

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

1. Introduction

This policy is based on the Mission Statement of the School.

The policy statement provides an overview of provision in the school for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. More detail on ways in which aspects of school life, curriculum subjects and collective worship contribute is given in the relevant policy statements.

The school sets out to plan provision for these areas of development, but we expect many unplanned opportunities to occur (especially for spiritual development) and encourage staff to 'seize the moment' when appropriate. Such moments may have a profound effect on individuals.

2. How the policy was prepared and authorised

This document was prepared and authorised in the following way: initially during an INSET meeting the whole staff, including non-teaching staff, met to discuss what was meant by the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of their work. In emphasising the spiritual aspects staff were encouraged to discover their contribution to the life of the school. The Governors were asked to do the same and the document produced was further revised by a working party making use of the diocesan model.

3. Spiritual Development

(OFSTED Framework 1996, section 5.3, states: "Judgements (about the opportunities for spiritual development) will be based on the extent to which the school provides its pupils with knowledge and insight into values and beliefs and enables them to reflect on their experiences in a way which develops their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge".

Saint Aidan's Church of England High School sets out to promote spiritual development within a context of Christian beliefs, values and worship, and seeks to provide students with opportunities to explore the Christian faith and develop a relationship with God. We also try to support a journey of faith and belief for those children whose family background is in another religious tradition or none at all.

The school's curriculum (in its broadest sense) aims to develop in students:

- * A set of Christian personal beliefs and values by which to live;
- * A sense of transcendence – that there is more to life than 'meets the eye', more than a physical or material existence;
- * An awareness of order, pattern, meaning and purpose in the world – leading towards an understanding that for Christians, creation is a revelation of God's loving purposes;

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- * A capacity for awe, wonder and mystery; an awareness of uncertainty and paradox;
- * A sense of personal identity and self-worth and of all others as created in God's image;
- * Self-knowledge, and an awareness and growth of feelings, emotions and imagination;
- * An understanding of Christian teaching on life and death, on suffering, grief and loss;
- * An awareness that life involves choices between good and evil;
- * An awareness of God's love and care for them personally;
- * An understanding of the Christian belief of Jesus as Saviour.

The school sets out, therefore, to provide opportunities in collective worship and throughout the curriculum and life of the school for students to:

- * Be quiet and reflect on life and the world, and 'wait on God'.
- * Become familiar with traditional forms of Christian prayer and worship.
- * Give thanks to God for their creation, preservation, salvation, and the promise of eternal life.
- * Use a variety of prayer forms and techniques; use their own prayers.
- * Question, explore, discuss and give an account of their own beliefs.
- * Understand and evaluate Christian and some other interpretations and responses to life.
- * Use the gifts of imagination and creativity.
- * Explore and express feelings and emotions.
- * Develop respect for others as independent, thinking, feeling people.
- * Face difficult or distressing matters in a context of loving Christian teaching and support.

Spiritual development has to take place in a particular context, in our case that of Christian belief and practice. Christian spiritual development shares features with other forms of spirituality in that it is concerned with coming to know ourselves, learning to reflect on experiences, exploring important questions of how to live and treat others, and so reaching a set of beliefs and values by which to guide our lives. Its distinctiveness, most importantly, consists in its capacity through a context of Christian worship, life and teaching, to offer opportunities for all in the school community to develop a relationship with God through Jesus.

Spiritual development in a Christian context is only possible when there is growth of the whole person. It therefore forms the basis for the other three areas of moral, social and cultural development. The school makes systematic use of the published Diocesan and District RE guidelines and materials on "God, Prayer and Spirituality" and invites the co-operation and involvement of the incumbent/minister and other clergy. Provision for spiritual development is made in most subjects across the curriculum of the school (see relevant policy statements).

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4. Moral Development

(OFSTED Framework 1996 states that moral teaching: “teaches the principles which distinguish right from wrong.”)

The school endorses the values and principles set out on the SCAA (1969) consultation paper “Values in Education and the Community”, though in some instances – particularly in upholding the centrality of marriage as a life long union between a man and a woman, we go beyond the values expressed in that document. The school aims to develop in students a moral stance which is based on Christian ideals of love, justice, peace, truth, compassion, redemption and forgiveness based on recognition of others as created in the image of God. We seek to develop in students a clear understanding of all these values and enable them to put them into practice in their life in and out of school. The school behaviour policy and code of conduct affirm these values and set out in detail ways of encouraging and rewarding them in line with the mission statement. The school will seek to ensure that adult relationships in the school set the best possible Christian example. We believe that both adults and pupils can be helped to live out these Christian values through the action of the Holy Spirit.

