

HOLY NAME CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

SPIRITUAL EDUCATION

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

Spiritual Education helps pupils to acquire insights into their personal existence which are enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and imitations of an enduring reality. “Spiritual” is not synonymous with “religious”; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils’ development.

Spiritual Development, then, is how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour questions which are “at the heart and root of existence”. It is, therefore also about what a school provides – through its curriculum, through Collective Worship, through its ethos and climate – to help individuals to make sense of these questions, and about what it does to help form pupils’ response to life and to various forms of experience, or even to questions about the universe.

The educational mission of the Church 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 and finding fulfilment in God alone. (Religious Education in Catholic Schools Bishops of England and Wales May 2000)

The importance of Spiritual 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 have provided a working definition of Spiritual Development. They identify 3 principle elements.

Spiritual Development involves:

- 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 to 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 schools 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 basis. (Promoting and evaluating pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Ofsted 2004)

Evaluation criteria

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

- ❑ Giving pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs and the way in which they impact on peoples' lives;
- ❑ Where pupils already have religious beliefs, supporting and developing these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them;
- ❑ Encouraging pupils to explore and develop what animates themselves and others;
- ❑ Giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful;
- ❑ Developing a climate or ethos within all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected;
- ❑ Accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals;
- ❑ Promoting teaching styles which;
 - value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns
 - enable pupils to make connections between aspect of their learning
 - encourage pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference – for example: asking 'why,' 'how' and 'where' as well as 'what;'
- ❑ monitoring in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

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

- ❑ Distinctive nature – ethos;
- ❑ Curriculum subjects, especially Religious Education;
- ❑ Collective Worship.

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 for 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 or aspiration, lack of confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, agreed injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination.
- ❑ An appreciation of the intangible – for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order as well for mystery, paradox and ambiguity.
- ❑ A respect for insight as well as knowledge and reason.
- ❑ An expression and/or creative impulse.
- ❑ An ability to think in terms of the 'whole' – for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective.
- ❑ An understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact.