



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy

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Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

Introduction

The purpose of this policy is to clarify our understanding of children's personal development and to outline the opportunities and experiences which we give our pupils to promote their spiritual, moral, social and cultural growth.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development make up a significant dimension of each child's personal development. Therefore, first we will consider the whole context of children's personal development and then we will consider each area separately.

Personal Development

Our British education system has a two-fold aim: to develop pupils both academically and personally. The academic requirements are contained within the National Curriculum but the values upheld and shared by the school need to be agreed amongst all staff, parents, governors and children. These values will reflect those of the society which pays for the education, and those of the members of the school community.

The role of the school is to help pupils understand the moral maze and equip them to reach maturity with the ability to make personal decisions based upon sound judgements.

Two interwoven strands of school life combine to create the environment in which our children develop: firstly, the personal relationships established in the school and secondly the emphasis that is placed upon the way the curriculum material is presented.

The quality of the relationships established between all those working in the school and the many visitors we welcome is crucial to the personal development of the children. By having high expectations of the interactions between all individuals we are ensuring that we recognise the value placed upon each individual in the school and the right that everyone has to be treated with respect. Teachers working in a climate of co-operation and discipline can offer their pupils the secure and happy environment in which they can thrive. Pupils' relationships with each other should reflect the belief that each child has the right to be respected and any incident of discrimination, bullying, vandalism, racial or sexual harassment, or anti-social behaviour will be treated very seriously and in line with our Behaviour Policy.

Our Behaviour and Management of Bullying Policies identify our expectations and our positive approach that encourages children to develop self-control. However, the policies also list the range of strategies and consequences that can be used if necessary to reinforce our expectations should a child persistently disregard the values upheld by the school. We believe that it is essential that the children experience a consistent approach to behaviour management and are helped to understand the purpose of our values, rules and learning habits, known as 'the 7 Habits'.

For the school to create an appropriate climate of co-operation and respect, it is essential for us to be working closely with parents who are fully informed about the school's behaviour policy. We believe that the positive and inclusive atmosphere is evident to parents when they visit the school and the quality of relationships which children and parents establish with adults in school helps to promote a sense of community.

Parents will be informed if their child's behaviour is causing concern and the school will work together with parents / carers to support and reinforce the values that the school is upholding. We will always endeavour to work closely with parents and develop consistent expectations both at home and at school.

Evidence that the school ethos is promoting the children's personal development includes:

- the clear expectations modelled by teachers and demonstrated by children.
- the care and respect members of the school display towards each other.
- the adherence to the Policy on Equality and Diversity and British Values.
- the whole Federation use of the principles enshrined in the Leader in Me, including the 7 Habits.
- upholding inspirational leaders that reflect the diversity of our community and model our values and ethos.
- the consistent application of the Behaviour Policy and school expectations.
- the development of responsibilities e.g.: class jobs, Lighthouse Leaders, House Captains, Sports Leaders.
- the value placed upon the children's work and the quality of the school environment.

The second strand, which makes a significant contribution to the personal development of the children, is the curriculum. Areas of the curriculum such as PSHCE, RSE, RE and assemblies make an overt contribution to children's personal development. However, all subjects should be taught with sensitivity to, and an awareness that, we must develop attitudes and values of a worthwhile nature and avoid prejudice or indoctrination. Appropriate presentation of the curriculum should allow for moral debate and personal reflection. For example, the choice of literature read to classes should encourage discussion, the teaching of history should explore values and personal motivation, and exploring environmental issues will raise the need to make personal choices. The values embedded in the 7 Habits are woven into our teaching and used to enhance learning.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development may be seen as the most contentious and difficult area of personal development to define and develop. Through our staff discussion we hope we have reached a consensus of opinion that is comprehensible and comfortable for all staff.

Spiritual development is related to the 'inner life' of a child and is often characterised by reflection upon the ultimate questions. Our understanding is that both those who adhere to traditional views of spirituality and those who view spirituality as the development of the human spirit in a humanistic form can support our definition of spiritual development as a quest for meaning.

Spirituality is not synonymous with religious development. There is no intention that we should be giving children a set of beliefs but instead we should be promoting curiosity, openness, reflection and open-ended enquiry about issues related to themselves and life's ultimate questions.

Our curriculum supports pupils' spiritual development both through the knowledge and ideas the children encounter and through the skills they develop as they do so. Opportunities to use and develop key learning skills such as investigating, problem-solving, creating, communicating and evaluating help our children to become the most inquisitive, reflective, thoughtful and expressive individuals that they can be.

