

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy

Introduction

The school's SMSC policy, driven by our vision, motto and core values is a key factor in the success of our school. The policy is reinforced by many of our other policies, particularly those concerned with behaviour, equal opportunities, personal social and health education and citizenship.



Rationale

It is a primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels valued and respected, is given the opportunities to thrive and flourish and that each person is treated fairly and well. We want every individual to experience the complete fullness of life which is demonstrated through our school vision:

Our Vision

Jesus said 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.' John 10:10

We aspire for all to achieve their God-given academic and personal potential, so that they can make a positive impact in the world. **Learning for life with Jesus** is at the centre of what we do underpinned by our distinctively Christian values which ensure we are wholly inclusive.

Aims

The ethos of our school is such, that all people, who come into our school, albeit staff, pupil, parent or visitor, are valued as individuals in their own right. They should set, and be entitled to expect from others, good standards of behaviour, marked by respect and responsibility. The behaviour standards have been created in collaboration with the pupils and are practiced and modelled by all staff. It is important that we recognise that the children's development will be affected by many factors other than those which the school itself provides. These include maturity, personality, gender, family, peer group, ethnicity, cultural background and more generally, the moral, spiritual and cultural climate of our society and of the communities to which they belong. Through religious education and acts of Collective Worship, children will be introduced to a broad spectrum of beliefs. They will be encouraged to value other people's opinions and develop a questioning mind across the full spectrum of the curriculum. We actively encourage our children to discuss and ask 'BIG' questions, confidently standing up for what they believe is right.

As a result, we are confident that our school values: thankfulness, trust, fairness, forgiveness and celebration naturally permeate throughout everything we do.

Definitions

The following definitions are used within the context of this policy: -

Spiritual development: It is very difficult to put into words what 'spirituality' actually is because it is a very personal experience. It differs from person to person, and often spirituality changes within people during their lifetime. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith.

'It is something we are and cannot escape, regardless of how we feel about it.'

Tatiana Wilson

Pupils' spiritual development is shown by their:

- beliefs, religious or otherwise, which inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different feelings and values.
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them, including the intangible.
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

Moral development: This can be defined as personal development relating to human behaviour, especially the distinction between good and bad, right and wrong.

Social development: This can be defined as a personal development concerned with living in a community rather than alone.

Cultural development: This can be defined as personal development concerned with the total of inherited ideas, beliefs, values and knowledge which constitute the shared basis for social action.

Differentiation

Children will be provided with opportunities to express themselves throughout the curriculum and in collective worship. Open questioning will be used to expand thinking as well as used as a method to review and reflect on individual behaviours.

We respect that all our children have different individual needs and will target these needs through worship, circle time in small groups, PSHE, peer mentoring and 1:1 therapeutic behaviour. Extra time will be given throughout the curriculum and individually if the need arises.

Extra-Curricular and Off-Site Opportunities

A child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural is developing all the time no matter where a child is. We provide a wide-range of opportunities for children to explore and reflect including clubs, events, performances, trips etc. Social issues are challenged and fairness, trust and forgiveness is habitually practiced. Children are encouraged to be courageous advocates in society where they feel safe and confidence to stand for what they believe is right. They support charities in school which then encourages some children to continue with this in their own spare time. We celebrate achievements and give children the opportunity to shine.

Assessment

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural progress is not assessed like other curriculum subjects. Planned and spontaneous opportunities are provided for pupils. Staff carry out observations and ask children questions to understand their thinking and thought processes. We do not give grades as it is such a personal matter. Instead, we expect our school community to show dignity and respect to others and to follow the school's behaviour policy. Children showing repeated negative behaviour will be identified and as a school, will work together with home and external agencies (where appropriate) to ensure the right support is put into place.

Curriculum Planning

Teachers are aware of the need to plan for opportunities in spirituality and reflection throughout the curriculum as well as developing pupils' knowledge and key skills.

Spiritual Development

At St Thomas, we use planned and spontaneous opportunities to develop our children spiritually. Curriculum planning often uses the 'windows, mirrors and doors' approach identified by Liz Mills who fosters Christian engagement and education. The list below does not follow any particular order and is not exhaustive but does include some of the ways that we develop spirituality in our school community. It is not used to assess the spirituality of individual children or adults, but instead used to provide opportunities to build on the spiritual development that has gone on before. The list is as follows:

- Be guided by individual beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them.
- Be self-aware and show empathy with the experience of others in the school and wider community.
- Believe in their own potential to achieve, showing inner strength and resilience when challenges arise.
- Use their imagination and be creative.
- Appreciate the beauty around them
- Be alive to experiences of awe and wonder.
- Be intrigued with the mystery of life.
- Be comfortable with stillness and prayer.
- Be prepared to say sorry, forgive themselves and forgive others.
- Be willing to take risks and grow from experiences of failure as well as success.
- Ask and explore 'Big Questions'
- Show thankfulness
- Show kindness and generosity.
- Respond positively when spontaneous opportunities for spirituality arises.

At our school, we recognise the importance of creating space and taking the time to reflect. Reflection areas are provided around the school including the outside space. Some of the ways that reflection is encouraged is by:

discussion, silence, meditation, listening to music, drawing, drama, improvisation

Moral/Social Development

It is important that children are given clear guidance as to what is not acceptable behaviour, so that they can develop a moral code of their own that is socially acceptable. Our behaviour policy clearly identifies acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. Children receive points when they model positive behaviours. These behaviours are displayed in all classrooms and staff regularly refer to them.

We will teach the children to be aware of their own actions, take responsibility for their own bodies and encourage independence. We will help the children to identify their feelings and think these through so that they are expressed in behaviour that is socially acceptable. This is done through worship, circle time in small groups, PSHE, peer mentoring, pupil advocacy and 1:1 therapeutic behaviour support for targeted pupils. We are interested in the development of the whole child and will endeavour to raise their self-esteem through praise, stickers, Star of the week, Head Teachers Award, class prize boxes, Head Teacher' Tea Party and other means that highlight both academic and social achievements (please refer to our behaviour and discipline policy).

Cultural Development

Through curriculum planning, extra-curricular opportunities, collective worship, visitors etc. pupils are developed culturally. Pupils' cultural development is shown by their ability to understand and appreciate a wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others. They should understand and appreciate the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain.

Opportunities will be provided to develop knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values and in continuing to develop Britain. Collective worship, R.E, curriculum opportunities and extra-curricular opportunities provide interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity. Pupil' extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity is shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.