



# SPIRITUAL AND MORAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

## **Mission Statement**

This is our school St Werburgh's and St Columba's  
A place to be inspired, be accepted, be yourself and be unique.  
Be able to grow spiritually, academically and morally.  
Be able to contribute to the community and be a responsible global citizen.  
Be able to reach for the stars and fulfil your potential.  
A place, providing an excellent Catholic education for everyone.  
Where we belong, where everyone belongs.

**Action : Spring 2023**

**Review: Autumn 2026**

## OVERVIEW

Our Mission Statement underlines how the 'Every Child Matters' agenda has always been so important for us and how the ECM ideals are at the heart of Catholic education. We believe that:

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)

..by his Incarnation, the Son of God has united himself in some fashion with every man and woman. He worked with human hands, he thought with a human mind, he acted by human choice, he loved with a human heart.

(Gaudium et Spes ~ the Church in the modern world ~ Vatican 2)

... the sense for the presence of God in the world around us and in our own hearts, awakens the creative powers in our nature and calls us to express our joy in art and poetry, in music and dance, and to order our lives in justice and truth.

(Bede Griffiths OSB)

## SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual education helps pupils to acquire insights into their personal existence which are of lasting value. It is characterised by reflection, making sense of their experiences and valuing a non-material dimension to life, "Spiritual" is not synonymous with "religious"; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

Spiritual development is concerned with how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour questions which are "at the heart and root of existence". It is also about what a school provides – through its curriculum, through Collective Worship, through its ethos and climate – to help individuals to make sense of these questions, and about what it does to help form pupils' response to life and to various forms of experience, or even to questions about the universe.

Spiritual Development involves:

- the development of insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values which guide and motivated us. For many pupils, these will have a significant religious belief;
- a developing understanding of feelings and emotions which causes us to reflect and to learn;
- for all pupils, a developing recognition that their insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values influence, inspire or guide them in life. \*

## OBJECTIVES

- Work with children in a wide range of ways to support them in developing:
- a set of values, principles and beliefs, which may or may not be religious, which informs their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour;
- an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs;
- a respect for themselves and others;
- a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion;
- an increasing ability to reflect and learn from this reflections;
- 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.

## **STRATEGIES**

- give pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives;
- where pupils already have religious beliefs, support and develop these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them;
- encourage pupils to explore and develop what animates themselves and others;
- encourage pupils to reflect and learn from reflection;
- give pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful;
- develop a climate or ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected;
- promote 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'.
- Monitor in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

## **OUTCOMES**

Children will develop a spiritual awareness which enables them to develop their relationship with God. They will be able to spend quiet and reflective periods of time, both alone and in a group. They will develop a sense of awe and wonder of the world He created.

## **Moral Development**

### **OVERVIEW**

"Moral education helps pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding, intention, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right or wrong"

As they develop a sense of morality, pupils should become more able to explore the place of reason in ethical matters and, as autonomous moral agents, acquire value systems, which are their own (rather than simply transmitted by others and accepted uncritically), together with the understanding that their behaviour and actions should derive from those beliefs and values. Schools can do much to encourage young people in their early years by providing them with a moral framework within which to operate and, 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.

Moral development involves the distinction between right and wrong, good and evil in a social context. Moral development, therefore, is about a growing awareness of, and a positive response

to, the demands of living as an individual with others in the community. Schools, therefore, need to consider how an individual pupil and, of course, a teacher can best develop in his or her unique way within an identifiable community.

## **OBJECTIVES**

- 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 applications to contemporary issues.\*

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.

## **STRATEGIES**

- provide a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school;
- promote measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria;
- give 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;
- develop an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision making;
- reward expressions of moral insights and good behaviour;
- make 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;
- model, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the principles which they wish to promote – for example, fairness, integrity, respect for persons, pupil's welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contracts;
- recognise and respect the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community;
- encourage pupils to take responsibility for their actions, for example, respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour;
- provide models for moral virtue through literature, humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts of worship;

- reinforce the school's values through images, posters, classroom displays, screensavers and exhibitions;
- monitor, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

## **OUTCOMES**

Children will listen to their conscience, learn from their experiences and make positive choices which prompt them to do what is right out of love for others, respect for themselves and regard for the world in which they live.

Pupils' morality is promoted and developed through the entire educative process especially through:

- distinctive nature ethos;
- curriculum subjects especially Religious Education;
- Collective Worship.