

St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School

School Development Plan

Vision & Objectives 2026 - 2027

School Development Committee & Full Governing Body – September 2026

SUMMARY COPY [APPROVED]

AGREED BY GOVERNING BODY ON: 1st October 2026

“Let all that you do be done in love.”
1 Corinthians 16:14



1

Christian Distinctiveness & Spirituality:

To extend and embed a shared understanding, language and approach to spirituality across the whole curriculum, ensuring that all staff intentionally identify, plan for and maximise opportunities for spiritual development, enabling children to flourish and articulate their spiritual growth with increasing confidence and depth.

[This is in direct response to the SIAMS inspection report - January 2026]

- To respond to the **SIAMS inspection development point** – ‘Extend the shared understanding and language of spirituality across the curriculum. This is to ensure that opportunities are identified and used effectively to support pupils’ spiritual development’.
- To continue to embed the principles of a whole-school spirituality framework through implementation of our **Spirituality Policy**, ensuring this is consistently implemented and understood by all staff.
- To incorporate and further embed a shared understanding and language for spirituality based around the **Mirrors, Windows, Doors** approach (e.g. *Self, Others, Beauty, Beyond*)
- To see **implicit and explicit evidence of spiritual development** referenced with curriculum planning and intent documents and considered in longer term Subject Leader planning sequences.
- To begin a more evidence based approach to Subject Leaders **auditing and mapping progressive opportunities for spiritual development** within their curriculum areas.
- To continue to provide staff with **professional development opportunities on spirituality** in order for them to confidently articulate the school’s definition and approach.

2

EYFS – Language Acquisition: To develop and embed consistently high-quality adult-child interactions across the Early Years Foundation Stage through the implementation of the ShREC (Share Attention, Respond, Expand, Conversation) approach, ensuring all practitioners use evidence-informed conversational strategies to enhance children's communication, language, thinking and engagement.

- To actively engage in the **RISE (Regional Improvement for Standards and Excellence) Reception Network Hub**, led by The Wickford Church of England School, to upskill our EYFS practitioners on the ShREC approach and understand the principles and importance of high-quality conversational interaction.
- To establish a **culture of collaborative professional learning** through regular EYFS team reflection, peer coaching and shared evaluation of impact. To ensure the EYFS Team Leader leads ongoing implementation, coaching and monitoring throughout the academic year.
- To develop a system of regular (once a term) **EYFS peer observation**, coaching and reflective dialogue focussing on rich, structured adult-child interactions supporting the principles of ShREC.
- To embed more regular, **planned learning walks and interaction audits** to see ShREC strategies in action – sharing attention with children; responding sensitively and contingently; expanding children’s language and vocabulary; sustaining meaningful interactive (back-and-forth) conversation.
- To observe increased staff confidence and expertise in supporting **early language development** within the school’s context and community.

3

Writing - Transcription (Handwriting and Spelling): To establish and embed a consistent, evidence-informed whole-school approach to the explicit teaching of handwriting and transcription (handwriting and spelling), ensuring that all children develop fluent, legible and automatic transcription skills that reduce cognitive load and enable successful composition across the curriculum.

- To explore further the principles of ‘*The Writing Framework*’ – (DfE July 2025), providing professional development opportunities on effective transcription instruction, including handwriting fluency, spelling automaticity, modelling and dictation.
- To agree a clearly **sequenced handwriting and transcription progression** to be implemented and consistently modelled and followed from EYFS/Reception to Year 6.
- To agree and implement a whole-school ‘**Ready to Write**’ routine for posture, pencil grip, paper positioning and presentation, observed and embedded in every classroom.
- To ensure teachers/LSAs explicitly **model letter formation, handwriting routines and spelling strategies** during English lessons using agreed handwriting and transcription practices.
- To monitor **daily/regular discrete handwriting instruction** in all year groups in line with the school’s agreed writing progression framework and expectations of pedagogical language.
- To rapidly identify children experiencing **transcription difficulties** and adapt/differentiate provision appropriately.
- To systematically use **dictation strategies** across the school to strengthen spelling, handwriting fluency and transcription automaticity.



4

Responsive and Adaptive Teaching: To further develop responsive and adaptive teaching by improving the use of verbal feedback, assessing knowledge with planned 'Hinge Questions' and scrutinising challenges to ensure adaptations are broadening and deepening thinking for all children throughout all lessons.

- To establish a **consistent approach to responsive teaching**, through regular phase team discussion, planning and implementation of hinge questions.
- To use the terminology '**verbal feedback**' consistently in class, both written (VF) and verbally, to promote a better understanding for children to develop their work further and show the changes intended.
- To work with teaching staff to find ways to **evidence and demonstrate the impact of verbal feedback** in books and monitor this for consistency across phases and the school collaboratively.
- To establish a **culture of collaborative professional learning to enhance adaptive teaching**, through regular phase team scrutiny, reflection, discussion and implementation of development of challenges linked to learning objectives using Bloom's Taxonomy to scaffold deeper and broader thinking. To ensure the Phase Team Leaders lead ongoing monitoring, reflection and improvement throughout the academic year.
- To work with staff to **develop working patterns and communication between teachers and learning support assistants**, using hinge questions and other assessment for learning strategies within lessons, to select groups of children who would benefit from '**double teach sessions**' to move their learning on, ensuring rapid and consistent progress through rotational support.

5

Attendance Provision and Monitoring: To continue to demonstrate our commitment to supporting strong and regular attendance for all children, so that they receive an excellent education, by working exceptionally hard in partnership with Aquinas Attendance Provision in response to the statutory guidance set out in the updated DfE document '*Working Together to Improve School Attendance – July 2026*'.

- To work in partnership and collaboration with **Aquinas Attendance Provision** to raise attendance levels (95%+) and continue to reduce persistent absence/severe absence across the school through early intervention strategies to sustain regular attendance at school.
- To work with Aquinas in promoting the **importance of regular school attendance** with our parent/carer community and recognising the importance of reducing absence and overcoming barriers so children are able to reach their full potential.
- To continue to use a more **robust and structured approach to attendance management** through early intervention, school-based attendance meetings and signposting/liaison with other specialist agencies – this will include: Aquinas completing challenging face-to-face conversations with parents/carers, completion of home visit assessments, issuing of legal warning letters and/or attendance agreement contracts, and issuing of Penalty Notices as a last resort.
- To use the DfE '**View Your Education Data**' [VYED] to be more reactive in terms of **undertaking and reporting expert attendance data analysis** – this will include: reasons/patterns for absence, impact of term time holidays, progress on persistent absence and overall attendance, the attendance gap between PPG and non-PPG pupils, SEND and non-SEND...etc, the effectiveness of current school practices/policy and audits on coding practices.
- To work with **staff to promote better understanding of their role in improving school attendance** by building strong relationships and working jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.

6

TPP for Families: To empower parents and carers with the same trauma-informed knowledge, language, and emotional wellbeing strategies used in schools, helping them understand behaviour as communication and foster a supportive home environment.

- To deliver a time-limited (6 modules/weeks) **group learning course** for multiple families and, where more appropriate, to deliver a **targeted intervention course** for one family. TPP for Families Facilitators to work in partnership to support our higher need families.
- To support parents/carers to better understand and support the themes of **Anxiety, Resilience, Self-Esteem and Emotional Regulation**.
- To **Share Consistent Language**: Equip families with the same relational vocabulary and co-regulation tools used by school staff.
- To **Understand Behaviour**: Shift perspectives to view children's challenging behaviour as a functional communication of underlying needs rather than something to punish.
- To **Build Stronger Connections**: Promote core values of compassion, hope, connection, and belonging to strengthen the relationship between parents/carers and children at home.



