



St John's Church of England Primary School

Approach to Spirituality at St John's

Love, Respect, Value

This document outlining our whole school approach to Spirituality will equip staff and children to articulate what spirituality at St John's means to us. It will reinforce our Mission Statement of 'Growing together in love and respect' and help build upon staff and children's understanding of our Vision to 'Love our neighbour, Respect Everyone and Value Diversity'.

This links with The SIAMS Framework which includes the questions:

- *IQ2B: How is spiritual development an intrinsic part of the curriculum?*
- *IQ3: How is daily collective worship enabling pupils and adults to flourish spiritually?*
- *IQ3E: How does the trust contribute to and enhance the school's worship and spiritual life?*

School Statement on Spirituality

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. To make conversations about spirituality more accessible to every member of our school community, Watford St John's has chosen to follow the approach developed by the Education Board at the Diocese of St Albans to wholly and purposefully ensure we are *'Living God's Love in Education: Enabling Life in all its Fullness'*.

This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God and that, through our vision, values and ethos, we live and breathe our mission statement of 'Growing together in love and respect'.

For us, 'spirituality is a sense of something bigger than ourselves.'

Spirituality enhances and enriches worship and children's spiritual development. For us, this is through the way that we think and feel, how we relate to and reflect on life's events as we grow. It is the way we are aware of, and choose to spend time with, others. It is how we see the world and reflect upon the things which are much bigger than us and our time on earth. Spirituality is not something we can see or touch - we feel it inside all of us. It might be a sense of awe and wonder. It might be a sense of empathy and compassion. It might be a sense there are important questions to be asked which might not have obvious answers. It might want us to laugh, cry, sing, be creative or be still. We might have spiritual experiences with others or we might have them on our own. Spirituality is a sense of something bigger than ourselves.

Spiritual development at St John's is the ongoing journey of becoming more aware of:

- ourselves
- others
- the world
- God (or something beyond ourselves)



Our school believes that spirituality is nurtured through moments of awe and wonder that invite children to pause, reflect, question and appreciate the world, themselves and others. By embedding these experiences throughout our curriculum and daily life, we enable every child to develop a deeper understanding of meaning, purpose, relationships and their place in the world.

We recognise that spirituality is not confined to collective worship or Religious Education. Instead, it is woven through every subject, every interaction and every opportunity to encounter beauty, creativity, challenge and hope.

What We Mean by Awe and Wonder



Awe: encountering something greater than ourselves.

Wonder: curiosity and deep questioning.

Awe and wonder are those moments that cause us to stop and notice something extraordinary—whether in nature, human achievement, acts of kindness, creativity or the mysteries of life. These experiences encourage children to ask big questions, develop curiosity and reflect on their own beliefs and values.

Through awe and wonder, children learn to:

- Notice the extraordinary in the ordinary.
- Ask thoughtful questions.
- Appreciate beauty and diversity.
- Develop empathy and compassion.
- Reflect on their own beliefs and experiences.
- Build resilience, hope and gratitude.

Windows, Mirrors and Doors

Through using the 'Windows, Mirrors and Doors' analogy, this approach helps adults nurture children's spirituality by encouraging them to see the world, themselves and others in deeper ways. **Windows** provide opportunities for children to look out and experience awe, wonder and different perspectives, helping them appreciate the diversity and beauty of the world around them. **Mirrors** encourage children to reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs and experiences, developing self-awareness and an understanding of who they are. **Doors** invite children to respond by taking positive action, showing compassion, making courageous choices or deepening relationships with others and the wider world. By intentionally planning moments that include windows, mirrors and doors across the curriculum and daily school life, adults create opportunities for children to grow spiritually, develop empathy, ask big questions and live out the school's values in meaningful ways.

Windows



Windows are for looking out into the world. They help us think about the 'WOW' wonders and the 'OW'; the things which are difficult.

I wonder... why did that happen?

Mirrors



Mirrors are for looking into and reflecting.

What happened?

Doors



Doors are for thinking about looking ahead.

How can you make a difference?

What could you do?

