Gomersal St. Mary's CE Primary School Spirituality Policy- September 2026

Aims and Rationale:

Our spirituality policy is a key expression of our Christian vision: "By being the best we can be, we all shine brightly making our world and school a better place", rooted in Matthew 5:16. The policy ensures that every child is nurtured to recognise, develop and share their God-given light. By providing structured opportunities for awe, wonder, reflection and spiritual growth, the policy helps pupils understand that their gifts, actions and character can positively impact others. This directly supports our theological belief that each person is created in the image of God and called to shine for the benefit of the whole community.

The spirituality policy strengthens our vision by ensuring that spiritual development is intentional, inclusive and woven through school life. It enables pupils to grow in wisdom, compassion and hope, empowering them to shine brightly—academically, socially and spiritually—and to make our school and world a better place.

Links to OFSTED and SIAMS expectations

All schools have a legal obligation to create opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils within their schools' communities, under the OFSTED School inspection framework. This requirement comes under personal development, specifically of 'social, moral, spiritual and cultural' (SMSC) development.

Section 344 of The OFSTED School Inspection Handbook, September 2024, states that the provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, 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

Church of England Schools also have a legal requirement to create opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils within their school communities, under The SIAMS framework for Schools and Inspectors, September 2024, which includes the following inspection questions:

IQ2 How does the curriculum reflect the school's theologically rooted Christian vision? *Within this inspection question, schools are asked to consider how spiritual development is an intrinsic part of the curriculum.*

IQ3 How is daily Collective Worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?

The school's understanding of spirituality

Understanding of spirituality within Gomersal St. Mary's CE Primary School starts with an acknowledgement of our school context and our theologically rooted Christian vision. We also consider the Anglican foundation of our school and consider the Biblical response to spirituality.

Galatians 5:22-23: "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness".

John 15:1-5 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit. Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing".

Matthew 6:25: "Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing?"

These Bible passages offer a helpful starting point in unpacking what spirituality can mean. In the passages above it shows that for Christians, spirituality is about remaining close to God and that developing spirituality is something more than what can be seen and has an impact on a person's character. However, it must be acknowledged that Church of England Schools are inclusive communities that welcome people of all faiths and none. Spirituality is also something that is deeply personal and can differ greatly between individuals. It is something that may be easily felt

but not so easy to define or articulate. However, for a school to develop spirituality in the ways outlined by the OFSTED and SIAMS inspection expectations above, school has decided to adopt a shared understanding and language of expression of spirituality so that it is more accessible to every member of our school community. The language of expression of spirituality within our school has been developed with support of the Diocese of Leeds, consultation with key stakeholders within our school community and by reviewing the Church of England's publication on Spiritual development (October 2019).

What shared language do we use as a school when we talk to pupils about spirituality?

Our school uses the shared language of *Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond* to describe spirituality. This reflects Rebecca Nye's understanding of spirituality as relational consciousness and provides pupils with a clear, age-appropriate way of exploring identity, relationships, awe and transcendence. We embed this through the Windows–Mirrors–Doors approach, enabling pupils to look outward, reflect inward and respond through action. The Ows–Wows–Nows framework further supports emotional honesty and wellbeing, recognising that spirituality includes struggle, celebration and stillness. Together, these approaches create a coherent, inclusive and theologically rooted culture in which every child can grow spiritually and "shine brightly" in line with our Christian vision.

Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond:

Rebecca Nye in her 2009 book 'Children's Spirituality: What it is and why it matters', suggests that spirituality can be defined as relational awareness or relational consciousness. That means awareness of the relationship with:
Self: being a unique person and understanding self-perception. Who I am and what do I feel inside?
Others: how empathy, concern, compassion and other values and principles affect relationships. How do others feel and how do I feel about them?
Beauty: perceiving and relating to the physical and creative world through responses to the magnificence, ingenuity and wonder of nature and art. What makes me go 'wow'?
Beyond: relating to the transcendental and divine, and understanding experiences and meaning outside the 'everyday.' What feels bigger than me?

