POLICY for

Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development

(SMSC)

September 2016	**September 2022**	**September 2025**
September 2019	**September 2023**	
May 2021	**September 2024**	

Striving for excellence, caring for all
Within a loving and caring Christian environment.

Our Academy Vision

We are a community in which everyone is offered the opportunity to fulfil their full potential, to understand themselves and be valued for who they are. Through a stimulating and challenging learning environment, we pursue academic excellence and seek the flourishing of all. This is because we know we are all God's children.

"Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can."
John Wesley

Our mission statement:
'Striving for excellence whilst caring for all within a loving and caring Christian environment.'

'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind' and 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' Luke 10:27

- As a RRS (Rights Respecting School – UNICEF) this policy upholds the following articles from the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child):
- Article 2: Everyone has equal rights whatever their race, religion, ability, whatever they think or say or whatever their family.
- Article 14: Every child has the right to follow their own religion.
- Article 29: Every child has the right to be the best they can.

This policy outlines the purpose, nature and management of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education within our Academies Trust.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the CEO / Executive Headteacher/Headteacher/ Head of School, all teaching staff and Governors.

As a Church of England Academy Trust, we take our duty to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development of pupils seriously, including the duty to promote British Values.

'Church of England schools have a distinctive identity and ethos, popular with parents and families, where the development of social, spiritual and emotional intelligence is as important as academic achievement.' (www.churchofengland.org/education).

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It has to do with the search for individual identity and with our responses to challenging experiences such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It is to do with the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live.

Aim
That all pupils will develop a positive attitude towards themselves and others, show respect for the world they live in and deal with everyday life situations in a confident and understanding way.

Entitlement
The Education Reform Act refers to a dimension of human existence which is termed the 'Spiritual' and which applies to all pupils. The potential for Spiritual Development is open to everyone and is not confined to the development of religious beliefs or conversion to a particular faith.

Spiritual Development

"Spirituality can be defined as relational awareness of self, other, the world and beauty, and the beyond." Rebecca Nye

In keeping with our Christian vision, we recognise that we are all created in God's image and have a spiritual dimension to our existence. We nurture this through the academic rigor we bring to our work and through our passion to help children and adults to flourish and achieve their God given potential. At Abbey Academies Trust, we believe that our role is to educate the whole child and the spiritual growth of our children is an important and vital contributor to their academic and personal development. Children's spiritual development is nurtured through all aspects of our provision. We believe it is important to develop strong relationships using our school vision and values as well as the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

As church schools we understand spirituality as the way in which we combine our thoughts and emotions to reflect, respond to and seek to give meaning and purpose to the experiences that we encounter in life. We provide a variety of opportunities to develop and promote children's spirituality as an ongoing, reflective journey. It teaches us about questioning, understanding and relationships: relationships with ourselves, others, the world and beyond. Spirituality enables our children to be happy; to flourish, to succeed and to live life in all its fullness.

Spirituality is about seeking a meaningful connection with something bigger than oneself, which can result in positive emotions, such as peace, awe and wonder.

Children are provided with explicit and intentionally planned opportunities to develop the four elements of spirituality across the curriculum at school. We also expect there to be unplanned spur-of-the-moment opportunities within any school day. Examples of this can be found in the document Spirituality within the curriculum.

The elements of spirituality are:

 SELF	 OTHERS
These are opportunities for our children to think about themselves and: • to look inward at yourself and to think, learn and reflect on their own experiences • to consider some of the BIG challenging questions of life and consider some possible answers • to explore their own insights and those of others • to have an awareness of feelings; ability to reflect and express • to have an awareness of our uniqueness; happiness with who we are • to have gratitude for the things we have and the person we are • to explore personal faith and beliefs • to develop imagination and creativity • to make a difference; to understand duty; to aspire to be a courageous advocate and an Agent of Change	These are opportunities for our children to think about others and: • to look out at others • to learn about life in all its fullness • to learn about life by looking at it in new ways • to love and be loved (loving your neighbour) • to gaze on, learn from and to wonder about others • to wonder about life's 'WOWs - things that are amazing and life's 'OWs' – things that are worrying or upsetting • to be aware of things that are 'awe-full' and make us wonder and be grateful and things that are 'awful' and make us wonder and ask questions. • to have empathy and understanding; to understand respect

 THE WORLD	 BEYOND (TRANSCENDENCE)
These are opportunities for our children to think about the world around them, beauty and imagination and: • to engage with the world in all its glory • to developing a sense of awe and wonder • to enjoy the miracles of everyday life • to take time for what really matters • to learn about religious and non-religious worldviews • to live out their beliefs and values • to live out our Christian values in the wider world • to put thoughts, ideas and convictions into action • to have the confidence to truly believe that they can make a difference in the world • to aspire to be an Agent of Change • to do something creative to develop and apply their ideas • to appreciating beauty in art, music, nature	These are opportunities for our children to think about beyond what we can see and: • to look beyond: to reflect on our learning and experiences • to have a sense of what lies beyond the material/physical) • to have opportunities to encounter, experience, connect to God or a higher being • to have opportunities for prayer and reflection • to have the ability to ask and discuss the 'Big Questions' (eg about life, death, suffering, nature of God) • to encourage individuals to acknowledge emotions • to think about beliefs and practices • to explore their higher purpose in life

Collective Worship and Religious Education are two key areas of school life that provide ideal vehicles for effective spiritual development.

