

# Spiritual Development Policy

Approved by the Governing Body: July 2022

Next Review date: September 2025



Inspiring happy, **courageous**, independent, curious and creative, life-long learners. We aim for all to achieve their full potential, striving both academically and socially with **humility** and **dignity**.

Believing being anchored in Jesus Christ will guide us all with **hope**, **compassion** and **wisdom** in becoming successful members of a global community.

# Learning for Life Anchored in Christ

## Rationale

At St Clement's CE Academy we hold the Christian belief that human beings are created in the image of God, and that each shares in God's purposes to bring life and allow creation to flourish.

This underpins the values and work of the school and is endorsed in our vision/mission statement

## Our Aims

To develop in each child:

- A sense of self-worth stemming from the recognition that they are 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.
- An involvement with others in the wider world and an appreciation of difference and diversity.
- A response to 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.
- A willingness to explore Christian beliefs and values through a knowledge of Bible stories and Christian teaching in order that these might become a firm foundation for life.
- The ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty etc
- The ability to realize that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss can be occasions for spiritual growth and development
- A capacity to value the natural world and a commitment to care for creation
- A willingness to explore the ultimate questions and mysteries of life.

## Our 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.
- We seek to foster spiritual capacities, eg. imagination, insight and empathy.
- We allow children the opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions.
- We provide opportunities for prayer including silence and stillness.
- We share feelings and experiences that foster hope and joy, reassurance and encouragement.
- We encourage children to develop relationships based on the Christian values of love, compassion, forgiveness and service to others.
- We enable children to make the links between biblical values the life of the school and the wider community.

Outlined below are some of the key ways in which spiritual development is nurtured and promoted as part of the curriculum:

In Physical Education:

- Being a team member.
- Pushing yourself to the limits.
- Extremes of skill, endurance and achievement.
- Emotion in sport.
- Personal limitation and failure.
- Appreciation of perfection.
- Sportsmanship.

In Design and Technology:

- Discovering how something works.
- Appreciating genius.
- Beauty in design.
- Perseverance to solve problems.
- Personal achievement.
- Learning from others and nature.

In Literacy:

- Empathy with authors and the characters in stories and plays and challenging stereotypes
- The appreciation of beauty in language.
- Emotions and sentiments in writing and speech.
- The values of great works.
- Heroes and heroines in literature.
- Imagining oneself as someone else.
- Escaping into other worlds through literature.
- The element of wonder in literature.

In Mathematics:

- Infinity and nothing.
- Pattern and order.
- Shape and regularity.
- Truth, certainty and likelihood.
- The universality of mathematics over time and space.
- The wonder of numbers, formulae and equations.

In Science:

- Wonder as the basis of science.
- Questions of beginning, creation and evolution.
- Discovering the limits of experimentation.
- Birth, life, death and renewal.

- The universe and beyond.
- Regularity and order in science.
- Beliefs in science and the faith of scientists.
- The impact of scientific achievements.

In Computing:

- The wonder of worldwide instant communication.
- The speed of the growth of knowledge.
- The accessibility of knowledge and contact with other people worldwide.

In the Creative Arts (Art, Music, Drama and Dance):

- The work of creative artists from a variety of times and places.
- Beauty, truth and goodness.
- Expressing, interpreting and exploring deep feelings and profound beliefs.
- Artistic creativity.
- The effects of the arts on emotions and senses.
- The arts as means of expressing mood.
- Skill in creation and performance, and particularly in personal reflection upon their own creativity using various art forms.
- Effects on the emotions and senses.
- Personal response and preference. Mood. • Skill. • Pattern. • Formulae.

In Geography:

- Wonder at the diversity of environments and people.
- Questions about the care of the environment.
- The beliefs behind particular causes and campaigns.
- World (economic) development.
- Land formation.
- Empathy with people from other parts of the world.

In History:

- Being in touch with past people, things and ideas.
- Being part of history.
- Handling artefacts.
- Influential events and people.
- The commitment of significant people in history.
- War and peace.
- Interpretation in history.
- The nature and importance of invention and exploration.
- Empathy with people from other times in history.

In Religious Education:

- People, places, things, books, actions and ideas held by religious believers to be holy.
- Ultimate questions of meaning and purpose.

- Ideas of the divine/questions of God.
- Forms of worship.
- Use of music, art and drama to express beliefs.
- Varieties of beliefs, celebrations and rituals.
- Ideas of commitment and belonging to groups and institutions
- The idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.