Success Criteria

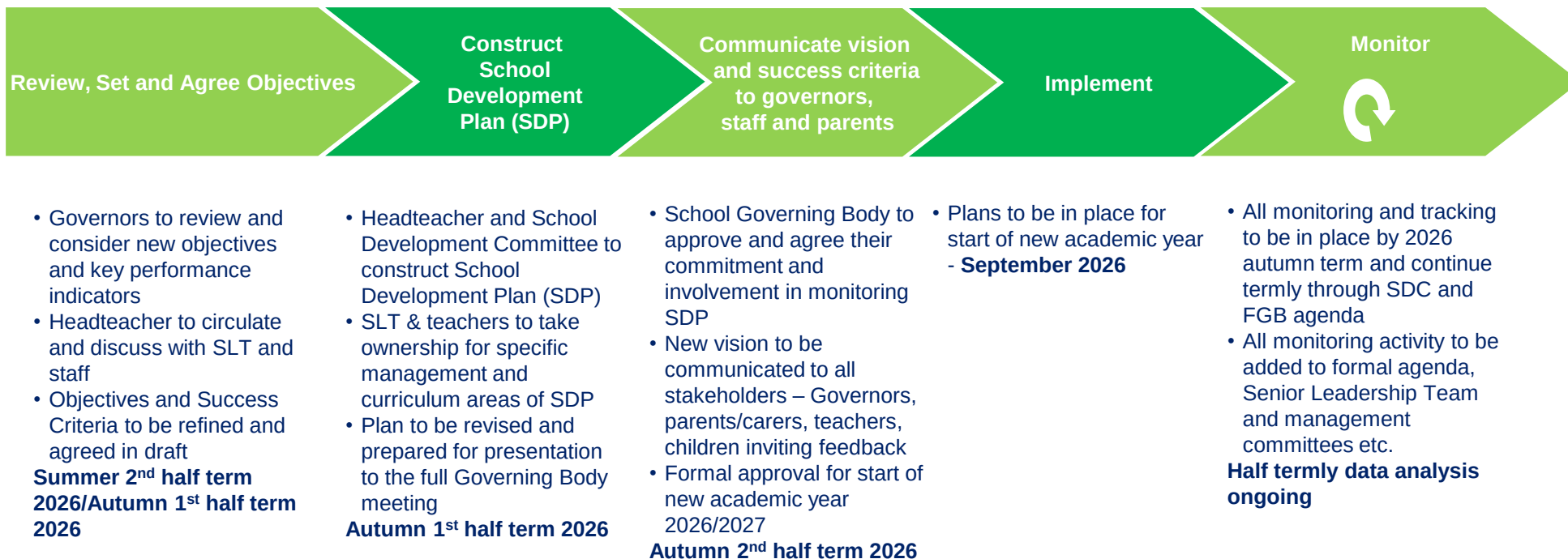
- ✓ Lesson drop-ins, planning scrutiny and monitoring evidence will demonstrate that staff consistently identify and utilise opportunities for spiritual development across curriculum subjects. *(beginning of Autumn Term 1 & ongoing)*
 - ✓ Staff will consistently use agreed spiritual vocabulary, in line with Spirituality Policy, when planning, teaching and discussing children's development *(beginning of Autumn Term 1 & ongoing)*
 - ✓ Planning will identify meaningful opportunities for spiritual development, including reflection and deeper thinking (Mirrors); encountering and exploring awe, wonder and mystery (Windows); response, action and creative expression (Doors). *(end of Autumn Term 1)*
- ✓ Through ambitious curriculum planning and teaching, children will experience progressively deeper opportunities to engage with big questions, reflection, imagination, creativity, relationships and meaning. *(end of Autumn Term 1)*
 - ✓ Children will be able to confidently explain what spirituality means in the context of our school, using agreed language to discuss their experiences and recognizing spiritual opportunities in a range of curriculum subjects, not solely RE and Collective Worship. *(beginning of Spring 1)*
- ✓ Spiritual development evidence will be captured through pupil voice, curriculum displays, class reflection records and examples of children's outcomes *(end of Autumn Term 2 & ongoing)*
 - ✓ By July 2027, spirituality will be a visible and intentional thread woven through the curriculum and daily life of the school. *(end of Summer 2)*
- ✓ Observational evidence will demonstrate an increase in the frequency and quality of sustained shared thinking and multi-turn conversations between adults and children *(end of Autumn 1 and ongoing)*
- ✓ Children will show measurable improvement in communication and language outcomes, with an increased proportion working at age-related expectations by the end of Reception compared with the 2025-2026 cohort. *(end of Autumn Term 2 and ongoing)*
 - ✓ Children's language-rich interactions will be visible across continuous provision, resulting in increased opportunities for talk, reasoning, questioning and vocabulary development. *(end of Autumn Term 2 and ongoing)*
- ✓ Targeted children, including disadvantaged children and those with identified speech, language and communication needs, will demonstrate improved engagement, vocabulary use and participation in conversations, evidenced through assessment and intervention records. *(end of Autumn Term 2 and ongoing)*
- ✓ Pupil voice, learning observations, EYFS planning agendas/coaching records and EYFS assessment data will provide evidence that the implementation of ShREC is positively impacting on children's communication and language development *(end of Autumn Term 1 and ongoing)*
- ✓ Regular termly assessment evidence will demonstrate improved transcription fluency, enabling children longer periods of writing and able to focus more effectively on composition. *(end of Autumn Term 2 and ongoing)*
- ✓ Regular workbook scrutiny at SLT meetings will clearly show improved consistency in handwriting legibility, letter formation, spacing and presentation across the curriculum, not just in English/Assessed Write books. *(end of Autumn Term 1 and ongoing)*
 - ✓ Pupil voice will demonstrate increased confidence and positive attitudes towards writing *(end of Autumn Term 1 and ongoing)*
 - ✓ Children identified as a risk of falling behind in handwriting of spelling will receive timely, targeted support and intervention through adaptive teaching approaches. *(end of Autumn Term 1 and ongoing)*
- ✓ The proportion of children achieving age-related expectations in handwriting and presentation will increase across all year groups from standards seen in 2025-2026 baseline. *(end of Summer Term 2 and ongoing)*
- ✓ By July 2027, transcription will no longer be a significant barrier to writing for the majority of children, with improved fluency, legibility and automaticity evident across the school, enabling children to devote greater cognitive capacity to composition and the communication of ideas. *(end of Summer Term 2)*