Embedding Spirituality through Awe and Wonder in Collective Worship

Collective worship is the beating heart of St John's. It provides the opportunity for our school community to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality, which we use as a school, is regularly and explicitly shared. Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present (windows and mirrors) which are often linked to invitations to pray.

Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for hearing the Christian story. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or observe, Christian spiritual practices such as prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy. Opportunities to reflect on the awe and wonder of life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise with moments of disappointment or pain.

Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities (doors) to others and to grow in love and service. Time is given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark seasonal Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and flourish spiritually. Collective Worship in St John's is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

Embedding Spirituality through Awe and Wonder in RE

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality.

Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils' ideas of spirituality and the language of awe and wonder where appropriate.

Embedding Spirituality through Awe and Wonder Across the Curriculum

The Christian vision of St John's shapes our curriculum design and, drawing on the language of 'Awe and wonder' as well as using the 'windows, mirrors and doors' analogy, conversations around spirituality will be included in classroom teaching when appropriate from Reception to Year 6, enabling children's spiritual growth as they travel through the school.

Maths	Exploring patterns, symmetry, infinity and connections in mathematics, fostering a sense of wonder and awe at the beauty and order in the universe. Persevering through painful moments to solve puzzles Appreciating the elegance of mathematical thinking. The joy of investigating different questions Wondering how mathematics shapes our world. By appreciating the beauty of shape and space such as the Fibonacci sequence in nature, e.g. spirals of seeds in sunflowers, the arrangement of petals on flowers, the sections of pine cones and pineapples
English	Rich literature that explores identity, courage and hope as well as moral and ethical dilemmas Big question - Can stories change the world? Having empathy for others Discovering different vocab Opportunities for reflective and creative writing, based on personal belief at times. Using a new device in writing and changing the quality of the writing By appreciating the beauty of language. Being a reader- discovering new authors and books Poetry that evokes emotion and imagination. Being an author- seeing a story unfold before you Knowing that a book can change your thinking Remembering influential lines/words/messages from books Hooks for writing that encourage 'wows' - these could be visual texts, artwork, music, nature around us
Science	Investigating the complexity of living things. Observing the night sky, ecosystems and natural phenomena. Asking "How?" and "Why?" questions about the universe. Growing real plants and observing the wonders of the natural world, By creating opportunities for pupils to ask questions about how living things rely on and contribute to their environment. Drawing conclusions and applying to real life Studying the natural world and considering questions about the origins of life, the universe, and our place within it. Opportunities to linger longer on the wonder and say wow! Particularly in learning

	about the human body and Earth and Space. What questions cannot be answered by science? Discussing how scientific discoveries start with imagination and forming a question. Talking about how scientists across the world co-operate and share discoveries to increase our understanding of the world. By spending time outdoors or making observations really taking it in and using our senses. Enjoying the small things in nature such as how a spider creates a web, or how leaves change colour or birdsong Enjoying nature throughout the different seasons
RE	Exploring beliefs, faiths and worldviews. Asking life's big questions. Studying different religious and philosophical traditions; exploring questions of meaning, purpose, and morality. Developing respect for different perspectives. Trips to different places of worship- seeing the beauty in the design. Godly play forming a sense of awe and wonder about the stories from the Bible- using 'doors' to improve our lives and others'. By experiencing wonder and joy through learning about and from stories, celebrations, rituals and different expressions of religion and worldviews. Discovering the meaning of stories and relating it back to themselves. By considering questions about God and evaluating truth claims
History	Reflecting on remarkable individuals and significant events. Studying different cultures, religions, and belief systems throughout history reflecting on the human experience and the search for meaning. Considering the resilience and achievements of people throughout history. Learning from both triumphs and mistakes. Seeing how people lived in the past- real life artefacts etc By looking at local history and investigating the reasons why there is a landmark, building or museum. How have we changed over time? Creating a space for children to relate to historical events to their own lives and identity By considering how things would be different if the course of events had been different Which stories tell historical awe and wonder? Which stories tell historical tales of 'windows, mirrors and doors?' What lessons for future decisions and choices do they provide? Providing opportunities for children to ask and discuss questions about courage, loss and change, rights and equality and to encourage listening to others.
Geography	Experiencing the beauty and diversity of our planet. Exploring different cultures and environments. Developing responsibility for caring for the Earth. Exploring the natural world and our place within it; considering issues of sustainability, stewardship, and interconnectedness. Fieldwork- seeing the world in action By using Google maps and asking pupils to imagine what it might be like to live in different parts of the world eg Favela settlements in Brazil Forest school- marvelling in the beauty of the natural world By making links with history when exploring the environment and speculating on why the landscape is as it is. By comparing their lives with pupils living in other countries or other parts of the UK What options/opportunities are there to respond and take responsibility in a challenging world? Developing opportunities/time spent exploring and asking questions about photographs e.g. feeling wonder when they see something majestic in nature, such

