



St Thomas of Canterbury Catholic Primary School

Policy: Moral 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.

Aims of Moral Development

Moral development should help the child gain an intuitive understanding of what is right and wrong. Children will be taught the process of reflecting on an event or experience and taking into account what should happen to best promote the gospel values of love, honesty and fairness. Children will be encouraged to make decisions based on their own beliefs and values recognising that other people's may differ from their own.

As they develop a sense of morality, children should become more able to explore the place of reason in ethical matters and acquire value systems which are their own, rather than simply transmitted by others and accepted uncritically. They should also develop an understanding that their behaviour and actions should derive from these 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. As they mature, we can help them to decide what they hold as right and wrong, how they should act and why they do so. That is, that they should behave well, in accordance with a moral code.

'Moral development involves the distinction between right and wrong, and good and evil in a social context. Therefore, moral development is about a growing awareness of, and a positive response to the demands of living as an individual with others in community. As a school, therefore, it is important to consider how an individual pupil and a teacher can best develop his or her unique way within an identifiable Catholic community'. (Spiritual and Moral Development across the Curriculum- Catholic Education Service).

The educational mission of the Church brings to life Christ's new commandment '... that you love one another as I have loved you ...' This gospel value is lived out in the daily life of the school in many ways including:

-  Forgiveness
-  Freedom
-  Tolerance
-  Respect
-  Relationships

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

Ofsted does not define a set of morals. Instead, it defines the essence of moral development as the building of:

'... a framework of moral values which regulate personal behaviour ... through teaching and promoting principles rather than through reward or fear or punishment'.

This involves

- 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 consequence of actions.
- Promoting, at an appropriate level, pupils' understanding of the basis of moral philosophy and the skills of analysis, debate, judgement and application to contemporary issues.'

(Contributing to Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development. Ofsted 2014)

Characteristics of Morality:

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.
- ✚ A ability to think through the consequences of their own actions and others actions.
- ✚ A willingness to express their views on ethical 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.

Promoting Moral Development

In order to encourage pupils' moral development at St Thomas of Canterbury:

- ✚ We provide a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school.
- ✚ We promote measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria.
- ✚ We give pupils opportunities, across the curriculum, to explore and develop moral concepts and values – for example, personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality or opportunity, right and wrong.
- ✚ We provide an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practice moral decision making.
- ✚ We reward expressions of moral insight and good behaviour.
- ✚ We deal with breaches of agreed moral codes where they arise, for example, in the press, on television and the internet as well as school.
- ✚ By modelling, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the Christian principles which we wish to promote – for example, fairness, integrity, respect for persons, pupil welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contracts.
- ✚ Through recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community.
- ✚ By encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions; for example, respect for property, care of the environment and developing codes of behaviour e.g. class rules.
- ✚ By providing models of moral virtue through literacy, the humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts of worship.
- ✚ Through reinforcing the school's values through the Mission Statement, images, posters and classroom displays.
- ✚ By monitoring, in simple pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

People who are developing morally listen to their conscience, the inner sense, informed by their upbringing, experiences and faith or religious beliefs that prompts them to do what is right out of love for others, respect for themselves and regard for the world in which they live.

The morality of pupils at St Thomas of Canterbury is promoted and developed through the entire educative process.

The Distinctive Nature of our Catholic School:

The ethos at St Thomas of Canterbury encourages the development of a positive moral base in our dealings with everyone and the way in which we treat the world around us. School policies, such as Special Needs, Equality, Behaviour and Safeguarding show our commitment towards the moral development of the children in our care. Moral development is also encouraged through class rules which are a focus for positive behaviour throughout the school.

St Thomas of Canterbury's curriculum works towards this through:

- ✚ Teaching the mission statement
- ✚ Discussion of class and playground rules
- ✚ Discussing issues through circle time
- ✚ Reflective time in RE lessons
- ✚ Discussing behaviour related incidents.
- ✚ Modelling fairness and discussion when dealing with behaviour related incidents
- ✚ Rewarding good behaviour during assemblies and praise in the classroom

As children mature they are encouraged to empathise and learn the art of persuasion rather than aggressive coercion. In addition we will help them to compromise rather than seeing the world from their sole perspective. We recognise that promoting self esteem is very important. We take every opportunity to involve the children in the decision making process. This is achieved through:

- ✚ School Council
- ✚ Chaplaincy Group
- ✚ Questionnaires to children
- ✚ Circle time
- ✚ Opportunities to speak at public events and whole school events

Curriculum Subjects

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

Collective Worship

The 'Come and See' programmes studied at any given time are reflected in all our forms of celebration. Time and space are set aside to:

- wonder at
- contemplate
- mark as special
- come to terms with
- give worth to the mystery of life – faith they have explored
- grow in awareness of and actively respond to the spiritual dimension of life
- develop the capacities and skills to participate in and plan worship and celebrations

Assemblies are held once a week and Key Stage celebration assemblies are held at the end of each topic. The whole school gathers to worship and celebrate the major festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Holy Week. Within assemblies, time is set aside for collective worship in the form of prayer, song and reflection.

Each day opportunities are taken for collective worship in all classes. This will include the use of formal and informal prayer.

Resources

There is a wide variety of resources available to provide ideas and assistance with areas of moral development such as books, bibles, posters and music. Each class teacher has some resources in the classroom and additional resources are stored in the RE Cupboard in the library.

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 from each child.

Development

A copy of this policy is made 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 children, staff and governors. The impact of this policy will be evident in the way in which children develop a growing awareness and a positive response to the demands of living in today's world.