

Spiritual Development Policy

“The spiritual life does not remove us from the world but leads us deeper into it.” (Henri Nouwen)

Our vision is central to the core and ethos of our schools; we believe that spirituality is a common thread that runs through everything we do. We seek to provide space and opportunity for all within our community to reflect and grow in their sense of self; feel connected to others through affirmational relationships; and have creative moments of transcendental discovery.

The Saints Federation Vision:

Shine as lights in the world.

Philippians 2:15

God values everyone within our community. The values of respect, kindness and encouragement are at the heart of all we do; seeking to help others to know the radiance of goodness and light; and aiming to unlock everyone’s potential so that they can shine as lights in our wonderful world.

By the time pupils leave the Saints Federation, they will be comfortable in reflecting on their own spirituality. They will have had opportunities to consider life’s big questions and will have fostered a curious mindset. Pupils value one another and themselves and will be able to make amends when relationships go wrong. Pupils will be equipped to enjoy moments of stillness and reflection, finding intrinsic value in kindness, love and hope and other core Christian values.

Spiritual Capacities:

We aim for all in our community to grow in their ability to:

- be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them.
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community.
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges.
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder.



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- be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life.
- be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer.
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others.
- be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success.
- demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions.
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life and show generosity towards others.

David Smith - Making Sense of Spiritual Development

Spiritual Contexts:

David Smith makes the point that spiritual capacities do not exist in a vacuum. The spiritual context will govern, to a great extent, the way in which they are understood and exercised:

"Spiritual capacities are relevant to all pupils, of any religious tradition or none, and to all areas of the curriculum. They are an important area to explore when considering spiritual growth. However, these capacities can be exercised in various ways in the service of various purposes. We do not encounter them in the abstract. The ways in which we exercise them are bound up with our beliefs, values and commitments."

David Smith - Making Sense of Spiritual Development

The Federation context of pupils' spiritual journeys include:

- Our biblically based vision encapsulates the perceptible imagery of light and goodness in which pupils of any faith or no-faith can explore their own sense of spirituality.
- Collective Worship is a focal and highly valued part of the day and includes a variety of ways in which pupils and staff can explore and engage with a range of spiritual experiences.
- Schools and classes all have worship / prayer stations for pupils to engage in private reflection.
- Our broad and balanced curriculum works coherently to develop pupils' wholeness and self-identity.
- Our *Power of Reading* scheme includes key literature to support pupils' emotional development and resilience.
- A strong emphasis is placed on imagination and creativity throughout the age-ranges, coupled with opportunities to experience awe and wonder in our wonderful world.
- Regular visits to local churches and places of worship further afield inspire pupils to consider their own spirituality.



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- Our behaviour policy and *Thrive* provision puts pupils' emotional well-being and readiness at the heart of our provision. It helps pupils celebrate their successes as well as teaching them about forgiveness of self and others when mistakes are made.
- Staff are trained in using *Emotion Coaching* techniques to help pupils learn to respond well. All emotions are recognised and validated, and pupils are taught and encouraged to reflect on situations and experiences to help them develop and grow.
- Our biblically based vision encapsulates the perceptible imagery of light and goodness in which pupils of any faith or no-faith can explore their own sense of spirituality.

Spiritual Experiences:

- Pupils and staff participate in a daily act of worship, either as a school, as a Federation or in their own class unit. Broadly Christian and rooted in Trinitarian tradition, the worship follows a weekly pattern that includes prayer, praise, storytelling, philosophy, creative response and celebration.
- Material for worship draws on a wide variety of multi-faith scripture and teaching alongside learning from and about religious and philosophical leaders. It is presented through a variety of genres including music, art, liturgy, stillness & reflection, prayer, storytelling, media and discussion.
- Pupils take an active role in leading and creating worship, including a half termly class assembly written and presented by each class.
- Pupils' engagement is enhanced through visitors from the local and wider community including *Open the Book*, Federation *Celebration Days*, *Pop-up Prayer Spaces* and a sustained commitment to ECO awareness.
- Pupils take part in an annual ECO week, with a focus on being stewards for all of creation.
- Pupils follow the 2019 Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for RE; "*Understanding religion and worldviews for a life in a changing world.*" In the course of an academic year, classes follow 5 enquiry questions where they are guided to engage, explore, evaluate and then express their own opinion.
- Enquiry questions are rooted in three key disciplines: Theology (thinking through believing), Philosophy (thinking through thinking) and Human / Social Sciences (thinking through living).
- During their educational journey, pupils are introduced to the six major religions (Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) as well as exploring and comparing them with Atheist and Humanist perspectives.
- Pupils' learning is enhanced through visits to places of worship and invited guests into the class.
- Awe and wonder for creation enfold the settings of our schools, all of which are set in rural Norfolk.
- We are developing work with the model 'windows, mirrors, doors' to help pupils reach a greater understanding of what exploring spirituality means.

Legal requirements:

Section 78 of the Education Act 2002 states:

The curriculum for a maintained school or maintained nursery school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which: (a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and (b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

The SIAMS Schedule (2018) references spirituality in both the RE and Collective Worship strands but the main focus is as part of strand two on Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills. The Church of England Vision for Education has a core desire for 'Life in all its fullness' (John 10:10) which requires educating the whole person.

The OFSTED framework 2019 states that pupil's spiritual development is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life'
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faith, 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.

As a staff team:

We have a staff understanding of spiritual development, including a culture across the Federation that places high value on creating opportunities to explore spirituality imaginatively and creatively. Our governing body monitor the provision for and impact of spiritual development and offer training opportunities to help staff continue to embed an open approach. We make explicit connections between well-being, wholeness and spirituality.

Other related policies:

Collective Worship
Teaching and Learning
Relationships and Behaviour
SMSC
All subject specific curriculum policies

Referenced reading:

Church of England Education Office (CEEEO) Spiritual Development – Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom (2019)