

INVESTING IN THE UNIQUENESS OF EACH INDIVIDUAL



ST. MARY'S CE
PRIMARY SCHOOL

Love, Trust & Hope

 Love  Trust  Hope



Cultural (SMSC) Education Policy

Date policy last reviewed: 01/10/24

Signed by:

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Contents:

[Statement of intent](#)

1. [Legal framework](#)
2. [A whole-school approach to SMSC education](#)
3. [Cross-curriculum teaching and learning](#)
4. [Community links](#)
5. [Promoting fundamental British values](#)
6. [Ofsted inspections](#)
7. [Monitoring and review](#)

Statement of intent

At St. Mary's CE Primary, the pupils and their learning are at the very heart of every decision we make. This policy reflects our diverse mix of pupils and does not discriminate against any protected characteristics.

The school prides itself on providing a consistently safe, caring and happy environment where each pupil is valued as an individual and can develop towards their full potential. This policy reflects the ways in which the school helps pupils to develop their individuality and inner discipline. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) education of our pupils is implemented throughout the school's activities and is not limited to specific SMSC lessons.

Legal framework

This policy has due regard to all relevant legislation and statutory guidance including, but not limited to, the following:

- Education Act 2002
- DfE (2014) 'Promoting fundamental British values as part of SMSC in schools'
- DfE (2014) 'National curriculum in England framework for key stages 1 to 4'
- Ofsted (2024) 'School inspection handbook'

This policy operates in conjunction with the following school policies:

- Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy
- Online Safety Policy
- Behaviour Policy
- Anti-bullying Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Policy
- Supporting Pupils with Medical Conditions Policy

A whole-school approach to SMSC education

The academy council will ensure that SMSC education is embedded across the school's activities to ensure that the potential of each pupil is developed in accordance with their individual needs and capabilities.

The headteacher and SLT will facilitate and encourage a school environment which is welcoming, inclusive and safe for all pupils and members of the school community, irrespective of their protected characteristics and/or background. Staff will be expected to model high standards of discipline, courtesy, respect and acceptance of others, and to encourage pupils to take responsibility for their own actions.

The school's spiritual development provision enables pupils to:

- Be reflective about their beliefs, religious or otherwise, and their perspective on life.
- Have knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values.
- Develop a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them.
- Use imagination and creativity in their learning.
- Develop willingness to reflect on their experiences.

School Statement on Spirituality

To talk about spirituality is, essentially, to talk about something which is beyond words. This language of spirituality begins from a Christian understanding that everyone is a valued creation, individually and uniquely made by God, like pots made by a potter (Isaiah 64:8). Yet, in life things happen that impact on the physical 'pot' of life and create cracks that provide a glimpse of something 'beyond' the tangible. Christians would view this as an opportunity to relate to the Divine Creator God.

As well as being physical and emotional, each of us was created according to the bible as spiritual. When we attempt to describe what being spiritual means, and spiritual experiences in particular; we often run out of words. What we can say is that each of us is made unique and wonderful, and God, the potter of Isaiah 64 is in the process of making and remaking us through life.

At times we glimpse him doing something good in us or through us; things that are breathtaking and wonderful- the 'Wows' of life.

At other times we might feel bumped and bruised by life, going through challenging times- the 'Ows' of life. The Japanese art of remaking broken pots with gold can give us an interesting insight into how God often can bring good things out of even the 'Ows' we find the most challenging, not hiding the cracks but transforming them.

Alongside these big moments of 'Wows' and 'Ows', we know God is at work in the present. At St Mary's we talk of the moments of being aware of God in our day to day life, in ordinary everyday things the – 'Nows' of life.

St. Mary's CE Primary uses this language and the concepts of 'Wows', 'Ows' and 'Nows'. These are used to explore relationships with: - ourselves - others - the wider natural world and beyond - and offering the invitation to relate to God

Windows



Opportunities to look out and wonder about the world around us. The 'Wow' and the 'Ow' moments: the things we find amazing and bring us up short

Like looking out of a window at the world around you. To look at the world in different ways. What do you notice and wonder - what questions do you have?