Windows, Mirrors and Doors

This concept was outlined by Liz Mills in the 'Interpretations of spirituality' publication by the Church of England (October 2019). This creates a concrete way of exploring the four main areas of spirituality with pupils.
Windows: The visual of a 'window' creates opportunities for pupils to look out at the world, other people around us, just as we would look out of a window. We can learn and reflect on what we observe around us. Pupils look outward at people, nature, stories, art, injustice, joy.
Mirror: A 'mirror moment' gives opportunity to reflect on self (just as you look at yourself in a mirror) and prompts pupils to think about their own thoughts, beliefs and ideas. Pupils reflect on identity, feelings, beliefs, questions, God.
Door: The 'door' gives pupils an opportunity to think about their impact on the world and what could be done or thought further about in response to the 'window' and 'mirror' moments. As the 2019 publication above states, 'door moments' give an opportunity for: *"moving on, making choices, and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. This can simply be done through a change in attitude or behaviour or thinking. It can also be expressed powerfully through music or art or drama or dance and through some form of social action or specific acts of giving".* Pupils respond through action, creativity, kindness, advocacy, prayer.

Ows, Wows and Nows

This concept was created by the Diocese of Gloucester and is based on the Japanese Art form of Kintsugi, which is the idea that old and broken pottery can be brought back to life with Gold. This can act as a powerful metaphor for life in that it acknowledges the ups and downs of life and that strength and beauty can be formed from brokenness.

- Ows: The 'Ows' offer a way for pupils to communicate struggles or difficulties.
- Wows: The 'wows' are about celebratory and positive moments of life.
- Nows: The 'nows' offer opportunities to be still, present, reflect and mindful of the current.

To help pupils understand why spiritual development is so essential to their personal growth and flourishing, school have developed a visual representation: a lighthouse. This visual helps pupils understand spirituality as connection.

- The lighthouse is a powerful symbol of our school vision, "Let Your Light Shine," and provides a meaningful connection to our Christian values.

- A lighthouse stands firm through storms, shines into the darkness and guides others towards safety and hope. In the same way, our values help us to shine brightly and guide the choices we make each day.
- **Resilience** is reflected in the lighthouse standing strong through difficult weather, reminding us to persevere when life is challenging and to learn from setbacks.
- **Love** is seen in its light reaching out to others, offering warmth, care and hope without expecting anything in return.
- **Respect** is reflected in the lighthouse illuminating the way for everyone, reminding us that every person has dignity and worth and deserves to be valued.
- **Friendship** is represented by the lighthouse as a welcoming beacon, helping people find their way, feel safe and know that they are not alone.
- **Forgiveness** is reflected in the light that continues to shine even after the darkness, reminding us that mistakes do not have to define us and that there is always the possibility of a fresh start.
- Together, these values provide the foundations for our children to let their light shine, supporting their spiritual development as they look through **Windows** to discover new perspectives, use **Mirrors** to reflect on themselves, open **Doors** to consider how they might act, and look **Beyond** to explore life's deeper questions.
- The lighthouse reminds us that each person's light matters and that, when we live out our Christian values together, we can illuminate our school, community and wider world with compassion, courage and hope. Children understand: connection to **self, others, beauty and beyond,** helps them to reach their potential and creates light in the world.

Organisation

The responsibility of spiritual development in Gomersal St. Mary's CE Primary School is shared across the whole school community. The oversight of spirituality within sits with Jane Barker (Head) and Anna Joyce (Deputy Head). They support the development of spirituality within school by ensuring that all new staff are aware of our school's shared understanding of spirituality, ensuring they are up to date with information and training on spirituality from the Diocese of Leeds, the Church of England and the Department for Education. They also create opportunities for staff to share ideas and best practice as well as have an oversight of monitoring and evaluation of spiritual development and contribute to the SIAMS self-evaluation process, particularly around Inspection question 2 and 3.