	as a jagged mountain range
PE	Developing a sense of connectedness between mind, body, and spirit; promoting values such as teamwork, respect, and resilience. Experiencing joy through movement. Developing perseverance and teamwork. Team sports focusing on working together, appreciating others skills and contributions, and the connection this provides. Celebrating personal achievement and resilience. By taking part in activities such as dance, games and gymnastics which help pupils to become more focused, connected and creative. By being aware of one's own strengths and limitations. By delighting in movement of others and themselves, appreciate what our bodies are capable of. How do you celebrate a new skill? How does it feel to be proud of your whole self? How do you recognise the delight in movement, connectedness, and creativity? Recognise/celebrate equality, freedom, respect and trust. Recognising how movement makes them feel, calm, relaxed, motivated. Appreciation of nature and the outside world whilst taking part in outdoor activities.
Spanish	How things may sound in a different language- how other people communicate themselves. Learning a new language so you can use this in exploring different cultures, beliefs, and traditions through language; fostering empathy and understanding across cultures Being able to grow in knowledge of how to communicate in another tongue. By exploring the beauty of languages from around the world. What motivates language learning? For example, buying an ice cream on holiday or welcoming and comforting a stranger in our country? What does it feel like to genuinely communicate with someone in a new language?
Computing	Wondering about innovation and the possibilities of technology and the power of the digital age e.g. use of the internet and social media. By understanding the advantages and limitations of IT. Looking at advancements in technology and showing appreciation and respect for the interconnectedness of the world. Reflecting on the ethical use of technology; considering the impact of digital interactions on personal and communal well-being. Help children to understand their digital identity and presence. E literacy lessons, online relationships and reputation, self-awareness and responsible digital behaviours. Digital footprint. Fostering a sense of integrity and accountability. Ethical implication of technology (AI and data privacy). Discovering how to make things work by programming By using the internet as a gateway to big life issues. Asking questions and reflecting: so what? What if? Developing creativity - problem solving; fostering self belief, confidence and resilience through challenge and sense of achievement. Creation of digital media that explores themes such as belief systems, social justice, and environmental issues. Developing empathy and mutual respect. Using technology for spiritual practices encourages children to develop their spiritual awareness and helps them connect with themselves and others in meaningful ways.
PSHE	Reflecting on personal values, beliefs, and ethical decision-making; developing empathy, compassion, and self-awareness. By developing awareness of and responding to others' needs and wants.