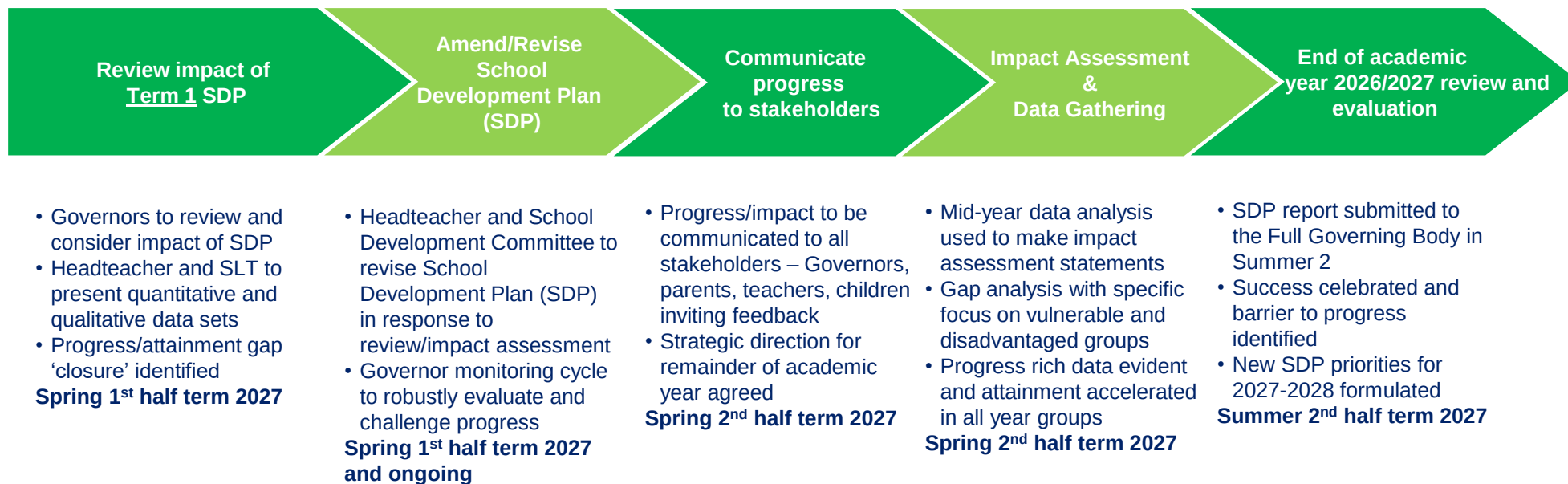
- ✓ Hinge questions will be planned for within phases/year groups and used to establish children's understanding before moving learning on and ensuring misconceptions are corrected quickly. *(ongoing termly)*
 - ✓ Observational evidence, book notations of 'VF' and pupil discussion will demonstrate a more consistent use of the terminology of 'verbal feedback' and its intended meaning in each learning development point. *(end of Spring Term 2)*
 - ✓ *Verbal feedback will be evidenced frequently in books with the code 'VF' and pupil learning development will be seen in response to the discussion with the member of teaching staff. (end of Spring Term 2)*
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- ✓ Planning scrutiny will demonstrate more effective tasks and activities to develop children's learning and understanding focused on the main lesson learning objective. Challenges will link to the learning objective and clearly demonstrate how the children's learning will deepen and broaden through Bloom's Taxonomy (Remember, Understand, Apply, Analyse, Evaluate and Create). *(end of Autumn Term 1)*
 - ✓ In lesson observations and drop-ins evidence of a synergy between teaching staff and LSAs will be apparent, with clear direction from the teacher of what to look for when assessing children's progress within the lesson. Key hinge questions or review markers will be clear and adults will be able to make decisive choices as a team to support progression for groups of children in a responsive manner, gathering groups for double teach sessions to consolidate or move learning on. *(end of Spring Term 2)*
 - ✓ Teachers will plan double teach sessions into lessons based on prior AfL to ensure passive learning does not take place as part of their adaptive teaching. *(end of Autumn Term 1)*
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- ✓ The school will agree and sign a full academic year attendance service level package with Aquinas Attendance Provision based on a model of support including 2 x ½ day support visits per half term to meet the school's attendance monitoring procedures. *(beginning of Autumn Term 1)*
 - ✓ The school will maintain progress towards improving and achieving its overall attendance outcome target (95%+) and proactively target families where concerns emerge around irregular school attendance patterns and high levels of unexplained sickness absence. *(end of Autumn Term 2 and ongoing)*
 - ✓ Working in partnership with Aquinas, conversations with parents/carers will be held that involve potentially difficult conversations between the Attendance Officer and parents/carers, whilst maintaining positive relations with school-based staff focused on a 'support first' approach *(beginning of Autumn Term 1)*
