

# **HIGHNAM C. OF E. PRIMARY ACADEMY**



## **SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY**

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## Spiritual Development Policy

### Introduction

In contrast to the policies for specific curriculum subjects, this policy relates to the whole life of the school. Spiritual development is promoted through all the subjects of the curriculum and also through the ethos of the school and through collective worship.

As a Church of England School we identify Christian values which underpin the whole of our community. These values inform our school's vision, aims and ethos, the design of our curriculum, all policies, planning and the school's management and governance.

### Vision and Values

## Children with Confidence

We chose **Children with Confidence** as our vision because:

We see **confidence** as a vital ingredient for living,  
the **confidence** that makes aggression unnecessary,  
the **confidence** to seek support,  
the **confidence** not to be anxious,  
the **confidence** to put other people first,  
the **confidence** to ask the big questions,  
the **confidence** to trust in God.

Our vision transforms the pupils of today ready to face the future with **confidence**.

### Primary QuEST Vision

**Together in Life, Flourishing Through Life, Faith for Life**

**Church of England Vision for Schools - Deeply Christian, serving the common good**

The vision is deeply Christian, with the promise by Jesus of 'life in all its fullness' at its heart. It encompasses schools, colleges, further and higher education, but in this initial articulation our focus is on schools; other work will follow relating more specifically to colleges and universities as well as exploring the connections with our Going for Growth work with children and young people in the church.

Our vision embraces the spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral and social development of children and young people. We offer a vision of human flourishing for all, one that embraces excellence

and academic rigour, but sets them in a wider framework. This is worked out theologically and educationally through four basic elements which permeate our vision for education:

| **Wisdom** | **Hope** | **Community** | **Dignity** |

The vision, in line with the Church of England's role as the established Church, is for the common good of the whole human community and its environment, whether national, regional or local.

Diocese of Gloucester Vision (2017-2022)

"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full" JOHN 10:10

L – Leadership

I – Imagination

F – Faith

E – Engagement

As the Holy Spirit breathes life into what this vision will mean for each of us, we will find joy in the unknown and familiar. We can be confident that each action we take, big or small, will transform lives and communities.

## Definition

Spiritual development relates to the quest for individual identity and the search for meaning and purpose in our existence. It is associated with a dimension of life which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses, but has much to do with feelings and emotions, and attitudes and beliefs.

The term 'spiritual' need not be synonymous with 'religious.' Understanding of self and others is at the heart of spiritual development and is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith. Spiritual development is, therefore, accessible to everyone.

All areas of the curriculum should contribute to pupils' spiritual development. As a church school, we place special emphasis on the specific teaching and beliefs of the Christian faith, both within the daily life of the school and through the curriculum.

In Collective Worship, children and adults are given the opportunity to praise God for the wonders of the world, to give thanks for God's limitless love and to learn about and celebrate the shared Christian values which unite them as a school family. The gospel stories and other Biblical teaching are therefore seen as the root of the Christian values (such as trust and thankfulness, friendship and forgiveness) that shape our school's life. This means that Collective Worship will be the life-giving thread weaving through all aspects of our school's life.

Opportunities for spiritual development are actively planned into all aspects of the curriculum. Spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy, and insight are modelled in different ways by staff and also encouraged and celebrated in children. There is a shared understanding that the spiritual life of the school is the wellspring of moral, social and cultural development and all that makes the community what it is and strives to become.

## Aims

We aim to develop in each child:

- a sense of self-worth stemming from the recognition that they are unique and created in the image of God
- a sense of being in relationship with others and a growing understanding of what it means to belong to a community
- the ability to sense the special nature of human relationships
- a response to and understanding of the distinctive ethos of a Church school and the content, language and symbolism of the Christian faith as a way of understanding our meaning and purpose in life
- knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them;
- an involvement with others in the wider world and an appreciation of difference and diversity
- the ability to listen and be still
- the ability to sense the sacred, the holy, the Divine
- the ability to sense wonder and mystery in the world
- a willingness to explore the Christian beliefs and values of the school community as a foundation for life and through them be able to counter negative forces in human experience
- the ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc
- the ability to realise that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth and development
- the ability to explore the ultimate questions and mysteries of life

## Objectives

- to develop the skill of being physically still, yet alert
- to develop the skill of being mentally still, concentrating on the present moment
- to develop the ability to use all ones senses
- to promote an awareness of and enjoyment in using one's imaginative potential
- to encourage quiet reflection during a lesson or assembly
- to develop individual self-confidence in expressing inner thoughts in a variety of ways
- to consider the mystery of God and the wonder of His world
- to find an inner confidence and peace

## What Spirituality Means at Highnam Academy:



## Approaches

In our school we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to children's spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning.

In particular we will ensure:

- 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 (eg in reflection areas and our spiritual garden)
- children's spiritual capacities such as imagination, empathy and insight will be fostered through the creative arts and interactive multi-sensory teaching strategies
- children's moral development will be linked to spiritual development through strategies such as Windows, Mirrors, Doors (see Reflection Journals)
- the outstanding RE curriculum will deliver knowledge and understanding about a range of faith perspectives relating to spirituality
- 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

Within RE, Worship and PSHCE, our school will:

- allow pupils to investigate and reflect upon their own beliefs and values
- provide opportunities for pupils to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the 'darker' side of life
- provide opportunities for prayer/reflection/silence, the exploration of inner space
- encourage a balance of music, speech, silence and the creative arts when exploring spiritual development
- explore the use of symbol, image, allegory and metaphor in the curriculum
- explore what commitment means
- always invite a response and never coerce

## Inclusion

We are committed to equality of opportunity regardless of race, gender, cultural background, ability or any physical or sensory disability.

## Spiritual Garden

Our Spiritual Garden was opened in 2015. It offers a place where children and staff can find peace and opportunities for reflection, as well as an outdoor worship space.

## Role of Staff

The Head Teacher has responsibility for overseeing the planning, the provision and the monitoring and evaluation of spiritual development and will keep in touch with national developments and will

act in an advisory capacity, supporting colleagues. Staff meetings may be used for discussion and the update of information.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

Opportunities offered to children for Spiritual Development will be monitored and evaluated in the following ways:

- monitoring of lesson plans and teaching and learning by Head Teacher/Curriculum Leader
- spirituality questionnaires
- audit of policies and schemes of work
- Worship Council Questionnaires
- Visits from the Bishop's Visitor
- regular discussion at staff and governor meetings
- sharing of classroom work and practice
- conversations with children and evidence from pupils' work