Collective Worship provides opportunities for:

- reflection and response
- thinking deeply and drawing links between ideas
- stillness and prayer
- the respect of personal and collective beliefs
- sharing and celebrating common beliefs
- celebrating success and talent
- sharing happiness, sorrow, hurt, excitement, anticipation, fear, etc.
- shared activities such as singing, listening, laughing, reflecting on a theme
- remembering and celebrating the lives of people of spiritual significance
- emphasising common purpose and values
- experiencing emotions
- taking part with sincerity and a sense of higher purpose
- through pupil-led worship, children have opportunity to support the spiritual development of others, that in turn leads to a sense of fulfilment and is therefore a spiritual experience for the young leaders
- creative responses to experience such as music, drama, poetry, story
- the use of visual stimulus such as religious symbols, candles, art, icons, photos, videos

Religious Education is a subject that looks at the spiritual experiences of others and how these change and shape their lives. RE allows children to use what they find out about other people and their beliefs to reflect on their own experiences. Through this process, children can engage with ultimate questions of meaning and purpose and begin to shape their own beliefs. RE allows children to engage with the idea of mystery and questions with no clear answers.

Moral Development

Moral Development, like Spiritual Development, cannot be defined by one simple statement. It involves several elements:

1. The will to behave morally as a point of principle and recognise right and wrong. This sense of moral responsibility is fundamental to moral development.

2. Knowledge of the codes and conventions of conduct agreed by society, both non-statutory and those prescribed by law.

3. Knowledge and understanding of the criteria put forward as a basis for making responsible judgements on moral issues.

4. The ability to offer reasoned views, make judgements on and understand the consequences of moral issues, as they arise by applying moral principles, insights and reasoning.

Our Academies Trust supports children's moral development by:

- Providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school
- Promoting racial, religious and other forms of equality
- Challenging stereotyping
- 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 practise moral decision making
- Rewarding expressions of moral insights and good behaviour
- 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 and assemblies; reinforcing the school's values through images, posters, classroom displays, etc. and monitoring in simple ways, the success of what is provided

Social Development

Pupils will acquire an understanding of their rights and responsibilities as members of families and communities (local, national and global) and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good.
They will use a range of social skills.
They will learn the importance of appreciating diverse viewpoints and resolving conflict.
They will display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate in the local community.
They will develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they will need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities.
They will engage with the British Values of Democracy, Rule of Law, Individual Liberty, Respect and Tolerance.

Our Academies Trust develops pupil social development by:

- Identifying key values and principles on which school and community life is based
- Fostering a sense of community, with common, inclusive values
- Promoting racial, religious and other forms of equality

- Encouraging pupils to work co-operatively
- Encouraging pupils to recognise and respect social differences and similarities
- Providing positive experiences to reinforce our values as a school community –for example, through assemblies, team building activities, residential experiences, school productions
- Helping pupils develop their character through opportunities provided to enhance their personal qualities, which are valued in a civilised society, for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, interdependence, self-respect and awareness of others' needs and the Character of Education traits of Motivation, Self-Control, Resilience, Self-belief, Integrity and Empathy
- Providing opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life
- Providing opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility
- Providing positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community

Cultural Development

Pupils will acquire an understanding of cultural traditions and influences and an ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences, ways of doing things and develop curiosity about cultural differences.
They will participate in cultural opportunities and understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity.
They will develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they will need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture.
They will appreciate the role of Britain's parliamentary system.

Our Academies Trust develops cultural development by:

- Extending pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language
- Encouraging them to think about special events in life and how they are celebrated
- Recognising and nurturing particular talents; providing opportunities for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events and encouraging pupils to reflect on their significance
- Providing a wide range of experiences for children including visits/visitors and experience days
- Reinforcing the school's cultural links through displays, posters, exhibitions, etc.
- Developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend pupils' cultural awareness, for example, theatre, museum and gallery visits

Implementation

The promotion of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of each child is seen as the responsibility of all members of staff. Much of this development should be assimilated through the ethos of the school. However, there are many opportunities within curriculum work to focus on the above statements.

Some of the above statements will take place through direct teaching.

Pupils will be taught:

- To distinguish between right and wrong;
- To articulate their own attitudes and values;
- To take responsibilities for their own actions;
- To recognise the moral dimension to situations;
- To understand the long and short-term consequences of their actions for themselves and others;
- To develop for themselves a set of socially acceptable values and principles, and set guidelines

to govern their own behaviour;
- To recognise that their values and attitudes may have to change over time;
- To behave consistently in accordance with their principles.

All children, regardless of ability, gender or social background will receive the same teaching with each of their views being considered.

Contexts for Promoting Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Developments in our Academies Trust

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is crucial for individual pupils and important for society as a whole. It is the heart of what education is all about – helping pupils grow and develop as people and effective participants in modern Britain.

It is an expectation that all staff, in all subjects, can and should contribute to the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of pupils through the curriculum and through the use of appropriate teaching and learning strategies e.g. discussion, reflection, pupil participation, circle time and also through their own conduct.

We believe that we are in a unique position to develop a clearer understanding and identification of ways in which Christian, moral and other faith values can motivate relationships between all members of our community.

In a world of often confusing and shifting values, we know that our pupils need an environment in which they can explore their own values, relate positively to others and develop skills to deal with life's joys, sorrows and questions.

We embed Christian Values to ensure they permeate through every aspect of the children's learning and lives. Made in the image of God, they all deserve to be the best they can be regardless of background, faith and ability.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development is cross-curricular. Contexts where suitable and optimal opportunities for promoting SMSC arise in many areas of school life including:

- Religious Education
- Collective Worship
- Curriculum subjects
- Relationships, Sex and Health Education
- Equal Opportunities
- Non-Statutory subjects and aspects e.g. PSHE and environmental education
- Teaching and learning strategies
- The quality of relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils
- Teachers and support staff as role models
- The ethos and values of the Academies Trust
- Aspects such as visits, visitors, clubs and extra-curricular activities
- Council meetings and class feedback sessions

Assessment

Ongoing assessments of the Spiritual and Moral Development of a child is initially the responsibility of the class teacher and then by any member of staff who comes into regular contact with the child.