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- ✓ The reporting and attendance pattern analysis will be utilised through the DfE 'View Your Education Data' [VYED] to spot and track attendance trends and respond quickly and proactively, taking necessary legal action as a last resort. *(twice half termly/termly attendance data scrutiny)*
 - ✓ The wider staff will have a better understanding of their role in promoting improved school attendance and more proactively and obviously build strong, trusted relationships with families to understand and remove barriers to attendance. *(ongoing termly)*
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- ✓ TPP for Families Facilitators will complete Facilitator Training ahead of the start of the academic year. *(Summer Term 2026)*
 - ✓ TPP for Families Facilitators, working in partnership, will identify families for whom TPP for Families would offer a supportive, non-judgemental intervention and programme of support. *(Autumn Term 1)*
 - ✓ TPP for Families Facilitators will offer a 1-hour Awareness Session to parent community - targeted and invite only at this stage. *(Autumn Term 2)*
 - ✓ Staff CPD session will focus on sharing the policy and principle behind TPP for Families and the Core Values that underpin this – Compassion and Kindness; Hope; Connection and Belonging. All staff understand the link to our TPP policy and practice in school. *(Spring Term 1)*
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- ✓ Practice will show families identified for either group or individual sessions of intervention are attending their 6-week intervention, demonstrating commitment with full attendance. *(Spring Term, Summer Term)*
 - ✓ TPP for Families will be an approach supporting parents/carers across the whole school which supplements and enhances our practice in TPP, Ready to Regulate, our Character Education Policy, SEND Policy, SEND Information Report (School Offer), Inclusion Strategy and Pupil Premium Strategy Statement. *(Summer Term 2, Autumn Term 2027)*
 - ✓ Targeted parents/carers will demonstrate an understanding of how to effectively support children. *(Summer Term 2)*
 - ✓ TPP for Families will be available to support all children, not just 'trauma children'. *(Summer Term 2)*



School Development Plan – 2026/2027



School Development Plan – 2026/2027 (continued)



Christian community where children are known by name and loved, which empowers them to learn and to grow in faith, knowledge and fellowship.

