

Ashurst CE Aided Primary School

Spirituality Policy.

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words.

At Ashurst, staff and Governors have sought to define what spirituality means to us, and how we can further develop our understanding and embodiment of it. In developing this policy, we have reflected on guidance from the Church of England, including 'Spiritual Development: Interpretations of Spiritual Development in the classroom (2019)' and documentation from the Dioceses of Gloucester and Guilford.

We recognise that spirituality is something that touches us all. It is a connection to something that is greater than us and whilst it is not dependent on a religious affiliation, at Ashurst the embodiment of spirituality is closely aligned with our vision which is rooted in 1 John: 3-18 "Let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth".

We embody spirituality by living with purpose and presence, by acting with intention and demonstrating integrity in our everyday lives. By cultivating compassion, kindness, and a sense of interconnectedness with others and the environment we live in alignment with our values and make them tangible through our actions, thoughts, and interactions with the world.

Spiritual development relates to fundamental questions about the meaning and purpose of life which affect everyone. It is about realising or becoming more aware of one's natural, innate spirituality, rather than becoming 'more spiritual'. This is sometimes a slow and gradual process, at other times there might be significant stages of realisation, which are part of the ongoing 'developing' process.

"We are not human beings having a spiritual experience; we are spiritual beings having a human experience."

Teilhard de Chardin

As an Aided Church School, Ashurst is committed to nurturing and encouraging the exploration of the Christian faith and its values, while being open to other faiths, beliefs and values.

At Ashurst, the development of an understanding of spirituality as feeling closer to God in the Christian sense and feeling closer to 'wholeness' in a truly inclusive sense is positively encouraged.

A language of Christianity spirituality begins with the understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8).

However, things happen in our lives that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.

Cracks may be caused when something so good and breath-taking happens that the pot expands and cracks - the wows of life.

Cracks may happen when something challenging happens and threatens the comfort of everyday - the ows of life.

Cracks can also happen in the stillness and ordinariness of everyday - the nows of life, when a moment of stillness, a pause or prayer creates a crack in the normal, physical every day.

In these special moments there is an opportunity to reflect and become more spiritually aware. In Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken ceramics with golden joinery or glue, creates something even more beautiful from the broken pieces than what it was before. Using this metaphor, the 'wows', 'ows' and 'nows' of life offer the possibility of cracks that are filled with gold and make the pot even more beautiful. The gold in the cracks reflects a little of the wonder of spirituality. As a Primary school we recognise the importance of using age-appropriate vocabulary and when talking and supporting our children to identify significant moments we will/may refer to the wows, ows and nows as identified above. (taken from the Diocese of Gloucester's guidance)

Spirituality is by nature a very personal experience. It differs from person to person, and a person's spirituality can change during their lifetime.

At Ashurst, we recognise that just as we are different people with different ways of seeing and interacting with others and the world around us, there are different ways to worship and to develop spiritually. By worshipping God in our own unique way- the way he made us- we affirm his work as our Creator.

Drawing on Thomas' work on Sacred Pathways (2020) we can begin to plan opportunities for all to encounter a variety of ways to cultivate spirituality, opportunities where we can feel closer to wholeness, and where we can begin to try different routes to travel our own Spiritual Pathways.

Nurturing children as spiritual beings at Ashurst involves not only creating an environment where they can feel free to explore their inner selves, connect with others, and develop a sense of meaning in their lives, but by providing opportunities for them to engage in practices that resonate with them personally.

The nine different Spiritual Pathways and how we support their development at Ashurst.

Naturalists

Those who find and love God most outdoors can be described as Naturalists. These people find spirituality amongst God's creation. They celebrate His majesty and discover spiritual truths through nature.

Opportunities for Naturalists within school include Gardening club, plants in and around the school building, use of natural objects in EYFS for provision, such as maths counters, all weather outdoor provision in EYFS, use of outside spaces, including the field, playground and Kings Grove, class trips, Wednesday Work Out, Sports Club and inter school sports tournaments.

'O Lord, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all; the earth is full of your creatures. Yonder is the sea, great and wide, creeping things innumerable are there, living things both small and great.' Psalm 104:24-25

Sensates

Those who find and love God most through their senses can be described as Sensates. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through sensual experiences — what they see (like art), what they hear (music), what they smell, and what they touch.

Opportunities for sensates within school include inclusion of fragrant herbs (lavender, rosemary and lemon balm) around School House, roles as Worship Warriors, roles of music monitors, the use of lights and music in worship sessions, textile, water painting and craft clubs, constructing and creating across the Music, DT and Art curriculums, visits to Glyndebourne and Worthing Symphony Orchestra, and Music tuition for both individual and class in flute, guitar, saxophone and ukulele.

"That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched - this we proclaim concerning the word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us." (1 John. 1:1-3)

Traditionalists

Those who find and love God through religious ritual and symbols can be described as *Traditionalists*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through traditions and sacraments of the Church. They are most at home with the structure and repetition of weekly liturgy and come to a deeper understanding of God and faith this way.

