

Barlaston CE (VC) First School

Spirituality Policy

Christian Vision:

“Let Your Light Shine Through Family, Friendship and Faith.”

School Vision:

Enabling our whole school community to flourish and let their light shine, preparing them for their role as gentle and humble agents for change in the world we share.

Spirituality Vision:

“Spirituality is an ever-changing journey through life, connecting each individual with something bigger than themselves.”

1. Introduction and Vision

At Barlaston CE (VC) First School, we believe that every child is a unique and precious individual, created in the image of God and deserving of the opportunity to flourish.

As a Church of England school, our Christian faith is at the heart of our school community. We seek to nurture the whole child and recognise that education is about much more than academic achievement. Spiritual development is an important part of this whole-person education.

Our Christian vision, **“Let Your Light Shine Through Family, Friendship and Faith,”** shapes the way we understand spirituality. Inspired by Matthew 5:16, we encourage children and adults to recognise their gifts and strengths and to use them positively in the service of others.

We want our children to develop a growing sense of who they are, their place within a community, their responsibility towards the world around them and an awareness of questions of meaning, purpose and faith. Through **courageous advocacy**, we encourage children to recognise when something is unfair, to speak up respectfully and to take positive action.

In this way, we hope our children will become **gentle and humble agents for change in the world we share.**

2. Our Understanding of Spirituality

We understand spirituality as **“an ever-changing journey through life, connecting each individual with something bigger than themselves.”** Spirituality is personal and develops throughout our lives. It is not a discrete subject or something that can simply be taught; it is nurtured through relationships, experiences, questions and opportunities to reflect.

For some, spirituality may be expressed through a relationship with God, prayer, worship and Christian faith. For others, spiritual experiences may be found through relationships, nature, creativity, music, beauty, awe and wonder, or through reflecting on important questions about life, meaning and purpose. As a Church of England school, our approach is rooted in the Christian story and teachings of Jesus, while respecting the diverse beliefs and worldviews within our community.

Our recent engagement with **Space makers** is beginning to strengthen our understanding of how adults can create and hold space for children's spiritual development. We are developing a shared language around **being, noticing, wondering and making space**, and are becoming increasingly attentive to moments of awe, wonder, curiosity, joy and deep questioning.

Space makers is an **emerging part of our practice**, and we recognise that its implementation will develop over time. We are committed to learning together and reflecting on how effectively we create the conditions for spirituality to flourish.

We are developing a shared understanding of what spiritual development looks like for our children, and we use **children's voices, experiences and reflections** to help us evaluate and refine our provision.

3. How We Nurture Spirituality

Spirituality is woven through the life of our school rather than being confined to a particular lesson or activity. We provide opportunities for children to **pause, notice, wonder, question, reflect, connect and respond**.

We use the **nine spiritual pathways** as a broad framework for providing varied opportunities for spiritual exploration. Children encounter these pathways through everyday school life and through our **termly spirituality days**, which provide dedicated time to explore spirituality through experiences such as nature, creativity, stillness, relationships, awe and wonder.

The nine pathways are **not fixed categories or labels for children**. Children may connect with several pathways, sometimes at the same time, and their responses may change as they grow and encounter new experiences. We therefore offer the pathways as opportunities for exploration rather than expecting children to identify with one particular pathway.

Spirituality is nurtured through:

- worship, prayer and reflection;
- Religious Education;
- the wider curriculum;
- relationships and community;
- nature, creation and outdoor learning;
- creativity, music, art and literature;
- opportunities for service and courageous advocacy;
- termly spirituality days and other planned experiences;
- spontaneous moments of awe, wonder, curiosity and questioning.

We recognise that spiritual moments cannot always be planned. A child's question, a moment in nature, an act of kindness, a piece of music or an experience of beauty may all provide opportunities for reflection and connection.

Our role is to **notice, make space and respond thoughtfully**.

4. The Role of Adults

The culture created by adults is central to children's spiritual development. Spirituality cannot simply be delivered to children; it is nurtured through the relationships, environments, experiences and interactions that adults create each day.

All adults are expected to model the values that underpin our Christian vision through the way we speak, listen, respond, forgive, show compassion and treat others.

Our developing work with **Space makers** is helping us to consider how adults can create and hold space for children's spiritual development. Adults are encouraged to:

- notice children's questions, observations and reactions;
- provide time for children to pause, reflect and make connections;
- ask thoughtful questions rather than always providing answers;
- become comfortable with silence and stillness;
- recognise opportunities for awe, wonder and reflection;
- listen carefully and respectfully;
- model curiosity, humility and openness;
- create calm and welcoming environments;
- model Christian values through their own actions;
- encourage children to use their voices with compassion and courage.

We recognise that adults do not need to have all the answers. Sometimes the most powerful response to a child's question is to **wonder alongside them**.

5. Prayer, Worship and Reflection

Prayer, worship and reflection are important parts of the spiritual life of Barlaston CE (VC) First School.

As a Church of England school, collective worship provides opportunities for children to encounter the Christian story, explore the teachings of Jesus, pray, sing, celebrate, reflect and consider how faith can shape the way we live.

