



SAINT JOHN'S

Spirituality Policy

Designated Member of Staff	Head Teacher
Committee with responsibility	Vision and Values
Date of Issue	May 2024
Frequency of Review	Every three years

Issue Number	Issue Date	Summary of Changes
1	May 2024	Introduction of a new policy

For this policy, we have used guidance from the Diocese of Gloucester as the basis for its contents. We have a separate Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy which provides information around the school's focus for each of these elements.

Introduction

Spiritual development is promoted through the vision and ethos of the school and through collective worship, as well as through the curriculum. As a Church of England School, our school's vision underpins our aims and ethos, the design of our curriculum, all policies, planning and the school's management and governance.

The vision for Saint John's is distinctively Christian: 'where we all flourish.'

This statement derives from Psalm 52:8: We are 'like a tree, flourishing in God's unfailing love'. Our key statement about school is: From diverse beginnings and building on our Christian values, we grow together to reach up and reach out.

Our vision is that Saint John's Church of England Primary School is a place where everyone flourishes and grows. Our logo of a tree reminds us that we are 'like a tree, flourishing in God's unfailing love' and our tree logo is drawn with one line, showing that fundamentally we flourish and grow together, helping each other as we develop and prepare for our next steps, reaching up and out towards others.

Although predating both, this vision accords with both the Church of England 2016 Vision for Education¹ and the Gloucester Diocesan 'Life' vision². (See Appendix 1: Our place as a Church of England school.)

The framework of the Christian faith, delivered through Christian values and the worship of the Anglican Church Year, in partnership with St Luke's Church, provides a setting where spirituality rooted in the Christian faith can be discovered and developed.

The Christian faith is understood to be that as expressed in the historic creeds of the church³ rooted in God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father acts with good purpose as ruler over all creation. The Son gives himself sacrificially in love and obedience for the sake of restoring all people and creation. The Spirit brings the presence and power of God into human lives and the world.

Christian spirituality considers that all people, being made in God's image, will find spiritual fulfilment in understanding God as Father, Son and Spirit, relating to Him and his world as he has purposed it, and reflecting his character and actions in life.

Spirituality is not specifically taught but is a "Golden Thread" which runs through the life of the school, and is interwoven into all areas of the curriculum.

¹ www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/2016-church-of-england-vision-for-education-web-final.pdf

² www.gloucester.anglican.org/about-us/our-vision/

³ www.churchofengland.org/our-faith/what-we-believe/apostles-creed

Spiritual Development

Pupils' spiritual development is shown by their:

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in 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.

To foster spiritual development, the school aims to provide children with opportunities to:

- Develop an appreciation of their uniqueness and value as a child
- Develop an understanding of the distinctive ethos of this church school as well as the context, language and symbolism of the Christian faith
- Develop knowledge and understanding of the school's core Christian values and the Biblical teaching that underpins them
- Develop an appreciation of what it means to be a part of a community (e.g. using their gifts and abilities in the service of others)
- Develop the skills and language required to enable them to reflect upon the big questions and mysteries of life
- The ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc
- Develop an awareness that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss may be occasions for spiritual growth
- Understand the value of difference and diversity through involvement with others.

Through teaching and learning, the school pursues these aims by ensuring:

- 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 all school policies
- Opportunities for spiritual development will be pro-actively planned into the curriculum and actively encouraged in all areas of school life
- The school building and outdoor environment will provide appropriate spaces for silence, stillness and prayer (e.g. a reflection area in each classroom and areas within the playground which are being developed)
- 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 the use of Diocesan booklets like the Windows, Mirrors and Doors booklet.
- That the outstanding RE curriculum will deliver knowledge and understanding about a range of perspectives relating to spirituality
- Collective worship will celebrate the love of God for every individual and provide opportunities for children to respond to this
- 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.

In addition, Saint John’s has been developing further principles around spirituality, aiming to raise awareness of four areas:

- Self
- Relationships with others
- Consideration of ultimate questions
- Appreciation of beauty

These four principles consist of, but are not limited to, the following developments:

Self

- Awareness of feelings and the ability to reflect and express.
- Awareness of uniqueness and contentment with who we are.
- Gratitude for the things we have and who we are.
- Exploration of personal faith and how this impacts identity and how we live.
- Development of imagination and creativity.
- Concern for wellbeing, both physical and mental.

Others

- Empathy and understanding such as respect and tolerance
- Loving and being loved
- Making a difference in the world and duty

Ultimate questions

- Consideration of what is beyond ourselves, the transcendent, and more than just the material or physical
- Formulating and discussing questions of life, death, eternity, suffering, and the nature of God
- Opportunities for connecting with God
- Making sense of the world, gaining understanding and finding meaning and purpose

Beauty

- Developing a sense of awe and wonder
- Enjoying miracles of everyday life
- Taking time for what really matters
- Appreciating art, music, drama and sport

All learning can be a spiritual experience. Opportunities for spiritual development are built into the life of Saint John’s and offered to the whole school community.

Church Year	Weekly	Enrichment Opportunities
A New Start Harvest Christmas Candlemas Lent Easter Pentecost	Collective Worship - Mondays: Termly Value - Tuesdays: DHT/Revd Boyd - Wednesdays: Revd Wheaton - Thursdays: Class Worship - Friday: Praise & Celebration Faithfuel - Christian Group meeting	Pantotivity iSingPop Imagine for Schools Prayer Day Christmas/Easter Experiences

Our place as a Church of England Primary School

Saint John's CE Primary School

Our Vision: *We are 'like a tree, flourishing in God's unfailing love' Psalm 52:8*

From diverse beginnings and building on our Christian values, we grow together to reach up and reach out.