Opportunities for traditionalists within school include roles as worship warriors, Collective Worship follows the Christian liturgical structure, celebration of Christian traditions, regular visits to St James' Church Ashurst, daily prayers

which provide a rhythm and routine to the school day, class and school routines and celebrations throughout the academic year and participation in school trips and residential as part of our topic cycles.

'What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.' Acts 15:28-29

Ascetics

Those who find and love God most in solitude and simplicity can be described as *Ascetics*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through contemplation, prayer and quiet times, they value the absence of noise and distraction.

Opportunities for ascetics within school include: fundraising events which encourage 'abstinence' including Sponsored silences, moments in the school day for silence and stillness, including during worship and RE sessions, times of the day timetabled for reading in class, as a whole class or in the library and areas of the school where pupils and adults can experience peace and reflect, such as Kings Grove

"Be still and know that I am God. I will be exalted among the nations; I will be exalted in the earth!" Psalm 46:10

Activists

Those who find and love God most through confrontation, fighting for godly principles and values can be described as *Activists*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through their dedication to and participation in social and evangelistic causes.

Opportunities for activists within school include: learning about inspirational figures from all communities through our history curriculum, including: The Windrush generation; Martin Luther King, Mae Jemison, Greta Thunberg, a choice of texts that highlight social injustice and inspirational characters at their core, ensuring pupils' voice is heard by taking minutes, making changes through becoming a Young Ashurst Governor or Worship Warrior, whole school annual 'School Expectations' discussion and writing, and shaping change around causes which are relevant locally and internationally to the children by choosing charities or fundraising events.

'I can do all things in Christ who strengthens me' Philippians 4:13

Caregivers

Those who find and love God most by serving others and giving of themselves can be described as *Caregivers*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through caring for, supporting and empowering those in need.

Opportunities for Caregivers within school include: visiting and packing food boxes at The Wholesome Warehouse, designing and signing Christmas and Easter cards

for local residential care homes, fundraising for Christmas Bazaar, the use of sign language as part of celebrations, the role of Y6 monitors and team captains in supporting younger and new children to make them feel welcome and included, making changes through becoming a Young Ashurst Governor or Worship Warrior. *"Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."*

Matthew 25:40

Enthusiasts

Those who find and love God most through mystery and celebration can be described as *Enthusiasts*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through outward displays of passion and enthusiasm.

Opportunities for enthusiasts within school include: Dance and drama club, singing in worship, half termly celebration assemblies, a range of music used in worships, including gospel and international music. Whole school events, such as Christingle and regular visits to St. James' Church Ashurst encourage togetherness with song and traditions, involvement with Christmas Tree decorating in the locality, locality events such as The Chanctonbury Music Festival, Christ's Hospital Choral Workshop, music tuition for both individual and class in flute, guitar, saxophone and ukulele.

"As surely as I live," says the Lord, "every knee will bow before me; every tongue will acknowledge God." Romans 14:11

"Let them praise his name with dancing and make music to him with timbrel and harp." Psalm 149:3

Contemplatives.

Those who find and love God most through adoration can be described as *Contemplatives*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through attentiveness, a deep love for their fellow men and an active prayer life.

Opportunities for contemplatives within school include: being a Worship Warrior, maintaining the Prayer Board where members of school have space to write their own prayers, learning in RE provides space for children to represent their reflections through art and music, writing and choosing prayers for morning and lunchtime, singing in school worships and praise through movement at Easter service at St James' Church.

"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." John 15:4

Intellectuals

Those who find and love God most with their mind and their hearts are opened to a new attentiveness when they understand something new about God can be

described as *Intellectuals*. They find worship more fulfilling and develop a deeper spiritual connection through intense study and intellectual pursuits of their faith.

Opportunities for intellectuals within school include: Spanish and Puzzle clubs, our ambitious curriculum which encourages reflection, debate and discussion, participation in challenge days at Christs' Hospital including maths and science days, opportunities to advance learning in STEM with Steyning Grammar School. Topic enrichment days and home learning activities that encourage a broadening of knowledge around specific curriculum areas.

'Wisdom will enter your mind, and knowledge will fill you with delight'. Proverbs 2.10

In addition to this we aim to nurture children's spirituality in the following ways:

Encouraging Open Conversations:

Creating safe spaces where children feel comfortable asking questions about life, death, and existence can allow their spiritual curiosity to blossom.

Fostering Connection:

Encouraging deep, meaningful connections with family, friends, and community to support children to feel part of a bigger, interconnected world.

Modelling Spiritual Practices:

Whether through stillness and reflection, prayer, or simply demonstrating compassion and love, modelling spiritual practices helps children find those 'in between time' moments and to learn by example.

Promoting Good Physical and Emotional Health:

Helping children understand how to manage their emotions and develop a healthy lifestyle can support their spiritual growth. Teaching mindfulness, self-awareness, and emotional regulation can create a strong foundation for spiritual development.

We recognise that just as we are all different, so how we express our spiritual awareness may be different, this may include;

- Beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform our perspectives on life and our interest in and respect for different people's feelings and values
- A sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about ourselves, others and the world around us, including the intangible
- Our use of imagination and creativity in learning
- Our willingness to reflect on our experiences

This policy was agreed in:	September 2025
By members of the Spirituality group	
It is due for review on or before September 2027	

