



Guidelines for Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural (SMSC)

(August 2019)

Maintained schools and academies have obligations under various Education Acts which require them, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the children and young people they serve.

Successive Ofsted frameworks place SMSC as a central part of the judgement of a school's overall effectiveness. Evidence to support this judgement will be gathered from consideration of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment; pupils' personal development, behaviour and welfare; pupils' outcomes, and leadership and management.

Policy and practice need to reflect this important focus. This is an ideal time to develop the opportunities and quality of our ethos and practice. These guidelines offer support in this process so that schools have opportunity to reflect and evaluate on the impact of current practice and plan for future excellence.

The definitions of Moral, Social and Cultural Development are researched, documented, understood and embedded in practice in our schools. But the same cannot be said for Spiritual Development which is much more open to debate. It is important that the whole school community discusses and debates what it means to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally in order that policy and practice have integrity within a church school setting. The following pages will support further school discussion on SMSC development in order that greater understanding and more extensive and wide ranging opportunities can be provided for pupils.

Once the whole community work on definition and understanding has been completed a policy review can take place.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development relates to the quest for individual identity and the search for meaning and purpose in our existence. It is associated with a dimension of life which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses, but has much to do with feelings and emotions, and attitudes and beliefs. The term 'spiritual' need not be synonymous with 'religious.'

Understanding of self and others is at the heart of spiritual development and is not linked solely to a particular doctrine or faith. Spiritual development is, therefore, accessible to everyone. All areas of the curriculum should contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of self – the inner person and the way that this shapes an individual's perception of themselves as a unique human being.

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of others – a growing empathy, concern and compassion for how to treat others.

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of a physical and creative world – a growing relationship with beauty through the ability to respond emotionally to experiences of the wonder of the natural world and the results of human creativity. Spiritual learners explore their understanding of beauty and the effect this has on their perception of and relationship with the world.

Spiritual learners become increasingly aware of the concept of the beyond – a growing relationship with the transcendental and the ability to explore experiences beyond the everyday. Spiritual learners search for meaning in their very existence and their place in the greater scheme of things.

A Christian Perspective

'Let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish.' Hebrews 12: 1-2

Looking at the root word for Spirit from Hebrew Scriptures (*ruach* meaning breath, wind, spirit, life-giving) reveals that to be spiritual is not just concerned with inner thoughts and feelings but that it has a dynamic and vibrant indwelling and out flowing movement, an animated and vibrant quest for a fulfilled life.

To Christians, God is Creator and Sustainer. Being made in God's image therefore we are spiritual beings who can ponder on God through creation as one looks in awe and wonder at His handiwork.

In the Bible, spiritual development is symbolised in many ways often spoken of in terms of moving from darkness to light, or as a hard race to be won to gain the prize, or a 'journey' such as the 40 year journey made by the Israelites through the wilderness to the promised land. As church schools we should encourage our pupils to take up these spiritual challenges and support and nurture pupils' natural sense of curiosity.

For Anglicans spirituality is most evident when gathered for worship, through singing hymns and songs; responding through word and sacraments. In our schools the act of collective worship will be a particular life-giving focus to spiritual development. Flowing out from this will be a community which is open and hospitable, a place where all can discuss their beliefs, views and ideas openly in a safe and secure environment, a place where deep joy, forgiveness and reconciliation can be experienced.

Church School Practice

In a church school it can be reasonably expected that Spiritual Development would be a considerable strength. Therefore the approach should seek to be at the very least 'deliberate and effective' but ideally 'thoughtful and wide ranging'. In your policy you will want to ensure that your community reflects a place where:

- Creative and imaginative teaching lead to progress in learning

- Staff encourage questioning with 'why', 'how', 'does it make a difference?' possibly through the use of Philosophy 4 Children approach and other critical enquiry strategies.
- Pupils are encouraged to ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- imagination, inspiration and contemplation are valued
- prayer permeates the life of the school
- there are opportunities for pupils to develop empathy and understanding of others by reflecting on values and beliefs
- staff can identify spiritual development in the planning of the curriculum
- the use of outdoor learning, drama, artwork and reflection times
- opportunities provided for extended learning provided by a variety of after school clubs and extra curricular activities which enable creativity, enjoyment and opportunity for pupils to learn more about themselves
- Collective Worship documentation and evaluation give evidence that difference and diversity are explored and celebrated and pupils are affirmed in their faith or non faith stance

Moral Development

Moral Development is concerned with pupils' ability to make judgements about how they should behave and act and the reasons for such behaviour. It refers to their knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes in relation to what is right or wrong.

