

HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

MORAL EDUCATION

Moral Development

“Moral education helps pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is right and 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 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 and, as they mature, by helping them to decide what to 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 growing awareness of, and a positive response to, the demands of living as an individual with others in community. Schools, therefore, need to consider how an individual pupil and, of course, a Teacher and Teaching Assistants, can best develop in 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” John13.34. 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 (School) Act 1992, School Inspection Act 1996.

There are clearly areas where there is a broad range of opinion and there will always be debate about moral values, about their relativity to certain historical areas or cultural contexts and about the possibility of universal moral standards. Such debate is at the heart of moral education. Schools, teachers, pupils and parents will differ, as

well as agree on some values but they generally help pupils understand the reasons for this.

The Ofsted Inspection Handbook 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 of 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 consequences of actions.
- Promoting, at an appropriate level, pupils’ understanding of basic moral philosophy and the skills of analysis, debate, judgement and application to contemporary issues. (Promoting and evaluating pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development)

EVALUATION CRITERIA

Moral education is to be evaluated by the extent to which the school is:

- Providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently throughout all aspects of the school.
- Promoting measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria.
- Giving 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.
- Developing an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practice moral decision-making.
- Rewarding expressions of moral insights and good behaviour.
- Making 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.
- Modelling, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the principles which they wish to promote – for example, fairness, integrity, respect for persons, pupils’ welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contract.
- Recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community.
- Encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions – for example, respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour.
- Providing models of moral virtue through literature, humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts or worship.
- Reinforcing the school’s values through images, posters, classroom displays, screensavers, exhibitions.
- Monitoring, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

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.

People who are developing morally listen to their conscience, the inner self, informed by their upbringing, experience 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.

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

- **Distinctive nature ethos**
- **Curriculum subjects, especially Religious Education**
- **Collective Worship**