

Guidance for Promoting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development in a Church of England School/Academy



Guidance from the
Diocesan Board of Education

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Guidance for Promoting the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Pupils

Introduction

Promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is seen as a significant responsibility for all schools as evidenced in the ongoing attention these areas are given in successive Ofsted inspection frameworks and evaluation schedules. In Church of England Schools SMSC is widely regarded as an area of vital importance and good quality provision in this area is seen as a key hallmark of a distinctively Christian school. In the Diocese of Southwell and Nottingham promoting SMSC is also seen as part of the outworking of our Diocesan Vision of “Joining Together in the Transforming Mission of God” in church schools –particularly the strand related to “Growing Disciples.”

The Religious Education curriculum and worship in a Church School should be the place where this excellence and distinctiveness is reflected most clearly. However church schools should be aware that SMSC development should be traced throughout the life of the school.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development in a Church School should be distinctive because of the Christian faith and beliefs that underpin the school. The three persons of the Trinity - Father, Son and Holy Spirit should be inextricably woven throughout the whole curriculum and especially in the areas of SMSC.

These notes should be used as guidance when writing a policy for SMSC.

Ofsted Framework

In the Overall Effectiveness section of the Ofsted ‘School Inspection Handbook’ January 2014 paragraph 113 points out that evidence of pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can be found, for example where pupils:

- are reflective about beliefs, values and more profound aspects of human experience, enabling them to develop curiosity in their learning, and as thoughtful, responsible individuals
- develop and apply an understanding of right and wrong in their school life and life outside school
- take part in a range of activities requiring social skills, including volunteering
- develop awareness of and respect for diversity
- develop the skills and attitudes to enable them to participate fully and positively in democratic modern Britain
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(Please see the document for a full list of evidence)

SIAMS Framework

The ‘SIAMS Evaluation Schedule for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools – September 2013’ states in core question 1 on page 5 that when evaluating the Christian character of the school inspectors must evaluate: How effectively the Christian character supports the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all learners whether they are Christian, of other faiths or of none

Inspectors will take into account:

- the breadth of experiences available to all learners through curricular and extra-curricular activities
- how well the school offers opportunities for learners to reflect on and respond to beliefs, values and profound human experiences from a range of faith perspectives
- the extent to which the opportunities for SMSC development are characterised by distinctively Christian values
- how well daily collective worship, religious education and other aspects of the curriculum enable learners to make informed choices which are based on Christian values
- the extent to which the school operates as a distinctively Christian community

Spiritual Development

Spiritual Development is the concern to develop the most distinctive and desirable capacities of the human person, i.e. those capacities that, above all, distinguish human beings from other living creatures. It is a concern which goes beyond what a pupil can know and do and relates to what sort of person they are and are becoming.

Pupils' spiritual development involves the growth of their sense of self, their unique potential, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their will to achieve. As their curiosity about themselves and their place in the world increases, they try to answer for themselves some of life's fundamental questions. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to foster their own inner lives and non-material wellbeing.

Spiritual Development in a Church School can enrich and encourage the child's journey towards a discovery and deeper understanding of our 'in most being', God our creator and the wonder of the environment around them.

"For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful." Ps 139 v 13-14

Opportunities for spiritual development may be encountered in these ways in the life of the church school.

Through:

- deep thinking in exploring challenging questions and issues
- being calm and peaceful - reflecting from within
exploring faith – both your own and someone else's
- knowing yourself – as known and loved by God and unique and special to Him
- accepting and understanding differences
exploring belief and how an individual's beliefs impact on their living
- worship – opportunity to explore prayer and worship from a variety of Christian traditions
- community – valuing one another in community and fellowship
- developing gifts of imagination and creativity
- godly play

Moral Development

Pupils' moral development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of moral conflict, a concern for others and the will to do what is right. They are able and willing to reflect on the consequences of their actions and learn how to forgive themselves and others. They develop the knowledge, skills and understanding, qualities and attitudes they need in order to make responsible moral decisions and act on them.

The important challenge is to develop in children a deep, abiding commitment to moral values. The issue isn't cultivating moral literacy; it's cultivating moral identity. It's making these values integral to the self, so that doing what's right becomes a reflex, and so children are strongly motivated to do what's right even when it conflicts with other needs and wants. The chosen values need to be consistently promoted throughout the whole life of the school.

Moral development in a Church School should allow pupils opportunities to explore issues from a wide range of viewpoints but underpinning all investigation, discussion, reflection and evaluation are the teachings of Jesus Christ, offering pupils a foundation stone on which to build their lives. The voice of Christianity should be heard clearly throughout.

*“Since **you** are my rock and my fortress, for the sake of **your** name lead and guide me”*
Psalm 31:2-4

Opportunities for moral development may be encountered in these ways in the life of the church school.

Through:

- developing a sense of right and wrong based on Christian teaching
- aligning behaviour and attitudes in the light of Christian teaching
- being able to recognise expectations
- considering the values we live by and the ways in which they are based on the Bible e.g. forgiveness, truth, justice, compassion
- considering the individuals rights and responsibilities which will include justice and fairness for themselves and others
- asking questions such as: What motivates me? Who do I want to please by the choices I make?

Social Development

Pupils' social development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national and global), and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities.

Social development in a Church School should develop children's understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice

*“May the Lord make your **love** increase and overflow for **each other** and for everyone else”*
1Thessalonians 3: 11-12

Opportunities for social development may be encountered in these ways in the life of the church school.

Through:

- understanding and valuing self and others
- being aware of own and others emotions and feelings and how to respond to different emotions
- building relationships between different communities e.g. parish, local, global etc
- understanding and acceptance of difference
- talking to, listening with and cooperating with others
- consideration of own and others rights, responsibilities and aspirations
- appreciation of appropriate behaviours and social conventions

Cultural Development

Pupils' cultural development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. They acquire a respect for their own culture and that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and curiosity about differences. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture.

Cultural development in a Church School provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide multi-cultural faith and appreciation of the diversity of beliefs and cultures across the world.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female for you are all one in Christ Jesus”

Galatians 3:28

Opportunities for cultural development may be encountered in these ways in the life of the church school.

Through:

- learning about others, accepting and valuing other traditions and celebrations
- developing an awareness of one's own culture and transition and change in it
- exploring the diversity of cultures within Britain
- understanding the contexts in which people express their beliefs and identity
- openness to other beliefs and cultural differences
- promoting an understanding of Christianity from a global perspective which may include encounters with people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing culture
- being part of a link with a school in another part of the world