



#### 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, justice 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 is brought 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 the spiritual development for both children and adults in our school community, and
- how we make the most of and embrace spontaneous opportunities for the 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

At Christ Church we understand spirituality to be:

- **looking outwards** to appreciate and cherish the awe and wonder of the world
- **looking inwards** to reflect on our experiences and to explore life's big questions
- **looking onwards** to discover the meaning and impact of our lives for others and the world around us

In more detail, spirituality at Christ Church is:

looking outwards:

- developing an awareness of the concept of 'beyond' and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday
- an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful and, in relationships with others, of what is generous, creative and loving

looking inwards:

- exploring fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone
- the spirit of a person being seen through their acts of courage and perseverance and in their response to setbacks, praise and the unknown.
- each person's search for individual identity and for the values by which to live

looking onwards:

- 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; developing an understanding of 'belonging to something bigger'.

A spiritual experience could encompass one, two or all three of the areas of looking outwards, inwards and onwards. For spiritual flourishing to take place, there may well be more than an emotional response to an experience, though it should be noted that each person's response will be very personal and two people may respond differently to the same experience.

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 continues to be a working definition and will be reviewed regularly as we continue to develop our practice in this area.

### Development of this document and our definition

Our definition of spirituality and this document was initially 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 an initial working definition, 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.

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.

In Spring 2025, our definition of spirituality was discussed, reviewed and refined with both staff and governor groups, considering a range of definitions used by other schools and shared in training by the LDBS, and minor changes were made.

In January 2026, Governors and staff met for a joint INSET session again to review this definition and share further recent examples of opportunities for spiritual flourishing for children and adults. This discussion contributed to a review of this document.



### **Planned opportunities for spiritual development**

There are many planned opportunities for the spiritual development and flourishing 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, St Paul's Cathedral, St Albans Cathedral) 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 quiet reflective times, breathing techniques in classes and as a whole school, e.g. 'listening to the river' on the Thames Explorer trip, well-being champions leading the whole school community in 'butterfly breathing';
- rewarding, praising and celebrating together – golden certificates for perseverance, self-less acts, friendship, staff thank you cards and the Charlie Chesser awards for kindness and inclusion;
- events to share and celebrate the diversity in our school – e.g. international event or pupil presentations about themselves and 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 reciprocal positive impact of our children's visits to the elderly people supported by Henderson Court Age UK centre;
- 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;
- reflection opportunities in RE lessons: moments when children and adults consider their own beliefs and faith in comparison to the beliefs and faith of others;
- 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 and learning with natural materials, 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. For example, singing favourite hymns together as a whole school accompanied by the visiting organ and organist from St Paul's Cathedral – feeling that the whole building and people's bodies were filled with music.

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.

Memorable spontaneous opportunities for spiritual development of children and/or adults, identified by staff and governors, which have taken place in recent years have included:

- our school 'Joseph' production and, in particular, the whole school singing rehearsals for this which inspired a genuine (and unplanned) feeling of belonging and togetherness amongst the school community;
- when our whole school sings together in harmony – the moment when the different harmony lines work beautifully together for the first time;
- our joy when we heard that some of our stones spreading messages of happiness had been found and appreciated by others;
- spontaneous snowman building competitions for all the children and adults working in teams on an unexpectedly snowy day;
- spontaneous time outside in the playground for Reception class when it suddenly snowed heavily – the first time many children could remember ever being outside in falling snow;
- 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; for staff members, the moment when you realise you have made a real difference to a child or family;
- the curiosity and wonder of Reception children on their regular Heath trips and their questioning and discovery about the natural world around them;
- a chance opportunity to see a beautiful rainbow when on a school trip – taking the time to stop and look;
- taking the time to stop to listen to the birds when out filming on the Heath; bird watching trips on the Heath – two classes standing silently, listening and watching;
- spontaneous whole class dancing outside in the evening or the feeling of togetherness and fun being on the beach on school journey – running hand in hand as a whole class;
- chance moments spent thinking about loved ones who have died and sharing memories about them with friends and the class;
- 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;
- leaving speeches by pupils where they reflect, often surprisingly, on the positive impact of their time in the school.



This document will be updated regularly, and at least every three years, as our work in this area develops.

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Updated and amended March 2022, March 2025, March 2026