What are the important facts? What is challenging to me about this? What is inspiring to me about this?

Mirrors



Opportunities for children to reflect, to look inwards exploring their own thoughts and the insights of others when considering answers to important questions.

Like looking in a mirror how you and others feel.

What is my view on this? How do I feel about it? How does my worldview affect my opinions about this? What can I learn from others about this?

Doors



Opportunities for children to respond, 'to step out' to action or express their thoughts, beliefs and values.

Like walking through a door. What are your thoughts, beliefs and values and how will you express them? What choice will you make?

Will you express it creatively through art or music or in a change of attitude?

What can I learn and take away with me today? How can I respond to this matter? Where can I find more information? How can I 'go and do likewise' this week?

Organisation

The spiritual growth of pupils is not only dependent on learning in RE, opportunities for enhancing the spiritual well-being of learners are developed in every aspect of our school life.

We support the whole school community to share this responsibility and to develop the shared language of spirituality. Opportunities are available for all to develop spiritually in our supportive and nurturing school inspired by our vision and lived out through our Christian values.

We have identified specific areas which contribute to the spiritual growth of pupils: collective worship, the whole curriculum, including RE and the general ethos of the school within daily life.

Spirituality in Collective Worship

Collective Worship is the beating heart of St. Mary's CE Primary. It provides the opportunity for our school community to share experiences, ideas and understanding. It is the context in which the language of spirituality, which we use as a school, is regularly and explicitly shared.

Collective Worship provides the opportunity for pupils to become aware of the importance of reflection and how our positive and negative experiences can be formative. It also provides a real sense of being present (now moments) which are often linked to invitations to pray.

Through daily Collective Worship, pupils are offered a space and a place for hearing the Christian story. They are offered an understanding of worship by being invited to participate in, or observe, Christian spiritual practices such as: prayer, reading and reflection on the Bible and liturgy and are introduced to different musical traditions.

Opportunities to reflect on the joys of life such as beauty and joy of the world are given, as well as time to reflect and empathise with the low moments of disappointment or pain. Pupils are given time to consider their responsibilities to others and to grow in love and service. Time is given for celebration, both for the accomplishments of school members and to mark seasonal Christian festivals and celebrations in the calendars of other faiths. In this way pupils are offered time to be able to contemplate and develop spiritually. Collective Worship in St. Mary's CE Primary is invitational, inspirational and inclusive.

Learning



Symbolised by a window, the learning element is when new possibilities or different perspectives are 'opened up' through the use of drama, visual images, poetry or videos based on Bible stories or other texts.

Reflecting



Symbolised by the mirror, the reflecting element encourages everyone to consider how the Bible story or stimulus has resonated with, or challenged them. Usually, 'searching questions' are offered as a focus for reflection. Sometimes this is followed by a few moments of silence.

Responding



Responding, the final element in the worship, has the symbol of the door and provides an opportunity to consider how God might be challenging those present in the worship to 'step out' and play their part in making a difference in the world either as individuals or as part of a whole school community.

If appropriate, a further activity is suggested to stimulate further discussion and consideration on the theme of worship through the week.

Please see collective Worship Policy for more information.

Spirituality in Religious Education

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE and spirituality. Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all pupils, offering a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews, linking these to pupils' ideas of spirituality and the language of wows, ows and nows where appropriate. For further details, please refer to St. Mary's CE Primary's Religious Education Policy and The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement.

Spirituality within the Curriculum

Our school's Christian vision is a driver for the curriculum design. Therefore, we invest in the uniqueness of each individual to ensure a broad and balanced curriculum. Drawing on the language of Wows, Ows and Nows, conversations around spirituality will be included in classroom teaching when appropriate from EYFS to Year 6.

Staff Development and Training

We ensure that all staff, including support staff, receive appropriate training and opportunities for professional development, both as individuals and as groups or teams. ECTs (Early Career Teachers) and staff who are new to St. Mary's CE Primary will receive training and support from the staff member identified as leading on spirituality.

Provision for Pupils

The school's moral development provision enables pupils to:

- Recognise the difference between right and wrong, readily apply this understanding in their own lives and, in doing so, respect the civil and criminal law of England.
- Understand the consequences of their behaviour and actions.