As a school, we acknowledge the importance of planned and unplanned opportunities for spiritual development within school and encourage our staff to identify areas within the curriculum that spirituality can be realised, as well as to take advantage of moments that may occur in school ad hoc. The areas listed below is where staff have planned for spiritual development and unplanned moments may occur in the leaning in of stories or ideas that pupils want to share, an appreciation of 'awe and wonder' moments that may occur in and outside of school and/or 'ow', 'wow' and 'now' moments.

- Collective Worship
- Religious Education
- Personal development / PSHE
- Opportunities across all curriculum areas
- Myhappymind
- Picture News

Our environment as a tool for spiritual development

The physical environment of our school plays a significant role in nurturing pupils' spiritual growth by providing rich opportunities for reflection, awe and connection. Set within beautiful green grounds, with an established forest school area and a committed Eco-team, pupils regularly experience the wonder of creation and develop a sense of responsibility for the world around them. Outdoor learning is encouraged wherever possible, helping children connect with nature, themselves and others.

Inside school, our dedicated reflection space—accessible to all and refreshed each half term—offers pupils a calm place to pause, think and pray. Across classrooms and communal areas, visual representations of the Big Story of the Bible, displays of big questions, and Picture News boards prompt curiosity, deeper thinking and engagement with current affairs.

Together, these environments create a school culture where spirituality is lived, noticed and valued, supporting pupils to shine brightly in line with our Christian vision.

Planned opportunities for spiritual development

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Daily Collective Worship is the beating heart of Gomersal St. Mary's CE Primary School. It provides the opportunity for our school community to come together to hear the Christian story, learn about Christian festivals, celebrations of other faiths and to share experiences, beliefs and ideas. The shared spiritual language of window/ doors/ mirrors; Self/ Others/ Beauty/ beyond; wows/ ows/ nows is referred to explicitly within Collective Worship.

Through carefully planned, inclusive, and invitational experiences, worship helps everyone deepen their understanding of faith, develop a sense of awe and wonder, and explore what it means to live well together.

- Weekly big questions — Each week begins with a theologically rooted big question that encourages pupils and adults to think deeply about faith, life, justice, and the world. These questions spark curiosity and help the whole community explore Christian teaching in meaningful ways.
- Child-led worship — Pupils regularly plan and lead worship, choosing themes, prayers, readings, and reflections. This empowers them to express their spirituality, develop confidence, and take ownership of their faith journey.
- Class-led church services — Each class leads a church service linked to a key Christian calendar event such as Pentecost, Easter, or Candlemas. By Year 6, pupils have experienced the full rhythm of the Christian year and understand the significance of its major festivals. Families are invited, strengthening the partnership between school, church, and home.
- Structured liturgy — Worship follows a consistent liturgical pattern that includes gathering, engaging with scripture or theme, responding, and sending. This rhythm helps pupils and adults feel secure, understand the flow of worship, and recognise its sacred purpose.
- Inclusive worship — Worship is planned so that all pupils—of all faiths and none—can participate meaningfully. It is invitational rather than prescriptive, allowing everyone to engage at their own level.
- Inspirational experiences — Music, storytelling, drama, silence, and reflection create moments of awe and wonder that help pupils and adults connect emotionally and spiritually.
- Responsive planning — Each half term has a different worship focus, chosen to reflect the emerging needs of the school community. Themes may address wellbeing, justice, compassion, resilience, or global issues, helping worship remain relevant and meaningful.
- Prayer and reflection — Worship provides time for pupils and adults to pray, reflect, or simply be still. These moments help develop inner peace, emotional regulation, and spiritual awareness.
- Awe and wonder — Through scripture, nature, music, and storytelling, worship encourages pupils to appreciate beauty, mystery, and the world around them.
- Worship beyond the hall — Worship is not confined to the hall. Its impact can be seen in pupils' behaviour, relationships, advocacy work, and daily choices. The values explored in worship shape how pupils treat one another, care for creation, and respond to challenges.
- Reflection/prayer space — The school has a dedicated reflection and prayer space that is carefully curated to support spiritual growth. Pupils can explore questions such as "What makes our world such an incredible place?" or "What does forgiveness feel like?" This space allows children to pause, think deeply, and respond to themes from worship in a quiet, personal way. It nurtures spirituality by giving pupils time to wonder, question, and connect with their inner thoughts.