It is insufficient for children simply to conform to an imposed set of Christian standards. The school therefore aims to provide opportunities for students through the curriculum and school life to:

- * Develop an understanding of right and wrong.
- * Develop an understanding of the need for shared values and accepted rules of conduct in school and community.
- * Develop self-discipline and a loving concern for others.
- * Understand links between behaviour and beliefs, including the teachings of the Gospel.
- * Stand up for and put into practice our Christian values despite external pressures.

In order to achieve this, children need to develop the following habits and skills:

- * Appreciate the feelings and concerns of others.
- * Develop and sustain relationships.
- * Reflect on questions of right and wrong and on their own values.
- * Discuss their own beliefs and feelings.
- * Listen with respect to the views and opinions of others.
- * Discuss and debate issues rationally and sensitively.
- * Exercise care and responsibility for others.

The exploration of moral issues, of questions of right and wrong, and of Christian teaching on appropriate ways in which to live, will be fostered within the programme of collective worship and RE and through every curriculum area. The school offers guidance to teachers on Christian approaches to teaching controversial or sensitive issues (see other relevant policy statements, e.g. sex education).

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The school seeks to recognise and affirm good conduct, commitment and service to others through its reward system, through the 16x16 award scheme, and through celebration and thanks in the context of collective worship.

5. Social Development

(OFSTED Framework 1996 states that social development: “encourages students to relate positively to others, take responsibility, participate fully in the community and develop an understanding of citizenship”).

Because Christians believe that we are “all one in Christ” and members of God’s family in the Church and accept Christ’s commandment to “love our neighbours as ourselves”, the school sets out to foster the commitment and ability to live and work with others, to share resources and to show concern and responsibility for others in the school and wider community. Classroom management will seek to promote group co-operation and mutual responsibility. Children will be pointed to the value and importance of working, playing and praying together.

The school seeks to avoid a predominance of groupings based on a single sex or interest, or social or ethnic background. It sets out to offer a wide range of educational, social, sporting and extra-curricular activities to all its members. In sport, there will be a balance of individual and team activities, both competitive and non-competitive.

Responsible leadership roles will be encouraged in a range of activities, including extra-curricular, and through the appointment of proctors and senior officers of the school.

Industrial and ‘business enterprise’ schemes will be characterised by stewardship of resources and care for, and enhancement of, the environment.

The school’s aim to develop social skills and insights through the full range of activities in school involving children and adults, and by creating situations where students have to relate to visitors to the school and do so with increasing politeness, tact and confidence.

Children will be encouraged to participate in and contribute to the life of the Church and the community through service to the needy, voluntary groups, choir or other involvement in church worship, parish and community activities.

The school’s programme of fund-raising, the way funds are raised and the Christian, charitable and other causes chosen will contribute to developing the habit of care and support for those in need. Students will be given the opportunity to choose charities the school should support, and to take an active part in planning and carrying out fund-raising.

Social achievement and service to church or community will be recognised and celebrated as described in the previous section.

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6. Cultural Development

(OFSTED Framework 1996 states that cultural development is concerned with teaching students to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the diversity and richness of other cultures.)

The school aims to broaden students' horizons by introducing them to a range of cultural activities and experiences, by building up an appreciation of their own cultural heritage and traditions, and introducing them to examples of the variety of human cultures, beliefs and ways of life. At the same time the school will seek to emphasise and express its Christian foundation, values, beliefs and way of life.

The planned programme includes the following:

Experience and appreciation of the rich heritage and range of cultures in Britain, in particular through English, Drama, History, RE, Music, Art and Sport;

Appreciation and respect for other cultures, faiths and ways of life, in particular through use of the Diocesan/RE syllabus and relevant curriculum materials (see the school RE policy), and through all curriculum areas. Developing links and shared activities with German and South African schools (which has a contrasting cultural or social intake) and exploring the cultures of the pupils who attend the school.

Educational visits to museums, events and places of cultural and historic interest.

The school sets out actively to promote mutual respect and harmony between different racial and ethnic groups.

7. Co-ordination and Monitoring

The policy will be co-ordinated and monitored regularly by the Head or Deputy in consultation with the RE Co-ordinator.

8. Evaluation, Review and Development

The progress and implementation of the policy will be discussed annually at the staff meeting and a report made to the Governors' Curriculum/Student committee, including any proposals for staff development or re-sourcing, or with implications for the school Development Plan. There will be annual review including provision for further INSET for staff and governors and consultation with parents and older students.

Reviewed by	Mrs Diane Cox
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