- Develop an interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and an ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

The school's social development provision enables pupils to:

- Use a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socioeconomic backgrounds.
- Participate in a variety of community and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively.
- Accept and engage with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and acceptance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in, and contribute positively to, life in modern Britain.

The school's cultural development provision enables pupils to:

- Understand and appreciate the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others.
- Understand and appreciate the range of different cultures within the school, and further afield, as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain.
- Develop knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain.
- Participate in, and respond positively to, artistic, sporting and cultural opportunities.
- Develop an interest in exploring, improving their understanding of, and showing respect for, different faiths and cultures.
- Understand, accept, respect, and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

The headteacher will work in collaboration with the SENCO to ensure that lessons and activities, and expectations of pupils in relation to those lessons and activities, are appropriately adjusted to accommodate the needs of pupils with SEND.

Cross-curriculum teaching and learning

SMSC education will take place across all areas of the curriculum. SMSC has particularly strong links to religious education, citizenship, history and PSHE.

All areas of the curriculum will draw examples from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible. Teaching staff will be expected to foster an open environment in their lessons in which respect, tolerance for different values, opinions and backgrounds, and team work are encouraged and prioritised in line with the guiding principles of SMSC education.

Teaching staff will use classroom discussion to support pupils to:

- Talk about their experiences, thoughts and feelings.

- Express and clarify personal ideas and beliefs.
- Speak about difficult events, e.g. bullying and death.
- Explore their relationships with friends, family and others.
- Consider, and show empathy towards, the needs and experiences of others.
- Develop self-esteem and personal confidence.
- Develop a sense of belonging.
- Develop their SMSC skills, e.g. compassion, respect, open-mindedness, sensitivity and critical awareness.

Many areas across the curriculum provide opportunities for pupils to:

- Listen and talk to each other.
- Learn to treat one another as equals, regardless of protected characteristics and/or background.
- Recognise and celebrate the differences and similarities between themselves and others.
- Agree and disagree with people respectfully.
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively.

The school will use the following methods to help pupils develop an understanding of how they can influence decision making through the democratic process:

- Electing a school council
- Establishing monitoring roles for pupils, e.g. arts ambassadors, sports leaders, librarians, to allow pupils opportunities to develop and display leadership skills
- Appointing sports leaders
- Issuing pupil questionnaires to gather pupil opinions on decisions
- Providing pupils with opportunities to build balanced arguments and form opinions, e.g. by taking part in debates and public speaking

The school will use the following methods to help pupils develop an understanding of the rule of law:

- Setting and enforcing high expectations for attendance, punctuality and behaviour
- Setting and enforcing classroom and school rules
- Teaching pupils about laws that are relevant to the school setting
- Teaching pupils about adults who fulfil roles designed to help others, including staff members, emergency services, friends and family
- Teaching pupils about the role of the monarchy and of previous monarchies
- Providing pupils with opportunities to celebrate the lives of people who have influenced the course of history
- Implementing clear, consistent and defined sanctions for challenging behaviour in line with the Behaviour Policy

We may use the following methods to help pupils develop an understanding of different faiths and beliefs:

- Celebrating differences and similarities through cultural event days
- Arranging trips to places of worship

- Teaching about different beliefs and cultures
- Exploring moral values through lessons, stories and worship
- Arranging visits from various religious leaders
- RE lessons

The school will also employ additional practical activities and practices to encourage pupils' SMSC development, including the following:

- Encouraging pupils to work together in different groupings and situations
- Providing opportunities for pupils to consume and study literature, art, music and media from artists of different cultures, backgrounds, genres and faiths
- Organising in a variety of different social and cultural school trips, e.g. to museums or places of worship
- Hearing and seeing live performances by professional actors, dancers and musicians
- Learning songs from different cultures and playing a range of instruments
- Making and consuming food from other countries
- Studying the contributions to society that famous people of all backgrounds have made

Teaching staff will help pupils' SMSC development by:

- Encouraging teamwork across all subjects.
- Encouraging an appreciation of, and respect for, the work and performance of other pupils, regardless of perceived ability.
- Using themes, e.g. in assemblies and lessons, to explore important aspects of British heritage and other cultures, e.g. religious festival days and global events.

