

West Park

'A caring school where we put pupils and their achievement first'



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Policy

This policy takes full account of the school's legal obligations and the latest Ofsted/HMI Guidance March 2004.

Introduction

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is crucial for individual pupils and it is crucial for society as a whole. We see it as the heart of what education is all about - helping pupils grow and develop as people. This importance has repeatedly been recognised by legislators; schools are required by law to promote pupils' SMSC development and inspectors are required to inspect it. (Ofsted 2004).

Why we are interested in pupils' SMSC development?

The statutory requirement that schools should encourage pupils' SMSC development was first included in the Education Reform Act 1988. The Act began as follows:

'The curriculum for a maintained school (must be) a balanced and broadly based curriculum which:

- a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'

The Act clearly recognised that there is more to life than achieving high standards in academic subjects. The task was described as:

'...the training of good human beings, purposeful and wise, themselves with a vision of what it is to be human and the kind of society that makes that possible'.

Today, the responsibility of educators and others in the importance of encouraging pupils' SMSC development remains strong. Whether talking about the family, teenage pregnancy, the misuse of drugs, ethics in business or politics, football hooliganism, homophobia, the promotion of good race relations, the consequences of social disadvantage, a failure to vote at elections, or the host of other issues which raise spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, the debate very quickly turns to schools and the role they can play.

There have been recent, significant, national initiatives in personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, sex and relationship education (SRE), drug education, and careers education and guidance, all of which are linked to pupils' SMSC development. Recent legislation on race equality, special educational needs, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age has significant links to pupils' SMSC development. Schools have a statutory duty to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against and to promote good race relations. Schools must have regard to guidance set out in codes of practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Department for Education and Skills and the Disability Rights Commission

In our school we have policies to support many of these national initiatives.

Opportunities for pupils to experience and learn about Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development in our school

It is an expectation at this school that all staff, in all subjects, can and should make a contribution to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of pupils through the taught curriculum and through the use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies e.g. discussion, reflection, pupil participation, circle time etc

(Please refer to the guidance attached as an appendix to this exemplar policy for guidance around the distinction between the four concepts Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural and suggestions as to how each can be separately addressed in the formal and informal curriculum).

Dissemination of the Policy

The policy is available to all pupils, parents, teachers and Governors in hard copy from the school office or on the school's website.

Policy Review and Development Plan

This policy will be reviewed annually as part of the Pastoral Development Plan.

Sources of Further Information

This policy has drawn on:

Promoting and evaluating pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (*Ofsted/HMI March 2004*).

Appendix A

Extract from 'Promoting and Evaluating Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development' - HMI 2125, March 2004

This section of the guidance discusses working definitions of 'spiritual', 'moral', 'social' and 'cultural' development.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of pupils' development are inter-related. Attempting to disaggregate them is helpful for the purpose of analysis and also inspection and school self-improvement. But it should not be forgotten that there is much overlap between them, not least in respect of spirituality and its links to pupils' attitudes, morals, behaviour in society and cultural understanding.

Spiritual Development

Ofsted's view of spiritual development:

The 1994 inspection handbook attempted a definition of spiritual development: 'Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal experience 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. 'Spiritual' is not synonymous with 'religious'; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils' spiritual development.'¹

It also said that spiritual development is about how a school helps:

'...individuals to make sense of these questions, and about what it does to help form pupils' response to life and various forms of experience, or even to questions about the universe'.

The paper recognised that many people will express their spiritual awareness in religious terms: 'For those with a strong religious faith, the spiritual is very much at the heart of life'. However, it also recognised that non-believers also need to develop spiritually and added:

'The inspection framework must apply to both sets of individuals, and to those at all points on the spectrum. It is vital to press towards a common currency of shared understandings'.

The 1999 handbooks for inspecting schools talked about the likely contribution of knowledge and insights from real-life experiences and the curriculum, and about ‘opportunities to reflect on life’s fundamental questions’ and ‘special moments’ in pupils’ lives. While the handbooks commented that spiritual development ‘does not need to have a religious connection’, it nevertheless said that ‘in many schools...religious education will make a significant contribution...’

These themes and others have been carried through into the inspection framework and handbooks. For instance, in respect of spiritual development, the secondary handbook states:

‘Where schools foster successfully pupils’ self-awareness and understanding of the world around them and spiritual questions and issues, they will be developing a set of values, principles and beliefs – which may or may not be religious – to inform their perspective on life and their behaviour. They will defend their beliefs, challenge unfairness and all that would constrain their personal growth, for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision and all forms of discrimination.’

Moral Development

Moral development is about the building, by pupils, of a framework of moral values, which regulates their personal behaviour. It is also about the development of pupils’ understanding of society’s shared and agreed values. It is about understanding that there are issues where there is disagreement and it is also about understanding that society’s values change. Moral development is about gaining an understanding of the range of views and the reasons for the range. It is also about developing an opinion about the different views.

Evidence from inspections suggests that pupils’ moral development is generally good. Most schools encourage it successfully, adopting a co-ordinated and consistent approach. Most have well-defined standards of acceptable behaviour, supported by codes of conduct and systems of rewards and sanctions. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities often focus on a variety of moral themes, raise ethical issues and provide opportunities for discussion and debate.