Our vision is that Saint John's Church of England Primary School is a place where everyone flourishes and grows. Our logo of a tree reminds us that we are 'like a tree, flourishing in God's unfailing love' (Psalm 52:8). Our tree logo is drawn with one line, showing that fundamentally we flourish and grow together, helping each other as we develop and prepare for our next steps, reaching up and out towards others.

Our school is rooted in Christian values. We learn about these values both formally and informally and we provide ways for our children and adults to cultivate those values. We want to learn about these values, reflect on these values and live these values within our school, within our homes and within our community.

Our sense of family is the strong trunk which holds everything together. As a Church of England primary school, we understand the importance of family; our children, parents, staff, governors and the wider community are the central part of who we are as a school. Saint John's is a place where we all belong and are valued. We recognise that families have different members who bring something precious to the whole family.

Our aims (Curriculum, Caring, Challenge, Community, Citizenship) are the branches of our tree. We are a school with clear aims which impact our decision-making and planning for our children's education. These five branches (our aims) stem from the roots (our values) and our trunk (our family) and they provide clarity, as we focus on our children's needs and provide them with opportunities to develop and grow individually and independently – like the leaves on a tree which are all different and unique.

St Luke's Church (our parish church)

Our Vision: *'Rooted in Jesus Christ, flourishing in God's love' (Colossians 2.6-7 & Psalm 52.8)*

The vision for St Luke's is to be a Christian community that finds its foundations and security in knowing Jesus. We express this through four values of being disciples of Jesus, local in mission, loving one another and structured to grow. The imagery of 'rooted' combines the sense of depth and stability, along with the implication of life and growth.

St Luke's understands itself as a local parish church. Our desire is for all who come into contact with the people of St Luke's, and the physical site of the church, experience a sense of God's love and flourish in life as a result. We believe God is calling us to ensure our site is a hub for community building and positive relationships, with a particular emphasis on being a haven for those in need of rest and healing. Our location opposite the hospital adds emphasis to this.

The relationship between St Luke's and Saint John's is a core part of our vision. Our Vicar and Ministry Assistant, along with volunteers from the church, seek to present the Christian faith to the school community in a manner that supports the vision of Saint John's. We desire our building to be seen as a place of worship for the school, and somewhere all are welcome to enter in to. In addition, we are seeking to develop our building to serve Saint John's in other ways too.

Diocese of Gloucester

Our Vision: “I have come that they may have life and have it to the full”.

With high aspiration for excellence, we are passionate for all within our family of schools to experience God’s love in a culture of care, dignity and hope. Our Christian values underpin all that we do ... We work together to support not only the flourishing of every child, but also the flourishing of school communities within their deanery groups.

The Diocese has a **LIFE** vision with four aspects to which we are committed:

Leadership - Committed to transformation

Imagination - Opening new paths to faith

Faith - Living as adventurous followers of Jesus Christ

Engagement - Living out Christ’s love and hope

Within this vision, certain elements speak directly into schools and our work at Saint John’s CE Primary School.

- Nurturing everyday disciples to live out their faith seven days a week
- Investing in people and programmes, which excite young people to explore and grow in faith
- Encouraging new and courageous ways of worshipping, in different places, which connect with more people
- Being advocates for flourishing through initiatives which combat injustice, environmental destruction, exclusion and isolation

The Diocese of Gloucester family of schools has the following core principles:

- We put children at the centre of our decision-making to ensure they have an exceptional school experience
- We work collaboratively and in partnership with GDBF and other professional colleagues
- We treat everyone with dignity and respect – we are reflective and open to challenge
- We work with care, honesty and integrity
- We are outward looking and collaborative
- We work in partnership with our family of schools
- We work sensitively within each individual school community
- We are inclusive and offer a wide range of services to all our schools
- We provide enhanced support for schools experiencing difficulties

Church of England

Our Vision: *Jesus Christ centred and Jesus Christ shaped.*

“I have come in order that you might have life - life in all its fullness.” John 10:10

Our strategic priorities are:

- To be a church that is younger and more diverse
- To be a church where mixed ecology is the norm – where every person in England has access to an enriching and compelling community of faith by adding new churches and new forms of Church to our parishes, schools and chaplaincies
- To become a church of missionary disciples where all God’s people are released to live the Christian life

Our aim is to promote education in schools, colleges and universities – education that allows children and young people to flourish in the widest sense.

Our vision for education is deeply Christian, with Jesus’ promise of ‘life in all its fullness’ at its heart. Our vision is for the common good of the whole community.

- Educating for wisdom, knowledge and skills: enabling discipline, confidence and delight in seeking wisdom and knowledge, and developing talents in all areas of life.
- Educating for hope and aspiration: enabling healing, repair and renewal, coping wisely when things go wrong, opening horizons and guiding people into ways of fulfilling them.
- Educating for community and living well together: a core focus on relationships, participation in communities and the qualities of character that enable people to flourish together.
- Educating for dignity and respect: the basic principle of respect for the value and preciousness of each person, treating each person as a unique individual of inherent worth.