

St John's Catholic Primary School



Religious Education

Spiritual and Moral Policy

"I am the vine you are the branches" – John, 15.



"Schools should produce young people with ideas and dreams, with a vision of what they want to achieve in life, who have a strong sense of service, of care and compassion for those in need; who have above all, a love of life, a zest for living life to the full."

(Cardinal Hume, 1999)

At St. John's School, pupils' spirituality and morality are promoted and developed through the entire educative process especially through our distinctive ethos; all our curriculum subjects, especially Religious Education; and Collective Worship.

Spiritual Development

Spiritual education helps pupils to 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 an enduring reality.

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2017 states that the **Spiritual development** of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in 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.

Above all, our aim is to find effective ways of developing pupils' drive, sense of identity and self-worth; developing their principles, beliefs and values; including those that have a religious basis. We understand that all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development, not just Religious Education.

We recognise that pupils who are developing spiritually are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

- A set of values, principles and beliefs, which may or may not be religious, which inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour
- An awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs

- A respect for themselves and for others
- A sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion
- An increasing ability to reflect and learn from this reflection
- An ability to show courage in defence of their aims, values, principles and beliefs
- A readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit, for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination
- An appreciation of the intangible – for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order, as well as for mystery, paradox and ambiguity
- A respect for insight as well as knowledge and reason
- An expressive and/or creative impulse
- An ability to think in terms of the 'whole' – for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective
- An understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact.

We endeavour to encourage of pupils' spiritual development by:

- Giving pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on people's lives
- Supporting and developing pupils' existing beliefs, where present, in ways which are personal and relevant to them
- Encouraging pupils to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- Encouraging pupils to reflect and learn from their reflection
- Giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful
- Developing a climate or ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected
- Accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals
- Promoting teaching styles which:
 - value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns
 - enable pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning
 - encourage pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference – for example, asking 'why', 'how' and 'where' as well as 'what'

- Monitoring in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Moral Development

Moral education helps pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right and wrong.

We aim to provide our pupils with a moral framework within which to operate and, as the children 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.

The educational mission of the Church brings to life Christ's new commandment *"that you love one another as I have loved you"* (John, 13: 34). In our school, this gospel value is lived out in daily life in many ways, including: forgiveness, freedom, tolerance, respect and relationships.

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2017 states that the **Moral development** of pupils is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, 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.

We aim to achieve this by:

- Extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of the range of accepted values in society
- Developing pupils' skills and attitudes, such as decision-making, self-control, consideration of others, having the confidence to act in accordance with one's principles and thinking through the consequences of actions
- Promoting, at an appropriate level, pupils' understanding of basic moral philosophy and the skills of analysis, debate, judgement and application to contemporary issues. (*1)

We understand that pupils who are becoming morally aware are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

- An ability to distinguish right from wrong, based on knowledge of the moral codes of their own and other cultures
- A confidence to act consistently in accordance with their own principles
- An ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' actions
- A willingness to express their views on ethical issues and personal values
- An ability to make responsible and reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas
- A commitment to personal values in areas which are considered right by some and wrong by others
- A considerate style of life
- A respect for others' needs, interests and feelings, as well as their own
- A desire to explore their own and others' views
- An understanding of the need to review and re-assess their values, codes and principles in the light of experience.

We aim to encourage pupils' moral development by:

- Providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school
- Promoting measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria
- Giving pupils opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values – for example, personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality of opportunity, right and wrong
- Developing an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision-making
- Rewarding expressions of moral insights and good behaviour
- Making an issue of breaches of agreed moral codes where they arise – for example, in the press, on television and the internet as well as in school
- Modelling, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the principles which they wish to promote – for example, fairness, integrity, respect for persons, pupils' welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contracts

- Recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community
- Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions – for example, respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour
- Providing models of moral virtue through literature, humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts of worship
- Reinforcing the school's values through images, posters, classroom displays, screensavers, exhibitions
- Monitoring, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Each class displays our behaviour policy, own reward systems, class rules.

We recognise that Spiritual and Moral development work alongside children's Social and Cultural development.

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2017 states that the **Social development** of pupils is shown by 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 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 develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2017 states that the **Cultural development** of pupils is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and those of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- 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,

as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socioeconomic groups in the local, national and global communities.

The Personal, Social, Emotional Education Policy, Religious Education Policy and the Behaviour Policy provide further detail as to how we promote children's Social and Cultural development.

[Link Policies](#)

- Religious Education, inc. Cultures & World Faiths
- Collective Worship
- British Values
- Behaviour Policy
- Personal, Social, Emotional and Health Education & Citizenship

[Resources](#)

SEAL, Second Step, The Way the Truth and the Life

[Review and Further Developments](#)

Agreed by governors: Autumn 2017

This policy will be reviewed within 3 years.

[Further Reading](#)

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 2017