Dunnington C of E VA Primary School

Spirituality Policy

We Care, We Believe, We Succeed – Together

Our Christian Vision

'Encourage one another and build each other up' (1 Thessalonians 5: 11)

Our Vision is to place the child at the heart of everything we do. It is to work together, where everyone encourages each other to be a partner in learning.

We aim to provide a safe, happy, caring and stimulating community, where every child is given the opportunity to reach their true potential and to celebrate their successes. Within our learning environment, children will:

- develop a thirst for knowledge, they will be encouraged to raise questions and develop their thinking and learning skills.
- develop physically, emotionally and spiritually, ensuring they are equipped for the ever-changing and demanding world in which we live.

In our school we will:

- respect each other's beliefs
- care for each other and the environment
- connect with the wider community

In learning and teaching we will set high standards and aspire for excellence in everything we do, ensuring that our curriculum is relevant and purposeful. We are determined to create an inclusive culture of learning where all children are challenged in their thinking, discover their talents, achieve to the best of their abilities and become motivated and resilient life-long learners.

Policy Author	Monica Gamble – Interim Headteacher
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1. Definitions

As spirituality is such a difficult concept to define, it is important that we have a common definition that we use when thinking about how we can support and develop pupils' spirituality within a church school context.

Spirituality relates, in essence, to the question 'who am I and how do I find real meaning in my life?' It is to approach, experience or believe in something that is beyond our normal thoughts, emotions and senses and to develop a deeper awareness of ourselves, our life, our relationship with others and our relationship with the surrounding world or to experience a connection with something beyond the everyday.

At its core, spiritual development should enable all pupils and adults to grow and flourish. It should provide opportunities to stop, think and question the world, helping children to make sense of the world in which they live and to understand a little more of their place within it.

Spiritual development is not about one specific religion, or indeed, a religious experience, as it is not the same as faith; however, some of these ideas may contribute to a pupil's spiritual development. Similarly, Ofsted highlight that 'spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'. All areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development. Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone and is not dependent on a religious affiliation.

As a church school, it is important that our view of spirituality is grounded in our distinctive Christian vision. Our Christian distinctiveness is what makes our school special and therefore, our development of spirituality reflects our vision for pupils to flourish as valued members of the world community, as educated citizens and as part of God's creation.

To make conversations about spirituality more accessible to every member of our school community, we have chosen to follow ideas developed by the Education Department at the Diocese of Gloucester and the work of David Hay and Rebecca Nye. Academic researchers David Hay and

Rebecca Nye have dedicated time and expertise to studying children's spirituality. They recognise the darker side of spiritual development (frustration, doubt, anger, vulnerability) alongside the more typically positive elements and characterise spiritual development as 'relational consciousness', whereby over time and with careful provision and opportunity, individuals become more aware of four key relationships they each have: with self, with others, with nature and the world, with the 'beyond' or God.

These four relationships are an important part of what it means to be human for any individual, with the latter sometimes leading to a relationship with the transcendent (meaning: beyond or above the range of normal or physical human experience) in terms of a deity and sometimes as regarding self as part of the wider web of the cosmos/universe. Approaching spiritual development using this model provides staff (and pupils in due course) with a useable language for talking about spiritual development, what it means and how it is being developed. This, in turn, allows for:

- Intentional planning for exploration of these four relationships as part of curriculum topics
- Reflection on these four relationships as part of routine lesson structure
- Opportunity for exploring current affairs and events as they happen with a focus on spiritual nurturing as a positive outcome, even in challenging times
- Thoughtful provision of spaces in classrooms and the wider school environment (both indoors and outdoors) for incidental spiritual development to take place (such as prayer/reflection spaces).
- A useful framework for exploring Bible stories and the celebration of feasts and festivals in the liturgical calendar as part of collective worship

Also, to support pupils' understanding of this challenging concept, it is important to use terminology that is easy for pupils to understand and relate to. With pupils, we can use. terminology of:

- Faith – A complete confidence or trust in someone or something, even if you cannot see it.
- Religion – A community of people, who share a common world view, set of rituals, rule of life and set of beliefs about a particular deity or individual.
- Belief – A truth that is understood/ An acceptance that something exists or is true, especially one without proof

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.

