



The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School

Spiritual Development and Collective Worship Policy

All of the policies that shape our lives and daily practice at Bishops` are informed by our Christian vision and values: to know, nurture and inspire our students to be the best version of themselves, so that they can live 'life in all its fullness' (John 10: 10)

Is this policy statutory?	No
Review Period	3 years
Date of approval	September 25, 2023
Committee	Students

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1. Statement of Intent

Our school vision states that:

The Bishops' Blue Coat Church of England High School is an exciting place to be. We know, nurture, and inspire our community to be the best version of themselves through a better understanding of the Christian faith, our core values, and a rich set of opportunities. Students achieve academically whilst growing personally and spiritually. Through their engagement in society and beyond, our students make a positive difference through wise action, resilience, and a sense of responsibility. Our community is enabled to live life guided by Jesus, to flourish and have “life in all its fullness” (John 10:10)

At Bishops, we take a holistic view of the development of our young people and our staff within the context of our Christian beliefs and values. Whilst we strive for academic excellence, we firmly believe that school is also a place where students grow spiritually through a deepening understanding of themselves, other people, the natural world, and God. We believe that the purpose of education is to support young people to flourish not only academically but also personally and spiritually so that they can become the best versions of themselves and truly live a life in all its fullness.

2. Aims and Purpose of the Policy

This policy outlines:

- What we mean by 'spiritual development' at Bishops
- How we nurture and promote the spiritual development of our pupils, including through acts of collective worship
- The roles and responsibilities of staff, pupils, and parents in this process

This policy aims to ensure that there is:

- a shared understanding of spirituality across the school community
- an understanding by staff of our collective responsibility in nurturing spiritual development
- an understanding by parents, students, and governors of our commitment to the holistic development of our students as individuals who can flourish academically, personally, and spiritually.

3. The Statutory Framework for Spiritual Development and Collective Worship

The role of schools in nurturing and promoting the spiritual development of students was fixed with the Education Act 2002 which states that schools must have a balanced and broadly based curriculum that '*promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils at the school*'.

DFE Guidance on Religious Education and Collective Worship also makes it clear that schools and academies with a religious designation must provide a daily act of collective worship in accordance with the tenets and practices of their designated faith.

Spiritual development and collective worship are therefore areas of school life that are subject to inspection, forming part of the Ofsted framework and its subsidiary guidance for schools on SMSC (spiritual, moral, social and cultural) and British values.

Church of England educational policy and guidance also gives priority to the spiritual development of young people and the role of collective worship in nurturing this. Its *Vision for Education* is one that embraces excellence and academic rigour within a wider framework of spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional, moral, and social development that enables young people to flourish, including through acts of collective worship.

Spiritual development and collective worship is therefore a particular focus of Church school inspections and the SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) Framework which asks: '*How well does the school support all pupils in their spiritual development enabling all pupils to flourish?*'.

This policy therefore has due regard to all relevant governmental and Church of England legislation and guidance relating to spiritual development and collective worship in schools including, but not limited to, the following documents and initiatives:

- *Education Act 2002*
- *Education Act 2011*
- *Promoting Fundamental British Values as Part of SMSC in Schools: Departmental Advice for Maintained Schools*, DfE 2014
- *Mental health and wellbeing provision in schools*, DfE 2018
- *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*, The Church of England 2016
- *The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium*, The Church of England 2001
- *Statutory Inspection for Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS) Framework*, The Church of England 2023
- *Mental Health and Well-being: Towards a Whole School Approach*, The Church of England, March 2018
- *Spiritual Development: Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the Classroom*, The Church of England, 2019
- *Spirituality in a Church School Within a Performance Driven Culture*, Anne Lumb (Grove Education, 2016)
- *Growing Faith*, The Church of England 2021
- *DFE Guidance on Collective Worship in Schools 1994*
- *Religious Education and Collective Worship in Academies and Free Schools 2012*

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Behavioural Policy
- Safeguarding Policy
- Equality Policy
- Behaviour for Learning Policy
- Staff Code of Conduct Policy
- Curriculum Policy
- Staff Well-being Policy

4. What is Meant by `Spiritual Development` at Bishops?

Spirituality is a difficult term to define and embraces a wide range of meanings. However, it is widely accepted that spirituality is concerned ***with a deep and deepening relationship between an individual and themselves, others, the world around them and God or a `divine other`.***

For many within our church school community, the relationships that are at the heart of spirituality are explicitly Christian in nature, rooted in a biblical understanding of the world and a prayerful connection with God. Whether understood in an explicitly Christian way or otherwise, this idea of `relational consciousness` being at the heart of spirituality is central to how we understand spiritual development at Bishops. It can be shown using a simple diagram:



To support the spirituality of our students, we are therefore concerned with providing high quality opportunities across both the formal curriculum and the wider life of the school - including the worship life of our school - to help students:

- develop a sense of self and identity which they are comfortable with
- develop an understanding of how they can relate well to others, both in school and beyond
- develop a sense of awe and wonder about the natural world, including an awareness of how and why they should act to protect and nurture it.
- develop an appreciation of, and a relationship with, God or a `divine other` beyond what can be seen, and to ask deep and meaningful questions about the meaning and purpose of life.

