



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

(July 2023)

Maintained schools and academies have obligations which require them, as part of a broad and balanced curriculum, to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural 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. The 2023 SIAMS framework also refers to spirituality as important aspects of the curriculum and Collective Worship. Therefore, Policy and practice within school needs to reflect this important focus. These guidelines offer support so that schools have opportunity to reflect and evaluate on the impact of current practice and plan for future excellence.

It is important that the whole school community (including governors) discuss and have a shared understanding of what spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development means, in order that policy and practice have integrity within a church school setting. The following pages will support this discussion and provide suggestions as to how these can be developed within school.

Spiritual Development

The Ofsted framework states that provision for the spiritual development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life
- knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- willingness to reflect on their experiences

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 always 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 may:

- 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
- become increasingly aware of the concept of others – a growing empathy, concern and compassion for how to treat others
- become increasingly aware of the concept of a physical, human and natural world and explore their understanding of beauty and the effect this has on their perception of and relationship with the world
- 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 world.

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, Redeemer and Sustainer. Being made in God's image, Christians believe that they are spiritual beings who can relate to God through creation as one looks in awe and wonder at His handiwork.

In the Bible, spiritual development is symbolised in many ways including 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 and 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 and a place where deep joy, forgiveness and reconciliation can be experienced.

Church School Practice

In a church school, Spiritual Development should be a priority and considerable strength. Therefore, the approach should seek to be deliberate and effective and thoughtful and wide ranging. In your policy, schools are encouraged to:

- Ensure Spirituality is an intrinsic part of the curriculum
- Plan creative and imaginative teaching which leads to progress in learning
- Promote questioning with 'why', 'how', 'who' and 'does it make a difference?'. This could be done by the use of Philosophy 4 Children approach and other critical enquiry strategies.
- Ask questions about the meaning and purpose of life

- Value imagination, inspiration and contemplation
- Invite pupils to prayer which permeates the life of the school
- Ensure there are opportunities for pupils to develop empathy and understanding of others by reflecting on values and beliefs
- Make use of outdoor learning, drama, artwork and reflection times
- Provide opportunities for extended learning such as a variety of extra-curricular activities which enable creativity, enjoyment and opportunity for pupils to learn more about themselves
- Ensure that collective worship is allowing for spiritual flourishing by being inclusive, invitational, and inspirational

Moral Development

The Ofsted framework states that the moral development of pupils includes developing their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, and to recognise legal boundaries and, in doing so, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues

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 make good choices and 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 which increases a sense of personal responsibility and a moral compass.

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 Incarnation, 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 Christian values. God acts with love to save their 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 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 are your approach to all you do in school
- People can disagree respectfully
- There are 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
- There are opportunities are given for pupils to show forgiveness and repentance
- Moral Development is identified in the planning of the curriculum
- 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
- The teaching of British values such as tolerance, individual liberty, mutual respect and the rule of law are encouraged

Social Development

The Ofsted framework states that provision for the social development of pupils includes developing their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance of and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different

faiths and beliefs. They will develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain

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 and it prepares them for life in modern day Britain. 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 varying emotional responses
- 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 and permeates school life. This can include the wider curriculum and extra-curricular activities
- 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
- Where SEND and disadvantaged pupils are given the same access to the curriculum and opportunities within school through appropriate intervention

Cultural Development

The Ofsted framework states that provision for the cultural development of pupils includes developing their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures in the school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- ability to recognise, and value, the things we share in common across cultural, religious, ethnic and socio-economic communities
- knowledge of Britain's democratic Parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

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 as well as 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

The Biblical example of the Good Samaritan shows how a compassionate approach to others allows people 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. The account of Pentecost shows how God reaches out and welcomes all in a celebration of diversity. Christianity is a global faith and so schools are encouraged to show a range of images from the Global Church in their schools and links with others across the world are to be embraced.

Church School Practice

In a church school the importance of humbly accepting and learning from others from different communities and 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. This could include visitors to your school and visiting places different to your school context
- pupils can develop an understanding of varying 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 the Global Church. 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
- 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. The St Philips's Centre may be engaged with here.
- Pupils from dual heritage are represented and valued. Sensitivity should be given to families who identify with a range of cultural experiences.