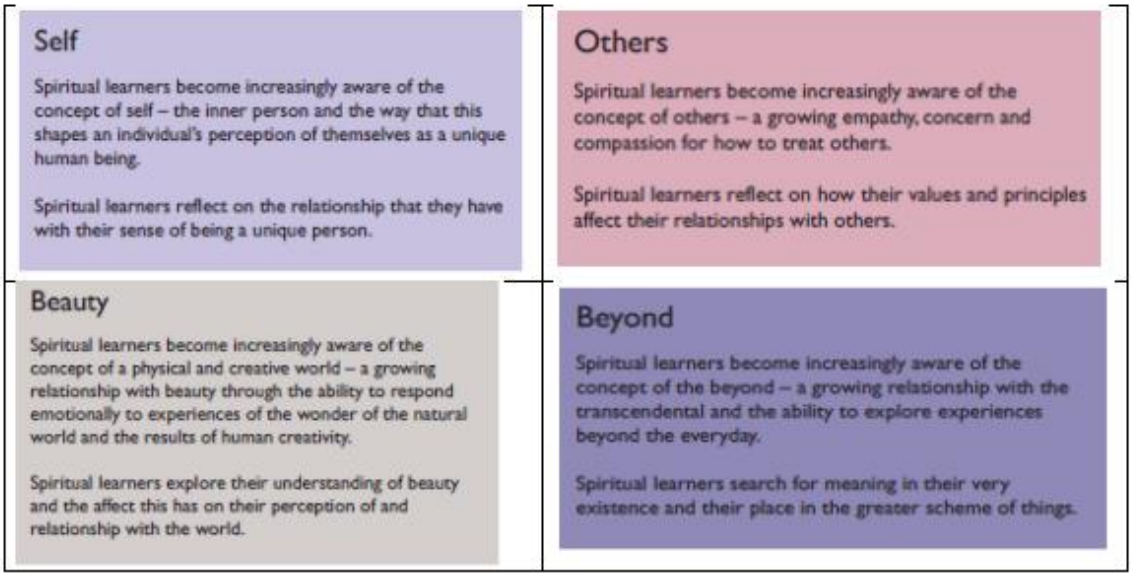
Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday – the ***ows*** of life.

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. The gold in the cracks reflect a little of the wonder of spirituality. We use this language and the concepts of **wows, ows** and **nows** to explore relationships with:

- self
- others
- the beauty and creativity of the natural world and beyond
- the concept of beyond or in a Christian interpretation, with God through the trinity.



These concepts provide a foundation to develop spirituality across both worship and the curriculum and supports the development of our school vision into an aims and values statement for the school and learners which relates to pupils' wider character attributes and development.

These attributes, relate closely to the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) research on the social and emotional elements of learning, help root spirituality within children's everyday 'now' experience as well as in the 'wow' moments:

- Self: Self-awareness and self-management skills.
- Others: Social awareness and relationship skills/ Responsible decision making/ compassion
- Beauty: Curiosity and creativity/ compassion
- Beyond: Faith and hope/ Curiosity

Pupils' expression of spirituality is not limited to these capacities but having the awareness of these help in our understanding of how children develop spiritually. It is important to ensure that pupils have the opportunity to explore and spend time engaged in these capacities in order to aid their development.

The six core theological concepts that underpin and wrap around everything that church schools do also link well with the relational consciousness model of spiritual development:

Four Key Relationships	Six Core Theological Concepts
Self	**Creation**- Imago Dei (made in God's image, creative expression of identity, learning and values) **Love**- the development of self esteem and self worth and the nurturing of practices such as prayer and reflection which may help with personal well being and mental health **Trinity**- celebration and acceptance of authentic selves and the expectation of human diversity and difference
Others	**Incarnation**- getting alongside others in the 'ows' and 'wows' of life (immediate context of friends, family and local community) **Trinity**- recognising and celebrating difference and diversity in relationships with others and learning how to live in community **Love**- treating others with love, respect and kindness and maintaining accountability with love at the centre **Reconciliation**- forgiveness and repair at the centre of relationships and as an expected response to conflict
Nature/the World	**Creation**- the exploration of the natural world and advocacy towards protecting it from exploitation, celebration of Creation and the joy of connecting with nature **Salvation**- 'good news' and transformative action for others in the form of courageous advocacy **Incarnation**- getting alongside others in the 'ows' and 'wows' of life (national and global context, awareness and recognition of social justice and equity issues and courageous advocacy) **Reconcilaition**- with the earth and the nurturing of a reciprocal relationship with nature
God/Beyond	**Creation**- recognition of the Christian idea of God as Father and Creator and personal exploration of what that might mean for them as individuals **Incarnation/Salvation**- reflection on what might be learned from the life of Jesus and his teachings **Love**- the importance of love as a central value as individuals reflect on their place in the world

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.

