the equipment whether they have played with it or not; children use litter pickers to pick up litter; children assist in clearing up the lunch hall by sweeping the floor etc.

How is Spirituality Developed through the Prayer Life of the School?

Prayer is interwoven throughout the school day so children develop an awareness that many see prayer as a constant means of communication with a listening, living God. Children say grace before eating lunch and an end of day prayer. In addition, the school prayer is shared on Fridays in Celebration Worship. All pupils are taught The Lord's Prayer. In addition, classroom worship encourages a personal response to a theme and invites pupils to write a prayer. These prayers are shared and valued. This is demonstrated through their addition to the prayer tree in the school lobby or added to the reflection area in every classroom.

How is this Policy Monitored and Evaluated?

The SIAMS Committee review the policy in partnership with Senior 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.

What are the Roles and Responsibilities Linked to this Policy?

We recognise 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 Headteacher 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:

- 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

How Are Staff Aware of the Expectations Reflected in this Policy?

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. ECTs and staff who are new to Jolesfield Church of England 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 shared with new staff and new governors through induction. This policy is reviewed every 3 years, or more frequently, as required.