

# Greens Norton C of E Primary School



## Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

**'In our school everyone can join in with everything we offer'**

Approved by

D. Ward, Chair of Governors

J Pickering, Head Teacher

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## **Policy for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

### **Introduction**

The personal development of pupils, spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, plays a significant part in their ability to learn and to achieve. The National Curriculum (1999) clearly sets education within the context of the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children, and of society.

‘The school curriculum should develop principles for distinguishing between right and wrong. It should develop pupils’ knowledge, understanding and appreciation of their own and different beliefs and cultures, and how these influence individuals and societies. ‘

The Education Act 1996 requires that all maintained schools provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

### **Spiritual Development**

The framework for Inspection (August 1993 edition) describes the scope of spiritual development as follows:

Spiritual development relates to those aspects of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence, which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non- material dimension to life and intimations of enduring reality. ‘Spiritual ‘is not synonymous with ‘religious’; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils’ spiritual development.

Therefore we see spiritual development as the way children acquire personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basic personal and social behaviour. It is also about what a school provides through its curriculum, through collective worship, through its ethos and climate to help children make sense of these questions and about what it does to help them respond to life and various forms of experience.

There are many aspects of spiritual development:

- beliefs - the development of the personal beliefs
- a sense of awe and wonder - being inspired by the natural world, mystery or human achievement
- feelings of transcendence - which give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being and/or resources to rise above everyday experiences.

- search for meaning and purpose - responding to challenging experiences, reflecting on the origins and purpose of life
- self-knowledge - an awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences and the development of self-respect
- relationships - recognising and valuing the worth of each individual; developing a sense of community and the ability to build up relationships with others
- creativity - expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through for example, art, music, dance, literature and crafts; exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight
- feelings and emotions - the sense of being moved by beauty or kindness; being hurt by injustice or aggression and the growing ability to recognise and control emotions.

Therefore, we see spiritual development as an important element of a child's education and fundamental to other areas of learning. The notion that pupils will develop spiritually raises the expectation that this is an area in which children can make progress. The steps to spiritual development might include:

- recognising the existence of others as independent from oneself
- becoming aware of and reflecting on experience
- questioning and exploring the meaning of existence
- being able to appreciate other points of view
- developing personal views and insights.
- applying the insights gained with increasing degrees of perception to one's life

## **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, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need in order to make responsible moral decisions and to act on them.' (The National Curriculum, 1999)

Moral development is concerned with fundamental decisions about how we should behave and act and the reasons for such behaviour and decisions.

We need to enable children to reach reasoned opinions and acquire values which are their own. Their behaviour and actions should derive from their beliefs and values.

We aim to provide a moral framework for children to operate in as they mature, by helping them to decide *what* they hold as right and wrong, *why* they do so, and *how* they should act - that is, that they should behave well, in accordance with a moral code. Our school values include:

- telling the truth
- keeping promises
- respecting the rights and property of other
- acting with consideration towards others
- helping those less fortunate than ourselves

- taking personal responsibility for one's actions
- self-discipline

As a school we reject:

- bullying
- cheating
- deceit
- cruelty
- irresponsibility
- dishonesty

We believe that children should grow up knowing which of these things are acceptable and which are not. Children will inevitably question why things are as they are, and will test the boundaries. It is important that there are boundaries - some form of value system, which provides the help and support to enable children to come to their own judgements.

In addition to absolute values such as these, children become aware as they grow older that situations arise where what is right or wrong is not universally agreed. In society there is a range of behaviour considered wrong by some, for example, smoking, drinking alcohol, gambling, divorce, abortion and blood sports. Children have to make up their own minds on these and other important issues. Our task, in partnership with the home, is to enable children to have the knowledge and ability to question and reason and so develop their own value system and to make responsible decisions on such matters.

Moral development in school builds on the child's experience in the home. There needs to be an insistence that pupils behave in an acceptable fashion towards all staff and towards each other. Children need to become aware of, and accept that, an effective and just society is based on certain rules that are acceptable to a wide range of individuals and that there are consequences for themselves and others of infringing the rules. As they become older children should come to an understanding of why rules are important, and should act upon them from conviction, rather than simply from fear of getting into trouble.

Children also learn the more difficult lesson: that rules are interpreted differently by different people, that sometimes allowances are made for people who break rules and sometimes not.

Morally educated children should ultimately be able to:

- distinguish between right and wrong
- articulate their own attitudes and values
- take responsibility for their own actions
- recognise the moral dimension to situations
- understand the long and short-term consequences of their actions for themselves and others
- develop for themselves a set of socially acceptable values and principles, and set guidelines to govern their own behaviour

- recognise that their values and attitudes may have to change over time
- behave consistently in accordance with their principles

There are three areas of school life in which opportunities arise for spiritual and moral development. They are:

- the ethos of the school
- all subjects of the curriculum
- collective worship

The ethos of our school is clearly stated and reflected in our aims.