In Collective Worship:

- Opportunities for reflection and response are planned into worship.
- Stillness.
- Personal and collective beliefs are respected.
- Sharing and celebrating common beliefs.
- Celebrating success Sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear, etc.
- Common activities such as singing, listening, laughing, praying, reflecting on a theme.
- Remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance.
- Emphasising common purpose and values.
- Experiencing emotions.

In addition, as part of the curriculum, the children have opportunities:

- To visit places of beauty, interest and challenge.
- To admire and wonder at the natural environment and human creative efforts.
- To work out personal relationships in unusual and challenging situations.
- To experience community cohesion links at a local, national and global level.
- To engage in charity based activities.
- To participate in a wide range of events and activities, involving a range of outside agencies, coaches, etc.

In order to facilitate spiritual development the organisation of the school and the environment for learning are such that:

- Everyone involved in the life of the school is valued and seen to be valued.
- Policies and ensuing practices are clearly seen to reflect the worth of individuals.
- Behaviour and people management policies and practices are collectively arrived at and discussed regularly.
- All adults recognise the need to set good examples of mutual respect and considerate behaviour.
- The quality and nature of the learning environment and displays reflect the value placed on pupils and staff.
- Aesthetic awareness is encouraged.
- The atmosphere of the school welcomes differences in beliefs and values, and invites everyone to belong.
- The achievements, successes and efforts of everyone are recognised and celebrated.

Teaching Christian beliefs and values is extremely important since it will govern how children will treat one another and be of service to others. In such trying times, it is up to the faithful to fulfil their duty and keep their Christian values alive and intact. Our Christian values will provide children with an opportunity to develop spiritually. In this way, they may reflect on the bigger questions of life and refine their moral judgement in order to make better and wiser decisions. It will allow them to experience God in a more profound way.

### Hope

It is important for children to be taught early on that they will need more than dreams, fantasy, and wishes – they need hope. Hope is a complex emotion. It is made up of a desire for something, and it has an expectation of fulfilment someday. Hope is not just wishful thinking, but a firm belief in God. Hope means trusting in God and His goodness. This is why Hope is called the anchor of the soul. Hope is coupled with faith and love as one of the three most enduring gifts of the Spirit (1 Corinthians 13:13).

### Love

Love is a core Christian value. This unmerited favour is realized through God because of God's unmerited favour and grace towards us. God offers His love to mankind in the form of eternal life, granted to us through Jesus Christ. The most fundamental characteristic of love is that it seeks to find the goodness in others.

### Compassion

The best way to teach our children compassion is by regularly practicing visible compassion in front of and as an example to them. This is why it is important for all staff to take part and get children involved in compassion projects. It is important for us to make our children realize that compassion has a much stronger meaning than simply "feeling sorry for" someone.

### Humility

The values taught in the Bible often stand in opposition to worldly values. Humility is definitely one of those values. Humility is the opposite of pride, which caused Satan and many others to fall. True humility is a quality that every Christian man and woman desires. Of all the words that can be used to characterize Christ, humility is high on that list (Philippians 2). Humility is one of the most desperately needed character traits simply because so many other virtues flow from this quality.

### Courage

Courage isn't about something magical that happens inside us to make us 'not scared'. It's about something magical that happens inside us to make us push through fear, self-doubt, anxiety, and do the things that feel hard or risky or frightening. Sometimes, courage only has to happen for seconds at a time – just long enough to be brave enough.

There's something else that kids need to know about courage – you don't always see the effects of it straight away. Courage might mean being kind to the new kid in class, trying something new, speaking up for something they believe in. Often, these things don't come with fireworks or applause. In fact, they rarely do. The differences they make can take time to reveal, but when actions are driven by courage, the differences those actions make will always be there, gently taking shape and changing their very important corners of the world in some way. ways to nurture their brave: Failure and rejection are often a sign that you've done something brave. Every experience gives new information and new wisdom that wouldn't have been there before. It's why only the brave ones get there in the end – they have the knowledge, wisdom, and experience that can often only be found when you land badly – sometimes more than once. Give them space for imperfections. Let them know that it's okay to hang on while they're getting comfortable – while they're working on a plan, fanning the brave spark inside them (and it's always inside them), but then there will be a time to let go. Encourage them to do activities that push them to the edges of their physical or emotional selves – drama, sport, music. Anything that will help to nurture the truth to life that they are strong, powerful, that they can cope, and that they are not as fragile as they might feel sometimes will help to nurture their brave hearts. Courage isn't only about pushing against their own edges. Sometimes it's about pushing against the friends who might steer them off track, the limiting expectations of others, the media, the majority, the world. Give space for their intuition to flourish – and teach them how to use it. Encourage their sense of adventure. Brave is about doing what's right for them.