2. Spirituality within the Ethos of the Daily Life of the School

At Dunnington C of E Primary School, we view spiritual growth as becoming more and more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality. These opportunities may happen each and every day as children deal with delight, disappointment and the chance to be present with themselves. Throughout the daily life of the school, including lunch times and playtimes, pupils know that they can feel comfortable to talk about and reflect upon their **wows, ows and nows** experiences with staff and other pupils. The school environment also contributes to spiritual development with classroom reflection areas, outdoor quiet areas and corridor/ classroom displays providing stimulus, challenge and thought-provoking ideas.

3. Spirituality within Collective Worship

Collective worship is the beating heart of 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 moments) which are often linked to invitations to pray or sit in silence.

The recognition of the trinity in daily worship acts as a clear signal and model of our relationship with God and Jesus through the holy spirit – that spirituality is that living connection between ourselves and beyond.

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 practices such as prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy and are introduced to different musical traditions.

Termly themes provide a focus to explore wider the school's vision and the practical impact of our aims and value statement on pupils' experience and character development. 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. Collective worship is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

4. Spirituality within 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.

5. Spirituality within the curriculum

It is important that spirituality is developed, planned for and promoted across the curriculum both incidentally and deliberately. Pupils are be given opportunities to see awe and wonder in all subjects and also to ask deep and engaging questions. Pupils are encouraged to be active, curious learners and to develop the confidence to express their own ideas, to be imaginative and develop the language of emotional and spiritual literacy. Resources are also chosen to provide new, refreshing and stimulating impressions. Drawing on the language of **wows, ows and nows**, conversations around spirituality where relevant are included in classroom teaching to enhance learning and support wider questioning and reflection. Subject policies identify the contribution each subject makes to pupils' spiritual development

6. The Importance of Questioning

Being able to pose questions that open up spiritual development is an important aspect of what Church schools do, whether it be in collective worship, part of a curriculum lesson, in dealing with a problem or in supporting pupils with engaging with deliberate spiritual spaces (e.g. prayer/reflection spaces) in their own way.

Using the relational consciousness model supports teachers in 'thinking on their feet' with regards to spiritual development: Which question can I pose here to best support pupils with their relationship with themselves, others, nature/the world or a relationship with something beyond themselves? A focus on questions rather than answers ensures pupils retain spiritual autonomy and agency as they

develop spiritually. It avoids 'spoon-feeding' answers and instead ensures adults sit with pupils in the questions of life and meaning.

The questions staff may pose to plan for intentional spiritual 'progress' fall into three categories:

Becoming	Knowing	Doing
Questions that encourage self-reflection in order to set an intention about the type of person they want to be	Questions that encourage understanding of self and of how the world works	Questions that prompt action and advocacy
What do I believe in? *What sort of person do I want to be?* *Is the forgiveness I saw that person exercising something I also want to be able to do in my own life?*	*What is important to me?* *Why do I feel this is important?* *Now I know this person's story, how has it changed me and my thinking?*	*What do I want to do now I have reflected on this?* *Is there something about my life/the world I want to change now I understand it better?*

The questions staff ask pupils at times of conflict, bereavement and challenge are also an important part of spiritual development and can be life-changing for pupils in how they handle these times and develop as people. They also highlight that spirituality development is not a fluffy thing and can involve some difficult processing and internal work.

7. Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Governing body 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. Opportunities for spiritual growth are monitored through the planned timetable of observations and learning walks in both formal and informal contexts, and through discussions with colleagues and pupil voice. Monitoring of spirituality also contributes to the SIAMS self-evaluation process particularly around IQ 2. 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.

8. 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 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

9. 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. Early Career Teachers (ECT) and staff who are new to the school will receive training and support from the staff member identified as leading on spirituality.