

St Mark's Church of England Early Years and Primary School

*Thy word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.
Psalm 119 Vs 105*



The promotion of Spiritual Development at Our School

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Our vision reflects a Christian understanding of God given to His people through His word revealed in the OT and NT and through the life and teachings of Christ. Psalm 119 speaks both of the characteristics of the scriptures but is also affirms that God's word reflects the very character of God Himself. We read in the psalm of the following attributes given to God: Righteousness, trustworthiness, truthfulness, faithfulness, unchangeable, eternality, light, purity.



Together, we will prepare you for life and learning



Together, we will teach you to live within the values of God's word



Together, we will safely lead you on your journey



Together, we will guide you to a fulfilling future



Together, we will forever help you to grow in confidence.

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Our vision reflects the importance of both the individual and the importance of community. As people, precious to God, He provides a path for us to travel and has a plan for our lives. His word and guiding light lead us onwards into eternity.

Our vision reflects our belief about the world in which we live, that we do not travel it alone but are accompanied by God who enables us all to flourish, recognising our differences and responsibilities towards each other and our world, as we journey together.

Our vision is central in all our decision-making processes. We ensure that the decisions we make will enable our vision to be a living reality in all we do. We believe that high standards in all aspects of our lives, will only be achieved if we demonstrate the importance of living within the values of God's word, when children feel safe to journey towards success and when they are given the opportunity to grow in confidence. We offer a creative and inspiring curriculum which is an expression of our vision in action and our monitoring and evaluation cycle ensures that we have robust and rigorous systems in place that measures the impact of our work against of Christian vision and distinctiveness.



Our Intent:

To develop in each child:

- A sense of self-worth stemming from the recognition that they are created in the image of God.
- A sense of being in relationship with others and a growing understanding of what it means to belong to a community.
- An involvement with others in the wider world and an appreciation of difference and diversity.
- A response to the distinctive ethos of a Church school and the content, language and symbolism of the Christian faith as a way of understanding our meaning and purpose in life.
- A willingness to explore Christian beliefs and values through a knowledge of Bible stories and Christian teaching in order that these might become a firm foundation for life.
- The ability to reflect upon experiences of awe, compassion, beauty, wonder
- The ability to persist and understand that experiences of disappointment, failure and loss can be occasions for spiritual growth and development
- A capacity to value the natural world and a commitment to care for creation
- A willingness to explore the ultimate questions and mysteries of life.



Implementation:

At St Mark's, we seek to find ways in which all areas of the curriculum can contribute to pupil's spiritual development and to highlight opportunities for these in our planning, collective worship, the learning environment and any other opportunities that we can celebrate spirituality.

- We seek to foster spiritual gifts, e.g.. imagination, insight and empathy.
- We allow children the opportunity to explore and express feelings and emotions, both in class and around the school by using prayer and reflection areas.
- We provide opportunities for prayer including silence, stillness and reflection.
- We share feelings and experiences that foster hope and joy, reassurance and encouragement.
- We encourage children to develop relationships based on the Christian values of love, forgiveness and service to others.
- We enable children to make the links between biblical values, the life of the school, our church relationships and the wider community.



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The promotion of Spiritual Development at Our School

Our whole school community have been involved in writing our definition of spirituality. Through pupil and adult voice, we feel that:

Spirituality is an appreciation and cherishing of what is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful, and, in relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving.

The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and praise, in endeavor and enquiry.

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experience beyond the everyday.


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At St. Mark's, spirituality is at the 'heart' of our school. It is how we understand ourselves and our place in the world - recognising strengths, areas for development and having the confidence to challenge ourselves.


We care for the local and global community and our Christian values underpin our learning and encourage children to ask the 'Big Questions'.