Acquiring a knowledge and understanding of what is right and wrong is central to moral development. It is the basis upon which the pupils may develop the ability to make judgements about how to behave and it is the standpoint from which to consider the behaviour of others in school and society in general.

The system of rules and codes of behaviour established in our school is an important early introduction to issues of fairness for all and to the consequences of operating outside the accepted rule system. Pupils are encouraged to understand the need for a common code and to follow it from conviction rather than because of consequences or sanctions. Moral Development, based on Christian principles, should enable pupils to become increasingly responsible for their own actions and behaviour.

A Christian Perspective

Like obedient children, do not be conformed to the desires that you formerly had in ignorance. Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct; for it is written, 'you shall be holy, for I am holy.'

1 Peter 1:14-16

For Christians morality is about shared values stemming from Christian belief. As stated in Romans 3:23 'all have fallen short of the glory of God.' Finding our way to becoming the people God created us to be is the moral journey for Christians. This is made possible by the grace, mercy and forgiveness offered by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. For Christians a spirit of repentance and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit give the moral life a transforming and renewing character.

For our church schools Moral Development will be characterised by these Christian values. God acts with love to save His people, thus love will predominate in our schools reflecting God's salvation history. Christians look to the life and teaching of Jesus to help them understand what self-giving and costly love (from the Greek *agape*) means in practice, that is to follow Jesus example of showing compassion to the poor, welcoming outcasts, healing the sick and giving his own life as a sacrifice.

Setting a moral perspective in school demands an ethos of forgiveness and not an acceptance of wrong-doing and the consequences. Relationships marked by restoration and reconciliation reveal a community that can make fair and balanced judgements when things go wrong.

Church School Practice

In a church school the importance of truth and integrity should be prominent in policies and practice. You will want to ensure that your community reflects a place where:

- you offer opportunities for genuine praise and thanksgiving to take place
- fairness and justice in your approach to all you do in school
- Being able to disagree respectfully
- Opportunities for pupils to act justly and mercifully and with a sense of humility through involvement in charity work, pupil buddying schemes and the school council
- opportunities are given for pupils to show forgiveness and repentance
- Moral Development is identified in the planning of the curriculum
- an emphasis on Moral Development changes what and how you teach. There is a clear policy and understanding of the Equalities Act and protected characteristics and a clear anti-bullying policy and action plan.
- review and evaluation reveal that pupils are responding to the opportunities for moral development that you provide
- the curriculum supports Moral Development through PSHE and through RE with opportunity to investigate moral dilemmas and understand the consequences of poor decisions

Social Development

Social Development refers to the development of abilities and qualities that students need to acquire if they are to play a full and active part in society. It also relates to the growth of knowledge and understanding of society in all its aspects.

Development in this area enables pupils to become conscientious participants in the family (in its various forms) and then, progressively, the class, the school and the wider community. Provision for Social Development should balance the positive, satisfying elements of belonging to a group or society with the demands and obligations such membership requires.

The school, but in particular the classroom, provides a suitable environment for promoting Social Development within a Christian context. Pupils learn to lead, to use their initiative and to use individual skills and strengths when working together towards a common goal. The ability to be led, to support others and to recognise the different skills of other group members can be developed when children work co-operatively.

A Christian perspective

The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up only one body. So it is with the body of Christ.

1 Corinthians 12:13

The Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit in equal relationship united by a bond of love is the perfect model for our schools. Human community reflects the relationship of the Godhead; God as Creator has a relationship with His people in the Incarnation, his involvement with all that it means to be human, and as Sustainer in all that is life-giving and re-creating.