Prayer provides opportunities to communicate with God, give thanks, say sorry, seek help, express hopes and concerns and reflect on the needs of others. Children encounter different forms of prayer, including spoken and written prayer, music, silence and personal reflection.

We recognise that children will engage with prayer and worship in different ways and provide opportunities for thoughtful participation while respecting individual beliefs and circumstances.

Reflection gives children time to consider questions such as:

- What have I noticed?
- What has made me wonder?
- What might this mean for me or for others?
- What questions do I still have?
- Is there something I might do differently?

We do not expect every moment of reflection to result in an answer. Sometimes the value lies simply in having the **time and space to pause and notice**.

Our links with **St John the Baptist Church** provide further opportunities for children to experience Christian worship and understand their place within a wider Christian community.

6. Spirituality Across School Life

Every area of school life has the potential to contribute to spiritual development.

In **RE**, children explore Christianity and other faiths and worldviews, encountering questions of belief, identity, meaning, purpose and belonging.

Through **English and literature**, children explore human experience, relationships, emotions, moral choices, hope, loss, courage and justice.

Science can inspire awe and wonder at the natural world and encourage curiosity and questions about creation and our responsibilities towards it.

Art, music and creativity provide opportunities to experience beauty, express emotions and encounter new ideas.

History and geography enable children to explore people, places, cultures, change, justice and our relationship with the wider world.

PE develops teamwork, resilience, respect and appreciation of the body and its capabilities.

PSHE and relationships provide opportunities to explore identity, emotions, values, choices, empathy, compassion and responsibility.

Our outdoor environment and **Forest School** experiences provide particularly rich opportunities to experience nature, stillness, beauty, awe and wonder, while developing a sense of responsibility for creation.

Across the curriculum, teachers are encouraged to notice opportunities for **awe, wonder, curiosity, beauty, reflection and meaningful questions**. Our developing work with Space makers supports us in becoming increasingly attentive to these moments.

7. Courageous Advocacy, Service and Community

We want spiritual development to inspire children not only to **notice and reflect, but also to respond and act.**

We understand **courageous advocacy** as giving children the confidence and opportunity to use their voices and actions to make a positive difference. This may involve recognising injustice, listening to others, developing empathy, speaking up respectfully, taking appropriate action and encouraging others to contribute positively.

We want children to understand that courage does not always mean doing something big. It can mean standing alongside someone who is being left out, challenging something that is unfair, caring for creation or helping someone who needs support.

Service is an important expression of our Christian values. Children have opportunities to serve others within school, their families, the local community and the wider world.

We encourage children to recognise that their gifts and talents can be used not only for themselves but to **support, encourage and serve others.**

Our approach encourages children to move from **encounter and reflection towards response.** Through worship, RE, PSHE, spirituality days, curriculum experiences and everyday relationships, children are encouraged to consider how they can make a positive difference.

In doing so, we hope to nurture children who are **compassionate without being passive, courageous without being unkind, and humble without being afraid to use their voices.**

8. Inclusion, Diversity and Respect

Spiritual development is for **every child.** We recognise that each child has their own experiences, beliefs, family background and way of understanding the world.

As a Church of England school, our approach is rooted in the Christian faith, the Bible and the teachings of Jesus. At the same time, we recognise and respect the diversity of beliefs and worldviews within our school community.

We do not expect children to respond to spiritual experiences in the same way. One child may connect through prayer, while another may experience wonder through nature, music, relationships or creativity.

The nine spiritual pathways are therefore offered as **opportunities for exploration rather than labels or expectations.**

We aim to create an environment where children feel safe to ask questions, express their ideas and acknowledge uncertainty. We value respectful dialogue and recognise that some of life's most important questions do not have straightforward answers.

We want every child to know that they are **valued, that they belong and that their voice matters.**

9. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Spiritual development is not assessed through formal grades or tests. We seek to understand its impact through the lived experience of children and adults across our school community.

We will monitor and evaluate our provision through:

- pupil voice and discussion;
- staff reflection and professional dialogue;
- observations of worship, spirituality activities and everyday practice;
- children's responses to spirituality days;
- evidence from RE and the wider curriculum;
- feedback from parents and the wider community where appropriate;
- reflection on how effectively our Christian vision is being lived out;
- consideration of the developing implementation of Space makers.

We will review whether children are increasingly able to reflect, wonder, ask meaningful questions, show empathy and compassion, participate in worship and reflection, recognise their own gifts, respond to the needs of others and use their voices and actions positively.

As our work with **Space makers** develops, we will continue to reflect, learn and refine our approach.

This policy will be reviewed regularly to ensure that it continues to reflect our Christian vision, the needs of our school community and our developing understanding of spiritual development.

Conclusion

At Barlaston CE (VC) First School, we want every child to **flourish**.

Our approach to spirituality is rooted in our Christian vision while recognising that each person's spiritual journey is unique. We seek to give children **time and space to wonder, question, reflect, pray, connect and grow**.

Through family, friendship and faith, we encourage every child to discover their gifts and understand that they can make a difference.

We want our children to leave Barlaston knowing that they are valued, that they belong, that they have a responsibility towards others and the world around them, and that they have the opportunity to **let their light shine**.

“Let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.”

Matthew 5:16

Policy approved by: _____

Date: _____

Review date: _____

Person responsible: _____