Aspect	Evidence	School Voice
<p>What is good, joyful, truthful and beautiful</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working together as a school community to celebrate and share other individuals' successes and achievements beyond the school gate • Long lasting relationships – Four members of staff are ex pupils • Celebration assembly and End of term awards acknowledge achievement and progress • Open door policy invites every parent in on a daily basis to be part of their child's journey. • Daily website updates and fortnightly newsletter • Opportunities to participate in whole school experiences of Music and drama • Whole School Services/Performances Sport Opportunities • Family homework projects and presentations • Extensive opportunity to participate in a varied After School Club Provision • The opportunity to participate and experience the vibrant and enriched school curriculum which is broad and balanced and designed for the development of the 'whole child' The opportunity to share and also participate in 'real life experience <p>Source evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website • Newsletter • Displays around the school • Class floor books • After School offer 	<p>The love shines through this school everyday-Bex Dayes (parent)</p> <p>A child's toothless smile -Karen (Admin)</p> <p>My school is generous in all it provides me with. -Lily Rose</p> <p>This nursery teaches good morals and compassion. They provide a trusting and joyful environment for both children and parents. As a Christian they teach the same life lessons and ideas that I support. Children here are curious and energetic, which the teachers engage with brilliantly. Johanna (parent)</p> <p>Praying and thanking Jesus at meal times. -Rochelle (parent)</p> <p>Everyone is singing from the same hymn sheet. There is consistency of expectations and responses from all adults. -Tracey Campbell (Behaviour Consultant)</p>

Aspect	Evidence	School Voice
<p>In relationship with others, of what is generous, creative and loving.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The promotion of positive relationships with others • Trauma informed practice • The positive promotion of our school Vision, creating an ethos which is conducive to our distinctive Christian ethos where everyone is recognised as being unique and special in their own way and all contributing to the success of the school • The teaching about Jesus and Christian values to enhance the theological understanding of living a good life • The celebration of Collective Worship • The establishing of high behavioural and academic standards / expectations where all recognise that they have a part to play in the success • The celebration of effort and achievement • Circle time /Big Questions/Curriculum Themed Weeks / Self/Peer Evaluation • Through staff discussions at Pupil Progress Meetings celebrating achievements and identification of developmental points <p>Source evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupil Progress Meeting • Collective Worship • Behaviour analysis • Celebration assemblies and end of term awards • Staff training • Questionnaires • School website • Displays around the school 	<p>Children know what is good and what is bad. -Yesim (admin)</p> <p>It is great to have our parent and staff prayer group -Steve (Prem Manager)</p> <p>St Mark's is a school that understands children. Reflection time helps us to understand ourselves. -Sharday (Y5)</p> <p>The lunchtime nurture group is a great example of children working together regardless of age or ability. -Wendy (PP Phase 2 TA)</p> <p>The absence of school is a hole in the lives of our children. -Jamal (EY TA)</p>

Aspect	Evidence	School Voice
<p>The spirit of a person is seen in acts of courage and perseverance, in dealing with both setbacks and praise, in endeavour and enquiry.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective Worship Stories (Bible and Multi- Cultural) • Living our vision and following Christian values • An open door policy that welcomes parents in each day, giving them time and space without feeling singled out to talk with staff • Links to Local/National/International News discussions • JLT application and interview process • Clear, set out rules, firmly embedded which give respect and relationships high standing. • The development of understanding why we support Charities and the need for Charities • Courageous advocacy • Participation in PSHE and Circle Time • Exploration of personal loss – family members / pets • End of term awards-recognising failure or not achieving is part of learning and character development. • Behaviour policy is model of good practice. Within Islington LA <p>Source evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE Books • Collective Worship • Roles and responsibilities given through work within school ie JLT, School Council, Y6 Monitors • The 'Big Question' corridor display 	<p>There is always lots of support, encouragement, reassurance and empathy from adults and other children-everyone is very supportive. -Romy (TA)</p> <p>Children have an intrinsic curiosity and radiate religious literacy. -Fiona (Governor)</p> <p>Children understand because staff put themselves in the childrens' shoes. Romy (TA)</p> <p>Spirituality to me means, as an educator, providing children opportunities, through creativity, enjoyment and imagination, an exploration of their roles as citizens, their relationships and an appreciation of our beautiful world. Miss Michael Y4</p> <p>Time to have that stillness and calm time to be at one with yourself. Mrs Lockwood (Y3)</p>