On a more personal level, teachers have a significant responsibility for moral education. They inevitably define, for their pupils, standards of behaviour in the classroom and around the school. They engage pupils in thinking about their responsibilities when issues arise, such as keeping promises, telling the truth, or dealing with unfairness and injustice. They provide for pupils, whether consciously or unconsciously, a moral framework of values which guide their relationships with others. Teachers face moral dilemmas and demonstrate to pupils how they can be addressed. Teachers’ attitudes and interactions provide powerful role models.

There is actually much agreement on moral values. This was the conclusion of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community. An extract from the Statement of

Values it produced was later incorporated into the current National Curriculum handbooks published in 1999:

‘Schools and teachers can have confidence that there is general agreement in society upon these values. They can therefore expect the support and encouragement of society if they base their teaching and school ethos on these values.’

Social Development

Social development is about young people working effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole. It is about the development of the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together. It is about functioning effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. It involves growth in knowledge and understanding of society in all its aspects. This includes understanding people as well as understanding society’s institutions, structures and characteristics, economic and political principles and organisations, roles and responsibilities and life as a citizen, parent or worker in a community. It also involves the development of the inter-personal skills necessary for successful relationships.

The quality of our relationships defines the kind of people we are and, ultimately, the kind of world we live in. Our capacity to participate effectively in social life is crucial to our well-being and that of the communities we belong to. These communities are defined not only by the spaces we live in but also by the prevailing ideals and values and by the codes and structures for living together.

This was stressed in the 1999 inspection handbook with its emphasis on how well schools:

‘encourage pupils to take responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of living in a community.’

These ideas are also repeated in the 2003 inspection handbook, which states that:

‘pupils who are socially aware adjust appropriately and sensitively to a range of social contexts. They relate well to others and work successfully as a member of a team. Older pupils share their views and opinions and work towards trying to reach a sensible solution to problems. They show respect for people, living things, property and the environment.’

Pupils experience community at different levels. These start with the families or other units in which they live, work and play and go on to embrace local, national and global societies which are accessible to them through their own mobility, or through the media and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Schools have a vital role to play in developing pupils’ contacts with society at these different levels. This is very well recognised in guidance to schools. For example, in the non-statutory guidelines for PSHE published with the latest version of the National Curriculum, one of the three elements is headed: ‘Developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people’. The guidelines go on to say that pupils should be taught a range of things linked to different levels of society including the family, work and friendship groups, and society as a whole.

Finally, it is worth noting that schools, themselves, are social communities that offer a model for living and working together. It is here that pupils learn and experiment with the challenges and opportunities of belonging to a larger group. It is also where they will experience the tensions between their own aspirations and those of the wider community. Clearly, the quality of relationships in schools is significant in forming pupils' attitudes to acceptable social behaviour and self-discipline. It is also essential that they be given opportunities to exercise responsibility and to face the consequences of their choices and actions. Decisions about how pupils are grouped, for instance, have an important bearing on their opportunities to work co-operatively and responsibly, and to develop leadership qualities, as well as affecting their educational progress.

Cultural Development

Cultural development is about pupils' understanding their own culture and other cultures in their town, region and in the country as a whole. It is about understanding cultures represented in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It is about understanding and feeling comfortable in a variety of cultures and being able to operate in the emerging world culture of shared experiences provided by television, travel and the internet. It is about understanding that cultures are always changing and coping with change. Promoting pupils' cultural development is intimately linked with schools' attempts to value cultural diversity and prevent racism.

This definition echoes the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, *All our Futures*. According to this report, the four central roles for education in the cultural development of young people are to:

- *'enable young people to recognise, explore and understand their own cultural assumptions and values*
- *enable young people to embrace and understand cultural diversity by bringing them into contact with attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures*
- *encourage an historical perspective by relating contemporary values to the processes and events that have shaped them*
- *enable young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and the processes and potential for change'.*

Ofsted's definition recognises that pupils need to understand their own culture. This gives them a sense of identity and a language with which to communicate, receive and modify the shared values of the culture. Their culture embraces customs, history, geography, icons and images, artefacts, music, painting, sculpture, dance and technology as well as the spoken word and written literature. There will be agreed norms of behaviour. There will also be opportunities to participate in celebrations which mark key ideals or events.

But the definition also recognises that within any culture there will be sub-cultures and the dominant culture of any one group of people is only one among many in the world. Moreover, people increasingly need to understand and feel comfortable with a world culture that is developing alongside improvements in communications, including transport, television and ICT.

Ofsted's definition recognises that cultures are always changing and growing; they are never static. Therefore, cultural development must go beyond just learning the norms and skills of a group of people; it also involves understanding the processes of cultural development and change and an appreciation of the inter-dependence of different cultures. It means facing the prejudices (however unwitting) which lead to dismissing or marginalising unfamiliar traditions. This was recognised in the 1999 Ofsted handbook when it spoke of the need to:

'look for evidence of how the school promotes the cultural traditions of its own area and the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.'

It is also recognised in the 2003 handbook when it speaks of pupils:

'...appreciating cultural diversity and according dignity to other people's values and beliefs. They challenge racism and value race equality...'

Ofsted's definition therefore embraces the challenge to improve pupils' understanding of change and diversity made in Recommendation 67 of the MacPherson Report after the murder of Stephen Lawrence. This suggests that schools need to do more to value cultural diversity and prevent racism to better 'reflect the needs of a diverse society'.