



Our vision

This is the agreed vision statement of Christ Church School:



Christ Church School, Hampstead

A village school in London inspiring *life in all its fullness*

Jesus, The Good Shepherd, promises 'life in all its fullness'. (JOHN 10:10)

At Christ Church we believe every child and adult in our school should be able both to experience life in all its fullness now and to aspire to life in all its fullness in the future.

We all seek to inspire life in all its fullness for all in the school through:

- ensuring a **safe, welcoming and inclusive environment** for children and adults, where everyone is valued and has the opportunity to contribute and flourish;
- the pursuit of **academic excellence** in all areas, with a determined desire for each child to make the best possible progress as a result of high aspirations, hard work and the development of a personal love for learning alongside the highest-quality teaching and support;
- offering the widest possible **breadth of curriculum** both within school and through extra-curricular activities, enriched by the vast range of opportunities locally and across London;
- **creativity and positivity** in all we do, mixing innovation with tradition;
- planned and spontaneous opportunities for **spiritual development** through reflection, discussion and harnessing curiosity, as well as the provision, at the heart of our school life, of daily opportunities for prayer and worship;
- the development and modelling of **strong, positive and loving relationships**, with peers, amongst the school community and in the wider community;
- the promotion of **respect and compassion for ourselves and for all others**, by cultivating positive emotional and physical well-being, by celebrating the diversity within and outside our school and by encouraging all of us to be empowered global citizens, guided at all times by the example of Christ's compassion alongside the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child;
- engendering a **sense of community and responsibility** for others and for our local and global environment and enjoying working together towards our common goals and expecting and valuing contributions from all.

Our vision comes to life through the school's five shared Christian values of **compassion, creativity, courage, simplicity and community**.

Our vision is for all in our school to experience *life in all its fullness* and we believe that a key part of this is the spiritual development of children and adults through reflection, discussion and harnessing curiosity, as well as through our prayer and collective worship.

The aims of this document are to set out

- what we think spirituality is and means to us at Christ Church School
- how we provide planned opportunities for spiritual development for both children and adults in our school community, and
- how we make the most of and embrace spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development of both adults and children.

This document should be read alongside our Worship Policy and plans which set out the key role that collective worship plays in spiritual development in our school.



Our definition of Spirituality at Christ Church School

Spirituality at Christ Church is

- exploring fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone
- each person's search for individual identity and for the values by which to live
- developing an awareness of the concept of 'beyond' and the ability to explore experience beyond the everyday
- searching for meaning in our very existence and our place in the greater scheme of things; developing a higher and deeper awareness and concern for others in the world around us
- an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful and, in relationships with others, of what is generous, creative and loving
- the spirit of a person being seen through their acts of courage and perseverance and in their response to setbacks, praise and the unknown.

Whilst the term spiritual is not synonymous with religious, we think that learning about religion helps believers and non-believers develop their spirituality. All areas of the curriculum and parts of the school day and year can contribute to children's and adults' spiritual development.

This is a working definition and will be reviewed regularly as we develop our practice in this area.

Development of this document and our definition

Our definition of spirituality and this document have been developed by staff and governors over 2018/19.

Teaching staff discussed the many definitions and reflections on spirituality contained within the LDBS (London Diocesan Board for Schools) Spirituality document, discussing which best fitted with spirituality at Christ Church. School leaders then refined this selection of comments about spirituality into the working definition above, ensuring that it was aligned with our vision statement.

Governors and all staff then used and refined this working definition at an INSET day where everyone contributed ideas about the planned and spontaneous opportunities provided for spiritual development for both adults and children. Staff members then extended this discussion at a Spirituality CPD session at St Paul's Cathedral, where staff had the opportunity to reflect further on what spirituality is through an interactive session in the cathedral as well as an opportunity for their own spiritual development through reflection, silence, poetry and, if they wished, prayer.

This document has been shared with our full governing body and also with parents, via our newsletter and website.

The examples provided in this document were then reviewed and updated with teaching staff in March 2022.



Planned opportunities for spiritual development

There are many planned opportunities for the spiritual development of children and adults throughout our curriculum and across our school day and year.

Examples:

- visits to places of worship and other inspirational buildings or places (e.g. Buckingham Palace, Trafalgar Square, National Gallery) with time to take in and reflect on surroundings;
- discussion and reflection opportunities in RE lessons and across the curriculum, with the creation of the right atmosphere to promote this;
- use of mindfulness, quiet times, breathing techniques in classes (e.g. breathwork exercises), 'listening to the river' on the Thames Explorer trip;
- rewarding, praising and celebrating together – golden certificates for perseverance, self-less acts, friendship, staff thank you cards and the Charlie Chesser awards for kindness;
- events to share and celebrate the diversity in our school – e.g. international event or pupil presentations about their families;
- whole school charity events with a deep understanding of how we, as a school community, can make a difference, including events suggested and organised by children;
- the time and space given to children to reflect on their behaviour and its impact on others, as a planned part of our positive behaviour policy;
- our collective worship in school, in church and in partnership with the wider church community, including our planned opportunities for the spiritual development of staff, parents and families;
- opportunities to experience new things and go to new places – our 'try something new' week, our trips, our regular time spent experiencing nature on the Heath;
- our planned opportunities for children and adults in our school to spend time outside, including on Hampstead Heath;
- opportunities for children to spend time together listening to music or appreciating artwork (e.g. trips to galleries, listening to a range of music in assemblies and music lessons)
- planned opportunities for 'togetherness' – singing together, performing together, celebrating together, praying and reflecting together, sharing together.

Teachers should consider opportunities for spiritual development in their planning and school leaders should consider opportunities for spiritual development in their planning of school routines and events.

Spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development

We believe that not all spiritual development can be planned and that the best opportunities can arise spontaneously. However, we should do our best to recognise this and make the most of these chance occurrences in order to inspire *life in all its fullness* for all. We should also learn from these events and reflect on whether these opportunities can be planned for again – this may be possible for some and not for others.

Recent spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development of children and/or adults, identified by staff and governors, have included:

- our school 'Happiness Songs' concert and, in particular, the whole school rehearsals for this which inspired a genuine (and unplanned) feeling of belonging and togetherness amongst the school community;
- our joy when we heard that some of our balloons or stones spreading messages of happiness had been found and appreciated by others;
- release of the butterflies that Year 2 had seen develop from caterpillars into the playground and then other children caring for the ones that couldn't fly away;
- the togetherness and emotion engendered by our school vision and values film premiere event, in particular the quiet reflective atmosphere that our Year 5 film on simplicity produced;
- spontaneous snowman building competitions for all the children and adults working in teams on an unexpectedly snowy day;

- giving adults space and time when life outside school may be tough – time to think, rest and reflect; an open door policy for parents also provides time for parents to develop a relationship with and talk to staff members;
- the curiosity and wonder of Reception children on their regular Heath trips and their questioning and discovery about the natural world around them;
- the chance opportunity to see someone flying a kite on a trip over Hampstead Heath – stopping and watching in wonder as a class;
- spontaneous whole class dancing outside in the evening on school journey;
- the enjoyment and kindness shown by all children when Year 1 and Year 5 children read their new books together after their trip to Waterstones;
- chance moments spent thinking about loved ones who have died and sharing memories about them with friends and the class;
- the feeling of togetherness, community and happiness once we were finally back together in the hall for assemblies after the period of COVID restrictions, especially singing as a whole school.

This document will be updated regularly as our work in this area develops.

Original version June 2019

Updated March 2022