At Bishops, spirituality is therefore primarily about **relationships**. It is about helping students understand the internal relationship with themselves and the external relationships they have with one other and the world around them. As we are a church school, spirituality is also understood in terms of nurturing not just our students' but also our staff's relationship with God or their sense of a divine other.

We therefore believe that spirituality should be at the heart of our ethos and daily life. Creating an environment that actively and daily nurtures spiritual development is essential for all in our school community to flourish and live life in all its fullness.

5. Spiritual Development within the Context of our School Vision

Our understanding of spirituality at Bishops is rooted in our school vision to *know, nurture and inspire our students to be the best version of themselves, flourish, and live 'life in all its fullness.'* (John 10:10).

In supporting their spiritual development, our aim as a school is to provide a rich and deepening set of opportunities for students,

To **know**:

- themselves and their place in the world
- others and their responsibilities towards them
- God or to develop an awareness of a 'divine other'

To be **nurtured in**:

- Christian virtues, character growth, hope, and aspiration
- a sense of community, belonging and respect
- a sense of justice, equality, and care for the natural world

To be **inspired**:

- by their learning and their daily experiences at Bishops
- to be the best versions of themselves
- to make a positive difference in the world through wise action and courageous advocacy

Life at Bishops' is guided and underpinned by core Christian values that create a coherent and overarching framework to support the academic, personal, and spiritual development of our students in all areas of school life. These values are:

- Dignity and Respect
- Hope and Aspiration
- Wisdom, knowledge, and skills

Guided by our vision and our core values, we endeavour as a school community to nurture the development of the whole child so that they can flourish in their relationships with themselves, with others, with the world and with God. Through being attentive to the spiritual development of our pupils, we believe that we simultaneously promote the flourishing, well-being, and mental health of our whole community of children, staff, and parents. This is one of the ways that we strive to realise the Church's *Vision for Education* to be 'deeply Christian, serving the common good'.

6. An Inclusive Vision of Spiritual Development and Collective Worship

Bishops' Blue Coat High School has a clear sense of its Christian roots and identity, and this provides the spiritual and moral basis for our work as we seek to know, nurture, and inspire young people to flourish and be the best version of themselves. We aim to nurture and support the character growth and spiritual development of all our students through providing an education that is grounded in Christian values, beliefs and a life of worship.

However, we recognise that many of our families, children and staff may be of another religion or indeed hold no religious affiliation. In line with Church of England guidance, we therefore promote an invitational approach to collective worship that encourages students and staff to engage with worship on a level that is meaningful *for them*. In this our approach reflects the Church's *Vision for Education* and its 'commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other traditions and beliefs, and for the religious freedom of each person'.

Our vision for the spiritual development of young people and adults at Bishops, therefore, is an inclusive one, not one that is restricted to members of our community who identify explicitly as Christian. In this respect, we are also fully in line with Ofsted guidance according to which *'spiritual is not synonymous with religious'*.

We believe that we all have innate spiritual capacities and that all areas of our formal and informal curriculum, including acts of collective worship, can support the spiritual development of our students, whether they consider themselves religious or not. Our definition of spirituality as being concerned **with a deep and deepening relationship between an individual and themselves, others, the world around them and God or a 'divine other'** ensures that the spiritual development of **all** can be nurtured and developed.

7. Spiritual Development in Practice at Bishops'

We believe that spiritual development at Bishops is something that should influence all areas of our educational provision as it does all areas of life. Whilst it may be particularly prominent in certain specific areas of school life - such as our programme of collective worship or RE lessons - the responsibility for nurturing the spiritual development of our students is a whole-school concern and is therefore shared by **all** staff and curriculum areas.

At Bishops, spiritual development is expressed through:

- the close, high-quality relationships that exist between staff and students and between students themselves.
- our pastoral system and the emphasis it places on nurturing values of respect, forgiveness and reconciliation across the community
- the work of our school leaders, including our Chaplain, and the spiritual care that is provided for all members of our community, including teachers, students and parents.

- our Prayer Space and Sanctuary, physical spaces in our school that provide welcoming environments for all students and staff to experience prayer and reflection.
- the challenging and inspiring lessons that take place every day across all areas of our curriculum, and which provide rich opportunities for our students to reflect upon their values and beliefs, to ask deep questions and to grow personally and spiritually.
- our weekly programme for collective prayer and worship which provides daily opportunities for all students to experience prayer, stillness, and moments of reflection.