By living and modelling these Christian values to our children, both staff and the children can live life to its fullness

### Dignity

Dignity is one of the most important things to the human spirit. It means being valued and respected for what you are, what you believe in, and how you live your life. Treating other people with dignity means treating them the way we'd like to be treated ourselves. We make the link between dignity and the golden rule in most world religions taught in school- Golden Rule, precept in the Gospel of Matthew (7:12): **"In everything, do to others what you would have them do to you."**

Every human has the right to lead a dignified life and fulfill his or her potential. Young, old, rich, poor – all over the world we all share the right to be treated with dignity. We treat others with dignity each time we lend a helping hand, stick up for a friend, or recognize the qualities and talents that make each of us special. Only with dignity are people able to achieve things like being good in school, finding friends, leading a happy life, and maybe even making a difference in the world. Having dignity means being treated with respect AND treating others with respect. This value is examined throughout the curriculum in all key stages including foundation.

### Service

Words relating to 'servant' and 'service' are central in Christian theology. Some of the most important prophecies in Isaiah speak of the coming of the 'Servant of the Lord' and

his role as a ‘suffering servant.’ That is why Jesus said that he ‘came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.’

Jesus washed the feet of his disciples at the Last Supper. This turned upside down the normal relationship between master and disciple, leader and follower. In many ways, this astonishing action symbolizes the essence of the Incarnation: God stooping to share the human condition. Jesus is very clear about the meaning of his action: ‘Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done.’

The parable of the Good Samaritan shows we should serve those in need whoever they are. Such service is not offered to gain some advantage for ourselves. ‘Going the extra mile’ involves sacrifice, putting ourselves out for someone else’s benefit. Serving God means serving others. It also means that we cannot serve other masters as well – such as money. However, the Christian message is equally clear that service is not all about restrictions. It is precisely in a life of service that we become most truly free.

Again service is threaded throughout the curriculum and through the enrichment program in school, as well as the central value for all our school Children’s committees; Worship Team, Prefects, Children’s Champions, Eco Council and Junior PCSO’s. Children demonstrate this value in the community with Litter picks, volunteer programs in the local area and with whole school fundraising for current world disasters as well as regular more local charities including Aston & Nechells Foodbank which is accessed by many of our families.

### **Forgiveness & reconciliation**

Our school behaviour management policy/procedures are based on forgiveness and reconciliation.

Forgiveness is fundamental to the character of God. Throughout the Bible, God is described as slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin (Numbers 14:18). Jesus was uncompromising in his command to forgive. Forgive, he said, ‘seventy times seven’ (Matthew 18:21). In other words, forgive and keep on forgiving without limit.

Forgiveness was at the heart of everything he did and is at the heart of the Lord’s Prayer. We forgive because we are forgiven. Paul says: ‘Be compassionate and kind to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.’ (Ephesians 4:32). We teach the children to understand what forgiveness looks like in ‘real-life’- that it doesn’t mean accepting an apology and then bring the incident up again two days later or still holding it against the person. The adults in school model forgiveness to the children on a daily basis and it is also examined through our personal development sessions as well as Collective Worship.

Reconciliation is the act of bringing people together to be friendly again or coming to an agreement. An example of reconciliation is children/friends who mend their relationship after a period of fighting or disagreement. What is God’s message of reconciliation? He came to restore peace by reconciling all of Creation to God. This Scripture says that God was reconciling to himself all things through Jesus. By restoring our right relationship to God, Jesus also opened the door for us to live in right relationships with each other, Creation, and ourselves. Again, the children are taught what reconciliation

looks like ‘in real-life’. It is more than just saying sorry. It is the actions that follow to show that reconciliation. Children complete reflection sheets where they are prompted to reflect on their behaviour and what the consequences of the behaviour might be, to whom and how this can be put right. This follows on from the teaching that we repair our relationship with God by reflecting, asking for forgiveness and then doing the right thing.

### **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 Pastoral manager/SLT/governors.
- Audit of policies and schemes of work.
- Regular discussion at staff and governor meetings.
- Sharing of classroom work and practice.
- Evidence from pupil voice
- Regular inclusion in SEF.