Spirituality in Religious Education

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement (2026) outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality. The information below states how Gomersal St. Mary's CE Primary School develops spirituality within Religious Education across the four main areas of spirituality.

Self – personal knowledge within RE is a student's individual understanding of religions and non-religious worldviews, shaped by their own life experiences, values, and beliefs. Pupils are given opportunities to become aware and reflect upon their own assumptions, viewpoints and positions on different topics within RE.
Others – Pupils have opportunities to share their own views and listen to the viewpoint of others within the classroom.
World – Pupils are presented with knowledge of religious and non-religious worldviews as well as diversity that exists within the religious and non-religious worldviews.
Beyond – Pupils have the invitational opportunity to relate to God and learn about the concept of God through the religious and non-religious worldviews that are studied.

Spirituality in PSHE and our Character Education:

Within our personal development and PSHE curriculum, we intentionally create opportunities for pupils to explore spirituality through the four areas of Self, Others, Beauty and Beyond**.** Our programmes support pupils in developing self-awareness, emotional literacy and resilience (Self), understanding relationships, empathy and citizenship (Others), recognising awe, creativity and wonder in the world around them (Beauty), and engaging with meaning, purpose and experiences beyond the everyday (Beyond). Through lessons supported by Pol Ed**,** pupils learn to appreciate diverse perspectives, strengthen character and develop a sense of social responsibility. MyHappymind supports pupils in building positive mental health, gratitude and reflective habits that deepen their inner awareness. Picture News enables pupils to engage thoughtfully with current national and global issues, encouraging them to consider the experiences of others and their place in the wider world.

Together, these elements ensure that spirituality is woven meaningfully through personal development, providing structured and inclusive opportunities for pupils to share their views, listen to others and reflect on how they connect with themselves, their community, creation and a sense of something greater.

Spirituality within and across other areas of the curriculum

Self – Within all curriculum areas, teachers plan in meaningful opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own views of the content that is being learnt. This could be in the form of big questions, reflection opportunities and time after topics to think about what they enjoyed and didn't enjoy, as opposed to only thinking about what they understood.
Others – Within all curriculum areas, teachers have implemented the school's oracy curriculum and give frequent, planned and meaningful opportunities for pupils to share their own views and listen to the viewpoint of others within the classroom.
World – Within all curriculum areas, teachers have thought about how pupils are learning about the world around them – local, national and global, and how they are encouraged to think about what they have learnt from different perspectives and traditions.
Beyond – Within all curriculum areas, pupils will have the opportunity to be still, reflect and the invitational opportunity to give struggles to God if and where appropriate. For example, this may be by making use of a school reflective space.

Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation
The development of spirituality is monitored and evaluated routinely as part of the school's self-evaluation process. This is done in the following ways:

- Reviewing how Collective Worship enables spiritual flourishing by observing different examples of Collective Worship in school
- Conducting pupil/staff/parent voice on spiritual development within school
- Reviewing the use and impact of spiritual / prayer / reflective spaces in school
- Meeting with the CW and RE lead as well as leads from other curriculum areas to discuss opportunities for spirituality across the curriculum.
- Learning walks on a frequent basis to see if planned opportunities for spirituality are being lived out across the curriculum.

The Standards Committee (including foundation governors) review the policy every three years (or more frequently, as required) in partnership with Senior/ Middle Leaders and consider any views expressed by parents, children and staff to make any changes or recommendations. Recommendations are fed back to the full governing body and are then actioned as appropriate.

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.

This policy is shared on the school's website and is part of the induction pack for new staff and new governors.

Approval/review by governing body:

Headteacher signed: Date:

Chair of Governors signed: Date:

Date of next review: September 2029