Within the curriculum, individual subject areas have particular roles to play in spiritual development. Religious Education makes a contribution because the religions that are studied pose questions and

answers to the important questions of life. However, all areas of the curriculum can also contribute. For example:

- aesthetic appreciation of Art and Music,
- the achievement of a physical challenge in PE,
- the wonder of the natural world in Science,
- the fulfilment of reaching a conclusion to a problem in Mathematics,
- empathy developed through reading and discussing literature, or studying the values and beliefs of people from other times and places in History and Geography.

Our teaching will promote these experiences but because of the unique personal nature of each child's responses to these experiences it will never be possible to evaluate our true success.

The school's responsibility is to use ethos, values, curriculum and collective worship to promote each child's personal response and to give children time to explore and reflect upon issues. The answers the children eventually choose to adopt for themselves may be totally different from the beliefs of those who taught them, but by developing the children's powers of evaluation and reflection we hope that they will be equipped to face their own personal search for meaning.

Moral Education

Moral education in schools refers to the development of the children's ability to understand the differences between right and wrong and to act accordingly. Through giving children the chance to explore issues and personally reflect upon the consequences of actions it is hoped that they will develop the ability to make rational decisions based upon knowledge and to match their behaviour to their beliefs.

We hope to encourage children to think through why and how they should behave so that eventually they may become independent, responsible global citizens.

The school will promote moral education through the example set by the adults in school and by the clear and consistent moral framework that reflects the values which are generally considered to be common to all civilised cultures and belief systems. The delivery of the curriculum and the development of skills will also prepare the children to address more complex moral issues.

As discussed in the section on personal development, the quality of the relationships established in school underpins the development of the individual and influences the child's personal growth. This is clearly the case in issues related to moral education and the example set by the adults in school will give the children an opportunity to witness the values being demonstrated: for example, the respect for individuals, and the respect for property.

The moral framework within which we all operate allows us to ensure the children receive consistent messages and experiences.

The school values are symbolised and shared in the following way:



The values will also be reflected in the mission statement that each teacher agrees with his/her class at the beginning of the school year. We have three simple rules that are ‘Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe.’

Moral issues and our moral framework will be explored through assembly materials and opportunities will be given for children to reflect upon the values upheld and the behaviour which is desirable. These themes allow us to reflect together, both as a whole school community and in age-appropriate groups, on particular values, why we might hold them and how they work themselves out in school and beyond. More information about assemblies is available on our school websites. We have also used the 7 Habits as the basis for our assemblies and reward systems. Thus ensuring the whole school community has a shared language to use when discussing these issues. The principles of our values system is shared on our school and Federation websites. .

The curriculum affords many opportunities to extend the children’s moral thinking. Religious Education is an example of a subject that can offer an opportunity to review a range of moral codes and to consider the idea that members of a believing community will uphold a set of moral beliefs and will act accordingly. Children will discover the similarities and differences in the moral codes followed by a range of different faiths and those with no faith.

Other areas of the curriculum also contribute to the child’s moral development and help them explore the moral implications of the subject matter. This can clearly be seen in PSHCE when children use drama and discussion to reflect upon many complex moral issues. In Geography environmental issues pose interesting dilemmas. Science, technology, literature and current affairs can all stimulate discussions about ethical issues.

The primary school curriculum offers opportunities for children to develop skills such as decision taking, investigating and analysis of facts. These must be well refined and combined with self-confidence and self-discipline if eventually children are to achieve the degree of moral autonomy

that will enable them to make their own judgements and behave according to their own beliefs and principles guided by the moral framework of the school.

Social Development

Pupils' social development refers to pupils' acquisition of knowledge, understanding, attitudes and abilities which will prepare them to play a full part in society. This involves children gaining knowledge of the institutional structures of society. It also includes helping children to experience opportunities to contribute to activities within the school and the wider community.

Our PSHCE curriculum provides the foundation for our work on social development while materials and attitudes presented in assemblies, extra curricular activities and through our school ethos all promote the values of social development.

A key to social development within the primary school is the development of the children's self-esteem. Through encouraging the children to have confidence in their own skills, attitudes and opinions we can seek to lead them from potentially egocentric members of our nursery class to reflective members of Year 6. We aim to develop children who can listen to and evaluate the opinions of others, express themselves clearly and contribute positively to the life of the school and beyond.