	By exploring meaning and purpose for individuals and society. By developing resilience and inner strength. By valuing self as unique in the image of God. By cherishing relationships. As children explore topics such as relationships, feelings & attitudes, keeping safe and 'your body' where are the natural links with awe and wonder? Are there difficulties we face as we grow older? The change in bodies over time- different families and how we can celebrate our differences. Celebrating love and relationships around the world. Being Me in My World - The link between appreciating our place in the world and our communities helps children understand they are part of something bigger. It also helps them consider their connections to others and can enable them to feel closer to them and nature. Celebrating Difference - Helps the children make the link between the idea that although we are all different we are also all special and connected. Also children can learn how people believe, pray and celebrate in different ways and may even see spirituality in different ways. Dreams and Goals - Reinforces the spiritual belief that we all have a purpose or path. Spirituality can help us achieve our goals through being hopeful, strong and focused. Healthy Me - A healthy lifestyle helps us feel strong, happy and calm. We can grow and have more opportunities for spiritual moments. Relationships - links to spiritual teaching of treating others with respect. We often share spiritual moments with people from close relationships.
Music	Experiencing the emotional power of music. Exploring the emotional and spiritual dimensions of music; experiencing moments of transcendence through performance and composition. Listening, performing and composing. By allowing pupils to show their delight and curiosity in creating their own sounds. Appreciating music from different cultures and traditions. Exploring different instruments Listening to environmental sounds by considering how music makes one feel and can 'move us' deeply. How does music encourage creativity, delight, and curiosity? Appreciating the effect, a performance can have on the audience creating that 'awe and wonder' moment of stillness and silence before the applause. Understanding how music can provide a link with different cultures and allow building relationships of mutual respect and understanding. Understanding how we can use music to help us improve our well-being and provide an aid to emotional regulation for some people. What type of music makes you feel calm? What type of music makes you feel excited / sad / angry etc. Thinking about what features of the music may contribute to these feelings e.g. tempo / rhythm / key / texture. Thinking about how music is used in the worship of many different religions and why this is. Appreciating different people have differing preferences for music to listen to and there is no right or wrong.
Art	Expressing personal beliefs and values through creative artwork; exploring the spiritual significance of art throughout history. Responding emotionally to great works of art.

	By providing plenty of rich opportunities for pupils to explore both the spiritual dimension and natural phenomena e.g. natural form, waves, complex pattern in nature. Creating opportunities for self-expression. Celebrating creativity and imagination. Having a window into the experiences, emotions, and perspectives of others through looking at and hearing others talk about their art Experiment with different techniques and media and taking the opportunity to reflect on how different pieces of art make us feel - using sketchbooks to make visual notes.
D&T	Exploring purpose of creations What motivates designers and their decisions? For example, is it a desire to make money or a desire to help and make improvements to daily life for everyone? By enjoying and celebrating personal creativity. By reviewing and evaluating created things. Team work to create devices/structures Marvelling at manmade and natural creations Discovering how something works Reflecting on the impact of technology on society and the environment; considering ethical and moral implications of design decisions. Caring for our own bodies and respecting them by learning about healthy food, heart health and balanced diets.

Awe and Wonder Within School Life

Our school ethos promotes spirituality through:

- Reflective collective worship.
- Quiet spaces for thinking and prayer.
- Outdoor learning and encounters with nature.
- Celebration of diversity and inclusion.
- Acts of kindness and service.
- Creative arts and performance.
- Meaningful pupil leadership opportunities.
- Marking seasonal celebrations and significant events.
- Our curriculum ensures moments of awe and wonder are shared and celebrated, using 'windows, mirrors and doors' to aid our children's spiritual development.
- Our curriculum also ensures we consider the awe and wonder of difficult moments in life and learning- difficulties and frustrations.
- Appreciating the every day moments of school life and beyond and being thankful for what we have achieved each day.

Adults model curiosity by wondering alongside children, encouraging thoughtful discussion rather than providing all the answers.

Reflection

Children are encouraged to pause and reflect through questions such as:

- What surprised you today?
- What made you stop and think?
- What are you grateful for?
- What questions do you still have?
- How has today's learning changed your thinking?

- When have you experienced something beautiful or inspiring?
- When have you experienced something difficult or challenging?
- How can you make a positive difference to someone else?

Creating a Spiritual School Culture

A culture of awe and wonder is built when everyone:

- Notices moments of beauty and joy.
- Values silence and reflection.
- Encourages curiosity.
- Celebrates diversity.
- Builds respectful relationships.
- Shows compassion.
- Inspires hope.
- Encourages children to dream, question and flourish.

Impact

By placing awe and wonder at the heart of our curriculum and ethos, pupils become thoughtful, compassionate and reflective individuals. Appreciating the power of 'windows, mirrors and doors' as a vehicle through which children can develop a sense of identity and belonging, appreciate the richness of the world around them and grow in confidence to ask life's deeper questions.

Ultimately, our children will leave our school with not only knowledge and skills, but also the wisdom, curiosity and empathy needed to contribute positively to their communities and the wider world.