8. Collective Worship at Bishops'

In line with statutory and Church of England guidance, Bishops' is committed to providing all students with daily acts of high-quality Christian worship that are inclusive, invitational, and inspirational. Planned opportunities for discrete and purposeful acts of worship are an important part of our daily routine as a church school and an integral strand of our holistic personal development programme, known at Bishops' as The LIFE Programme.

Collective worship at Bishops' takes place in a variety of ways including prayers during Form Time and services during assemblies that involve larger year groups.

A discrete act of Christian worship in the form of a prayer is a priority for **every** session of Form Time. Daily Form Time worship is calm, focused, and purposeful and students are invited to participate in a way that will be personally meaningful for them (whether they have a Christian faith or not).

Year Group Assemblies take place weekly in the Assembly Hall (or, for Sixth Form students, in the 6th Form Common Area) and are usually delivered by our Chaplain, a member of SLT, students themselves, or by a representative from one of our wider church partners.

Assemblies provide an opportunity for our students and staff to come together and develop a deeper understanding of spirituality, and in particular the Christian faith, through knowing the foundational truths that they are loved and understood by God, and by seeing that the life and teachings of Jesus have important things to say to them today.

Our termly programme for collective worship is outlined in the Bishops' LIFE Programme. Our approach to worship is themed across each term and there is a coherent weekly focus for prayer and worship in Form Time and in Year Group Assemblies.

Our assembly programme deepens our students' spiritual development across the year through exploring what the Bible has to say about them (Term 1), the world around them (Term 2) and the ways that they can respond lovingly to the injustice that they see in the world (Term 3).

We also provide occasional opportunities for staff and parents to worship together. Staff INSET Days always provide opportunities for colleagues to share Holy Communion together. There is also a thriving Parent Prayer Group that meets once every half term.

9. Roles and Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for:

- Evaluating and reviewing this policy to ensure that it is not discriminatory
- The overall implementation of this policy

The Headteacher and SLT are responsible for:

- Reviewing, amending, and implementing this policy
- Arranging appropriate training for staff members
- Supporting the spiritual development of staff
- Quality assuring our provision for spiritual development and collective worship

Year Leaders and Pastoral Support Officers are responsible for:

- implementing the systems that support our students` mental and emotional health and which nurture positive relationships between students and teachers
- corresponding and meeting with relevant staff, students, and parents where necessary

Form tutors are responsible for:

- nurturing the spiritual, personal, emotional and mental well-being of their tutees
- using the programme of collective worship to facilitate purposeful, inclusive and invitational acts of worship, prayer and reflection

The School Chaplain is responsible for:

- designing and implementing a rich and varied programme of collective worship to nurture the spiritual development of students and staff
- leading acts of worship and periods of reflection and providing pastoral and spiritual guidance and support for all members of the Bishops` community
- supporting and encouraging students to lead each other in worship, growing leadership skills in our students that relate to the ethos and values of our school

Subject Leaders are responsible for:

- designing and implementing programmes of study that maximise opportunities for students to develop not only academically but also personally, spiritually and ethically

- ensuring that members of their team are aware of and exploit opportunities to engage their students in the kind of deep questioning, open enquiry and reflection that promotes character growth and spiritual development

Classroom Teachers are responsible for:

- adopting a holistic approach to teaching and learning that ensures that lessons have more than just an academic focus
- maximising opportunities during lessons for students to develop not only academically but also personally, spiritually and ethically

Parents are responsible for:

- supporting the spiritual development of their children at home by nurturing their relationships with themselves, with others, with the natural world and with God or a divine other
- supporting the school as it seeks to nurture the spiritual development of their children in a wide variety of ways

Students are responsible for:

- developing an open, receptive and expansive mindset towards their education, understanding that academic excellence is only one of the valuable outcomes that we are striving for as a school
- embracing opportunities within school and beyond to develop themselves spiritually in ways that suit their temperaments and capacities
- take part in the leadership of collective worship whenever this is possible, working closely with the Chaplain and senior leaders to ensure that the worship life of our school involves the student body in an active way

10. Appendix 1 – Assembly Protocols 2023

Assemblies provide an opportunity for our students and staff to come together and develop a deeper understanding of spirituality, and in particular the Christian faith, through knowing the foundational truths that they are loved and understood by God, and by seeing that the life and teachings of Jesus have important things to say to them today.

Year Group Assemblies take place weekly in the Assembly Hall (or the 6th Form Common Area) and are usually delivered by our Chaplain, a member of SLT, students themselves or by a representative from one of our wider church partners.