The PSHCE curriculum in the Early Years Foundation Stage focuses on developing the children's relationships with others and their understanding of themselves and their emotions. As they progress through the school the children learn to discuss their views and opinions. They develop skills which will promote their sense of self worth and will help them cope with peer pressure. The work in PSHCE eventually leads to a consideration of rights and responsibilities and an exploration of the structures of the wider society.

Other areas of the curriculum also contribute to the children's social development.

These include opportunities to develop:

- the skills of effective group discussion and collaboration, e.g. through debates in English, practical experiments in Science, or design briefs in Design and Technology
- empathy through learning from the experiences of others, e.g. from the study of literature in English, or of particular historical periods or different world and community religions in the humanities
- a sense of interconnectedness and global citizenship, e.g. through the study of other countries and cultures in Geography, or via our International School link

The evidence that the school ethos is promoting personal development, which is outlined on page 2, also provides us with a clear view of the community the school wishes to develop. We want to give children the opportunity to experience a stimulating and safe environment where everyone is valued and respected.

Through the school rules and expectations, clearly expressed by all staff, we endeavour to give children an understanding of the need for structures within organisations. By encouraging children to contribute to the making of classroom rules and by explaining the purpose of making rules we hope to promote co-operation and respect.

The atmosphere promotes respect for each individual and helps to create an understanding of each person's needs and rights. The guidance offered in the Policy for Equality and Diversity and our work on British Values ensures that we plan to meet the needs of each child.

As pupils work in groups or in pairs, they are learning social roles such as co-operation, partnership, leadership and responsibility. They learn to respond to the ideas of others and the meaning of a common purpose. Playtimes also give children opportunities to develop social skills and learn to make friendships.

A wide variety of additional opportunities are offered in school to promote a sense of responsibility and to give children the chance to experience positive involvement in the school community. A variety of clubs are organised during the school day and after school and that are reviewed on a termly basis. They all give children the opportunity to contribute to the work of a team and learn the importance of co-operation. Children also organise their own clubs around a personal interest and are supported by staff. Residential trips, which take place during Year 6, are a chance for children to enhance their relationships with each other and other adults.

Through Lighthouse Group Meetings, children in Years 1 to 6 take part in practical democratic thinking in school. These meetings are opportunities for children to share their ideas, listen to the views of others, contribute to the organisation and ethos of their class and (via their Lighthouse representatives) make contributions to the shaping of wider school life.

The appointment of House Captains in Year 6 and Pupil Lighthouse Group members from Year 1 upwards gives the children a chance to take on responsibilities and to make a positive contribution to decision making. The election of these members also gives the children the opportunity to experience democracy in action. The fund raising activities which the children undertake help to develop their sense of responsibility and give them an appreciation of the needs of others.

We also enjoy the opportunity to take part in activities in the wider community such as the school choir taking part in annual community celebrations and maintaining links with the elderly people who live close by in the local care home.

Cultural Development

When we consider cultural development in our school we are referring both to deepening all children's understanding of their own cultural roots and to the broadening of their cultural horizons.

Many children at our schools have a language other than English in their home background. Some families are working in England for a short period while most are based here permanently. Our aim is to foster a respect for all cultures and traditions while giving children an opportunity to reflect upon the customs, religious beliefs and cultural heritage of the wide range of cultures that are represented in school. We endeavour to promote co-operation with all groups in order to achieve our educational goals.

Cultures are complex and it must be acknowledged that each culture is evolving and changing.

Children thus need to learn about those features of the past which influence and shape the present.

The wealth of cultural opportunities we offer children include:

- hearing stories, poems and other texts read aloud regularly
- listening to music from other cultures and musical periods
- learning a musical instrument as a whole class
- singing and performing music to their peers and family
- taking part in competitive and non-competitive sporting, dance and athletic festivals and special events

- studying art from a range of cultures and artistic styles
- visits to museums, art galleries and places of local interest / importance
- creating and manipulating sound, images, animations and films using ICT
- talks and special activities from visiting experts linked to curriculum work
- children and their parents sharing information about their home culture, language, food and religion through special presentations linked to the curriculum
- concerts and performances from visiting musicians
- in-school theatre group visits
- visiting authors, poets and storytellers

By presenting the children with opportunities to explore and reflect on their own culture and the culture of others, we hope to enhance their knowledge and interest, foster tolerance and promote a genuine appreciation of the richness of the cultural traditions from around the world.