



St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Policy: Spiritual Development Policy

Review date: September 2021

Next review: September 2024



MISSION STATEMENT

Growing Together in God's Love



Give love in all we do and say

- We live out our school values of:
 - Love
 - Peace
 - Forgiveness
 - Fairness

Which are based on Gospel teachings (The Beatitudes).

- We welcome everyone into our safe and caring family.
- We always try to be positive role models.

Rejoice in God's friendship

- We pray together every day and in many different ways.
- We continue our journey in the Catholic faith and develop our own personal relationship with God.
- We celebrate the awe and wonder of God's creation and look after our world.

Open our hearts to others

- We share our time and talents to enrich the lives of others.
- We build positive relationships within our school family and extend this to the wider community.
- We celebrate our culture whilst exploring and respecting the beliefs and cultures of others.

Work at being the best we can be

- We understand that each of us has been made in the image and likeness of God with our own unique talents and gifts.
- We have high expectations: listening, reflecting and always trying our hardest.
- We value, encourage and support everyone in our school family.

Definition

Spiritual Development helps pupils gain insight into their personal everlasting value and it is usually stimulated and facilitated by personal reflection. 'Spiritual' is not always synonymous with 'religious' - all areas of the curriculum and school life may contribute to pupils' spiritual development.

The main theme of spiritual development is how a child acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion and whether life has purpose. Personal and social behaviour questions are also at the heart of a child's existence and have a part to play in spiritual development. It is therefore, about what a school provides through its Curriculum, Collective Worship and through its ethos and climate – to help pupils make sense of these questions and to form responses to life and to various experiences they may have.

Spiritual development relates and is intertwined with the educational mission of the Church and is rooted in Christ's mission '*... that all may have life and have it to the full*' (John 10:10). This involves the ongoing development of the entire potential of each individual made in the image and likeness of God.

A working definition of spiritual development has been provided by Ofsted and they identify three principal elements.

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

The task faced by school is then, 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 belief.' (Promoting and Evaluating Pupils' Moral, Social and Cultural Development – Ofsted March 2004)

The importance and significance of spiritual development has been acknowledged by government legislation as being vital to the holistic development of pupils. (Education Reform Act 1988, Education Act 1992, School Inspections Act 1996)

At St Thomas of Canterbury, spiritual development is at the heart of all we do. Spiritual development pervades all subject areas and the daily life of the school.

Characteristics of Spirituality

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 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, aggression, greed, injustice, narrow vision, self-interest, racism and other forms of discrimination
- An appreciation of the intangible – beauty, truth, love, goodness, order, mystery
- 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, perspective
- An understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact.

Promoting Spiritual Development

In order to encourage pupils spiritual development at St Thomas of Canterbury

- Pupils are given the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way in which they impact on people's lives.

Where pupils already have religious beliefs they are supported in developing these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them.

- Pupils are encouraged to explore what animates themselves and others.

By encouraging pupils to reflect and learn from reflection e.g. Collective Worship

- Through giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful.
- By developing a climate/ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected.
- By accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals.
- Through promoting teaching styles which:
 - ✚ Value pupil's questions and give them room for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns.
 - ✚ Enable pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning, encouraging pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference – for example asking why, how and where as well as 'what'
 - ✚ Through monitoring, in simple pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

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

The Distinctive Nature of Our School

The ethos at St. Thomas of Canterbury encourages the development of positive relationships with all members of the school community. We work to encourage a culture of mutual care within our school family. When appropriate, visits to church are undertaken and the children are encouraged to actively participate in the celebration of Mass and other services. Preparation for First Holy Communion and the Sacrament of Reconciliation also provide opportunities for the promotion of spiritual development on a personal basis.

Curriculum Subjects

The opportunity for promoting spiritual development arises in a wide range of curriculum areas. RE is seen as the prime curriculum opportunity for promoting spiritual development. St. Thomas of Canterbury School recognises that the spiritual development can also be encouraged through a variety of other curriculum areas such as PSHE, Literacy and Science. It is highlighted that the spiritual development of learners filters into other curriculum areas and should not specifically be left to Religious Education.

Collective Worship

There are a variety of opportunities for Collective Worship at school. Twice a week, there is Collective Worship for the whole school. This is led by the staff and pupils. The theme of the Collective Worship relates to the seasons of the church year and the current topic being covered in the 'Come and See' programme. During the remainder of the week Collective Worship takes place in class and is facilitated in a variety of ways, some classes having the children involved in the planning and delivery of Collective Worship. Prayer is an important part of our day at St. Thomas of Canterbury and our children are encouraged to be reverent and respectful.

Resources

There is a wide variety of resources available to provide ideas and assistance with areas of Spiritual development such as books, bibles, posters and music. Each class teacher has resources in the classroom and additional resources are stored in the RE cupboard in the Collective Worship area.

The RE Subject Leader and the Headteacher are also available to help staff. The school also uses resources such as CAFOD and Mission Together to highlight moral judgement situations and encourage the thinking and self-development process of each child.

Development

A copy of this policy is available for all staff to read and is placed on the shared staff drive. This policy will be reviewed within the cycle of policy reviews for the school and feedback will be invited from staff and governors. The impact of this policy will be evident in the way in which our children develop a growing awareness of and a positive response to the demands of living in today's world.