Form Tutors register their students at the start of Form Time and then bring them down to the Assembly Hall with their bags. Students will usually be dismissed at the end of the assembly and sent directly to lesson 4 (although occasionally Form Tutors may be asked to return to form rooms with their groups).

Collective worship through Year Group Assemblies follows the programme outlined on our LIFE Programme Overview. Worship themes from Form Business are reinforced during assemblies so that the spiritual development of our staff and students is supported in a coherent and holistic way.

Our assembly programme deepens our students' spiritual development across the year through exploring what the Bible has to say about how God sees them (Term 1); about different issues (Term 2); and about social justice, caring for others and the world around them, and how they can respond lovingly to the injustice that they see in the world (Term 3).

11. Appendix 2 – Evaluation and Quality Assurance of Form Time and Worship

Collective worship in Form Time is regularly quality assured by senior leaders and Year Leads using a proforma that focuses on 4 key areas of practice. These are shared with Form Tutors in a guidance document as 'the essentials of Form Time'. These essentials relate to:

1. Basic Routines

1.1. Form Time starts promptly with a register.

1.2. Students sit according to a seating plan and Disadvantaged First strategies are in place (e.g. PP students sit near the Form Tutor and are engaged early on in each session).

1.3. BESt is used and is evident in practice (e.g. there is a calm and purposeful environment; standards of behaviour, uniform and equipment are enforced; classroom routines are in place).

2. Relationships and Support

2.1. The Form Tutor establishes a nurturing environment, knows their tutees well and provides ongoing challenge and support (e.g. using systems like IRIS to support dialogue about behaviour).

2.2. The Form Tutor works closely with Year Leads, Pastoral Support Officers and parents to provide the wrap-around care tutees need (e.g. contacting home on the third day of a students' absence).

2.3. The Form Tutor ensures that relationships between students in their form group are calm, positive and mutually respectful.

3. The LIFE Programme

3.1. Form Time follows the weekly programme and uses resources from the LIFE Programme page.

3.2. Form Time is purposeful and delivered with enthusiasm and a commitment to our whole-school vision of supporting students to become the best version of themselves.

3.3. The importance of Form Time as a time for nurturing our students' personal, spiritual and character development is clearly established and understood by all.

4. Worship

4.1. The Form Tutor values and prioritises Christian worship and **every** session of Form Time incorporates a specific element of worship in the form of a prayer.

4.2. Daily worship is calm, focused, and purposeful and students are invited to participate in a way that will be personally meaningful for them (whether they have a Christian faith or not).

4.3. The Form Tutor utilises either the desktop wallpaper prayer, prayers available on the LIFE Programme page or resources of their own to support the daily act of Christian worship.

Results from our quality assurance processes are fed back to staff during staff meetings and CPD sessions to support them in the improvement of their practice as Form Tutors at Bishops'.

12. Appendix 3 – Collective Worship: Our Vision and Values

Our ***Spiritual Development and Collective Worship Policy*** defines spirituality as being “concerned with a deep and deepening relationship between an individual and themselves, others, the world around them and God or a `divine other”.

At Bishops’ we want our students to understand that they can be **known, nurtured, and inspired** by God.

We want our students to **develop a deeper understanding of spirituality, and in particular the Christian faith**, through knowing the foundational truths that they are loved and understood by God, and by seeing that the life and teachings of Jesus have important things to say to them today.

Our hope is that their journey of spiritual formation might lead them into a deeper understanding and experience of ‘**life in all its fullness**’ (John 10:10), **enabling them to flourish and inspiring them to become the best version of themselves.**

The outworking of this process will be the increasing demonstration in their lives of the fruits of our vision: **Dignity and Respect; Wisdom, Knowledge and Skills; and Hope and Aspiration.**

Towards this end, we have developed a 3-tier assembly programme which commits to exploring these relationships and enabling students to deepen their understanding of spirituality, and the Christian faith in the following ways: -

Term 1: What does the Bible have to say about how God sees me?

As I come to understand these key foundational truths about how God sees me, how can my response impact my relationship with God, myself, others and the world around me?

Term 2: What does the Bible have to say to me about different issues?

How does the Bible speak directly into my life and the world around me today and how can my response impact my relationship with God, myself, others, and the world around me?

Term 3: What does the Bible have to say about social justice and caring for others and for the world around me?

And how can my response impact my relationship with God, myself, others, and the world around me?

How will we facilitate this?

- Inviting our church partners to speak and to share their own stories.
- Hearing from our school Chaplain.
- Student / Chaplain led assemblies.

- Inviting organisations to talk about their work from a Christian perspective.
- Asking speakers to prepare a Prayer Plus slide to reiterate their message for the week.
- A deepening of understanding requires repetition, so these themes could potentially be repeated annually with slightly different content.