Aspect	Evidence	School Voice
<p>Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experience beyond the everyday.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding 'thy word' as a whole school vision in which we all can flourish • Being part of the community of St. Mark's school and providing the opportunities in line with our vision to 'prepare, lead, teach, guide and grow together' • Providing educational school visits to different places of worship to develop and deepen the pupils understanding /experiences of the community and world in which they live and the contribution they can make to living in an harmonious community / society • Making regular visits to St. Mark's Church to listen and learn from the Church team all about the role the Church and its community plays in our everyday lives • Developing an awareness of world in which we live through our global links Developing children to be courageous advocates who make a positive difference through their courageous actions • Experiencing inspirational speakers and visitors to St. Mark's and hearing firsthand about their personal experiences and the impact they have made through courageous actions and how it can inspire the young individuals • Developing the knowledge and understanding of our faith and the faith of others in Collective Worship • The interactive and innovative use of resources to support a creative and vibrant learning environment • The sharing of real-life experiences and opportunities via inspirational speakers and drama theatre workshops. <p>Source evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE Books • Collective Worship planning • The 'Big Question' classroom display • Collective worship monitoring and feedback • School website 	<p>The children never fail to amaze me with their questions or their responses-St Mark's children are amazing -Collette (TA)</p> <p>Children are very reflective and intuitive in thought when thinking spiritually. -Lance (Sports Coach)</p> <p>Child of the week is focused on scripture. -Comet (parent)</p> <p>Spirituality is having a connection with nature and the natural world around us. It is understanding why we are here and our place in the world, as well as being at peace with ourselves in this path. -Miss Adams Rec class</p> <p>In school, we allow the children time to be still and reflect on themselves, their lives and what is important to them. I think it's important to have many opportunities built into the daily routine for this to happen. In Year two this includes daily meditation or having a chance to go into our reflection area. while there, children are able to write a prayer which goes into our class prayer book and is prayed on by the parents and staff prayer group. -Miss Godden Y2</p>

Aspect	Evidence	School Voice
<p>Spiritual learners search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The fulfilment, delivery and understanding of the LDBS RE Curriculum in our school which provides an in-depth overview of Christianity and other world faiths Providing time for reflection and spiritual dialogue through the 'Big Questions' & the opportunity to develop self-review • Providing opportunities for the pupils to experience RE related trips and visits to enhance their developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths • Whole class and school Collective Worship and the development of the understanding of Christian values • Creative and in-depth planning and delivery of stimulating RE Lessons which inspires pupils to learn and develop their knowledge and understanding of their faith and the faith of others and in so doing, equipping them with the knowledge and understanding of the diverse and rich cultural and spiritual community / world in which they live • Developing and promoting an understanding of Christianity and the relationships and the impact they have upon individual lives both in the present and moving forward into the future equipping them with the appropriate skills for adulthood • The vibrant and distinctive RE displays throughout the school which celebrates the high quality of teaching and learning available to the pupils and further enhances the environment in which they learn • A celebration of the distinctive Christian nature through Church services and the development of a respect for spiritual ritual and actions as a young individual and instilling the understanding that is transferrable into adulthood. <p>Source evidence:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned RE Curriculum Map • School website • School Trips • Workshops portfolio • Vibrant and colourful displays around the school 	<p>The daily check in our class means everyone has the opportunity to discuss how they're feeling. Everyone feels valued and equal. -Sharday (Y5)</p> <p>Big questions help to explore the purpose of life. -Mrs Bearfoot (SENDCo)</p> <p>Children are given the tools through RE and P4SE to explore who they are and how they fit into the world. The older they are the more complex this discovery becomes. -Nik (TA)</p> <p>I really appreciate the scripture focus in the newsletters. -Comet (Nursery and Y1 parent)</p>