The Church is described in relational terms as the Body of Christ. In 1 Corinthians St. Paul emphasises the value of each person in the Christian community and their need to work together to bring God's Kingdom to the places where they live and work.

The attitude of such a community strives for justice and is motivated by an attitude of generosity. In the Old Testament Amos speaks of a God who is 'just and righteous' and in the New Testament Jesus teaching reveals a self-giving and generous love even to those considered enemies.

Church School Practice

In a church school the importance of working together for the good of all should be shown in the values expressed in policies and practice. You will want to ensure that your community reflects a place where:

- the quality of relationships enable all to express themselves openly, honestly and respectfully
- the support of strategies to help pupils deal with disappointment
- all are willing to listen to others with differing opinions and that this can be encouraged through visits and visitors
- there are opportunities to better understand the balance between rights and responsibilities
- social development is identified in the planning of the curriculum
- an emphasis on social development changes what and how you teach with an emphasis on groups working well together and co-operating in class regardless of gender, race or religion. Opportunities given for older pupils to help younger pupils through themed days with the whole school working together
- review and evaluation reveal that pupils are responding to the opportunities for moral development that you provide
- the way your curriculum is organised supports social development

Cultural Development

Cultural Development refers to the development of knowledge and understanding of differing cultural beliefs, customs and traditions. It is an increasing appreciation of the systems of values and attitudes which form the basis of identity and cohesion within societies and groups.

At the heart of Cultural Development lies the necessity to develop a sense of personal identity, whilst at the same time acquiring awareness, understanding, respect and tolerance regarding the cultural traditions of others.

In order to make provision for Cultural Development existing knowledge, interests and experiences are strengthened and then built upon further. In this way pupils gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and the factors which influence it and gain a broader understanding of other cultures and cultural influences.

A Christian Perspective

There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male or female. For you are all Christians – you are one in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:28

To understand one's own culture forms a good foundation from which to begin to understand others from different cultures. The Biblical example of the Good Samaritan shows how a compassionate approach to others allows us to cross the bounds of culture.

In the Acts of the Apostles we read how the early church was a place where many cultures and backgrounds were drawn together. David Smith in his book 'Learning from the Stranger' refers to the story of Pentecost as 'a divine act of hospitality.' Each hears the gospel message from a Galilean in his or her own language. The story of Pentecost shows how God reaches out and welcomes all in a celebration of diversity. Today Christianity is a global faith and links with others across the world are to be embraced. Theologian Mirosslav Volf uses the image of an embrace to illustrate a positive and accepting attitude towards others from different backgrounds.

'In an embrace I open my arms to create space in myself for the other. Open arms are a sign that I do not want to be by myself only, an invitation for the other to come in and feel at home with me. In an embrace I also close my arms around the other. Closed arms are a sign that I want the other to become part of me while at the same time I maintain my own identity. By becoming part of me, the other enriches me. In a mutual embrace, none remains the same because each enriches the other, yet both remain true to their genuine selves.' As quoted by David Smith in Learning from the Stranger (p. 121)

Church School Practice

In a church school the importance of humbly accepting and learning from others from different cultures is paramount. Such values will be expressed in policies and practice. You will want to ensure that your community reflects a place where:

- opportunities are given to welcome others with openness and respect.
- pupils can develop an understanding of their place within the Christian cultural heritage and an appreciation of other cultures through studying different authors, poets, artists, musicians and sportsmen and women.
- pupils are encouraged to explore and experience the diversity of the Christian tradition within Britain and across the world. They are also to be encouraged to understand and appreciate the different cultures and religions represented in the school or locality. Visits to or visitors from sacred spaces should be included in the whole school plan.
- cultural development is identified within the planning of the curriculum.
- review and evaluation reveal that pupils are responding to the opportunities for cultural development that you provide.
- the way your curriculum is organised and resourced supports cultural development through the use of visitors e.g. local authors, dance groups, drum workshops, visiting artists and musicians.