It is based on Christian values and beliefs and that respect for all individuals is paramount.

School is seen as a corporate community which encourages children to show consideration and respect for others and expects them to strive for excellence in their work and behaviour.

The Ethos is further developed in our Behaviour Policy:

- in the atmosphere of the school
- in the quality of the relationships
- in the way in which we help children to deal with conflict, loss, grief or difficulties

In most aspects of the curriculum children encounter questions about the origins of the universe, the purpose of life, the uniqueness of humanity and the meaning of truth. They should be encouraged to reflect upon these questions in their broadest sense.

Moral issues will arise, for example in science - issues of creation, life and death, geography - environmental issues, and history –issues of belief and tolerance. Religious Education will promote the spiritual and moral development in the light of the teachings of the great world religions, and particular in our school through Christianity.

This will be achieved through a variety of learning experiences, which provide children with opportunities to:

- discuss matters of personal concern
- develop relationships with adults and peers
- develop a sense of belonging to a community
- explore the values and beliefs of others and deepen their knowledge and understanding of their own
- discuss religious and moral questions
- understand why people reach certain decisions and how those decisions affect their lives
- experience silence and reflection

Collective worship offers children opportunities to explore and share beliefs; consider the importance of prayer, meditation, and silence; consider the relevance of ideas and

beliefs to their own lives; think about the needs of others and develop a sense of community; and appreciate the importance of religious beliefs to those who hold them.

Collective worship also offers the opportunity to re-affirm, interpret and put into practice the values of the school. It provides the time to celebrate the various achievements of members of the community that are held to be of worth.

A more detailed account of the role of worship in spiritual, moral, cultural and social development can be found in our Collective Worship Policy Statement:

### **Social development**

Social development, according to the National Curriculum, “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 and qualities and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities.’

Social development is concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society.

In school we build on and support the functions of the home and wider community by helping to prepare our children to live in society. In school they join in larger and more varied groups than that of the family. They are taught the importance of rights and responsibilities of being a member of our school and the importance of taking into account the feelings and wishes of others as well as themselves. Social development is, therefore, closely related to the development of moral principles.

Our classroom organisation and teaching styles also influence social development. Decisions about how pupils are grouped convey strong social messages because through group work they experience a variety of social roles, including co-operation and partnership, leadership and responsibility. They learn to respond to the initiatives of others, and what it means to share common purposes.

The Citizenship Curriculum and Personal, Social and Health Education schemes of work allow us to plan a range of opportunities for pupils to learn and develop social skills and attitudes. The Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning package (SEAL, Primary Strategy 2005) provides further opportunities for children to develop their social and emotional skills

As our children grow we provide a wider range of experiences to develop their social skills, for example school productions, cluster work, residential visits, involvement in village life and events, fund-raising activities and so on.

In addition, the content of education itself contributes to social development. Social skills are acquired through team and group work, through studying other places, times and cultures.

Children should show effective social development if, at a level appropriate to their age and ability, they display:

- knowledge of the ways in which societies function and are organised - from the family to the school and then to wider groupings (local, national, international)
- attitudes which show the capacity to adjust to a range of social contexts by appropriate and sensitive behaviour
- skills in taking on, as appropriate, the roles of leader and team-worker, exercising responsibility, initiative and co-operation
- ability to make a strong personal contribution to the well-being of social groups and to form relationships with them

## **Cultural development**

According to the National Curriculum (1999), '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".

We aim to develop and strengthen the children's cultural interests

In school, cultural development links with certain aspects of spiritual, moral and social development. Cultures grow and change over time. Children need to learn how cultures change and influence the present.

Children are subject to many cultural influences and schools need to introduce children to the values and customs held within a nation's culture and to those of other significant cultures.

We expect our children to respect the values, customs and cultural heritage of others in school who belong to faiths or ethnic cultures that may be different to their own. We would also wish to extend their cultural horizons beyond the immediate and the local. A more detailed description of our expectations is contained within our policy for Racial Equality.

We teach about, and use, examples from other cultures in a wide variety of our work in school, for example in history and geography where we teach about other times, civilisations, development and places, in mathematics and art when we look at pattern and shape, in RE when we study the major world faiths, and in worship and literature by looking at and using stories from other cultures.

Children should show effective cultural development if, at a level appropriate to their age and ability they display:

- knowledge of the nature and roots of their own cultural traditions and practices, whether these are religious, social, aesthetic, ethnic or political, and also of the key features of other major cultural groups within their own society
- understanding of the diversity of religious, social, aesthetic, ethnic and political traditions and practices - nationally and internationally.
- personal response and accomplishment in a range of cultural fields, for example, literature, music, technology, art and design and dance and sport
- capacity to relate what they learn to their appreciation of wider cultural aspects of society, and to evaluate the quality and worth of cultural achievements