



# Diocese of Salisbury Academy Trust

*'Beyond expectations for all of God's children'*

## **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 school's theologically rooted Christian vision enable pupils and adults to flourish?
- How does the curriculum reflect the school's 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.