Community links

The school recognises that an important part of SMSC development is enabling pupils to become active participants in their local community and, as such, will continue to foster strong links with the wider community.

These links will be formed through a variety of activities, including:

- Community fundraising activities.
- School-community link organisations, e.g. 'Friends of St. Mary's'
- Hosting school events to which community members are invited as participants or audience members.
- Having an effective approach to careers information, education, advice and guidance.
- Questionnaires sent to parents and other members of the community to gather opinions, e.g. on school initiatives or practices.

The school will engage parents and members of the wider community in the educational life of pupils, ensuring that the diversity and varying experiences of the local community are reflected in the way in which pupils are educated.

Promoting fundamental British values

The school will use SMSC education to promote fundamental British values by:

- Including, in suitable parts of the curriculum, age-appropriate material on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law works in Britain compared to other countries.
- Teaching pupils a broad and balanced international history.
- Representing the cultures of all our pupils within the curriculum.
- Teaching a wide range of English and non-English literature.
- Listening to the voices of all pupils and promoting active participation in democratic processes, e.g. through a school council.
- Using democratic opportunities in the wider community, e.g. general and local elections, to provide pupils with the opportunity to learn how to argue and defend points of view.
- Using teaching resources from a wide variety of sources to help pupils learn about and understand a range of faiths.
- Using extra-curricular activities to promote fundamental British values.

By promoting fundamental British values through SMSC education, we will provide pupils with:

- An understanding of how they can influence decision making through the democratic process.
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects them and is essential for their wellbeing and safety.
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and while some public bodies, for example the police, can be held to account by parliament, others maintain independence, for example, the court system.
- An understanding that their freedom to choose and hold faiths and beliefs is protected by law.
- An acceptance that people of different faiths and beliefs to themselves (and those with no faiths or beliefs) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be subject to prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour.
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

6. Ofsted inspections

As part of its activities when carrying out ungraded, graded, and urgent inspections of schools and academies across England, Ofsted will assess the effectiveness of the school's SMSC provision.

Inspectors will judge the schools' SMSC provision based on the following factors:

- Whether the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental, and physical development of pupils is actively promoted by the school
- Whether the SMSC provision enhances pupils' personal development in relation to citizenship education and fundamental British values
- Whether the school's work to enhance its own SMSC provision is of a high quality

The school will ensure that all of the 'good' criteria are met securely and consistently in order for its personal development provision to be judged as 'outstanding'. Additionally, the school will ensure that its provision includes the following elements:

- The school consistently promotes the extensive personal development of pupils, providing a wide variety of opportunities for them to develop their talents and interests
- There's strong take-up by pupils of the opportunities provided by the school
- The opportunities provided by the school are done so in a coherently planned way through the curriculum and extra-curricular activities

The school will ensure that its curriculum prioritises its personal development provision in order for that provision to be judged as 'good'. This includes the school meeting the following criteria:

- Ensuring that the curriculum stretches beyond the academic, vocational, and technical
- Working to support pupils' confidence, resiliency, independency, and strength of character
- Ensuring that high quality pastoral support is provided, including guiding students to maintain a physically and mentally healthy lifestyle
- Providing opportunities for pupils to have their interests nurtured, developed, and stretched
- Preparing pupils for life in modern Britain, developing their understanding of fundamental British values, democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, as well as tolerance and respect for those of different faiths and beliefs
- Promoting equality of opportunity and diversity effectively
- Promoting pupils' engagement with views, beliefs, and opinions that are different from their own
- Providing pupils with meaningful opportunities to understand how to be responsible, respectful, active citizens who contribute positively to society

The school will also undertake all of the above actions in relation to personal development provision to avoid being judged as 'inadequate' by Ofsted.

7. Monitoring and review

SMSC provision is reviewed on an annual basis in the following ways:

- The monitoring of teaching and learning and work scrutiny by the curriculum coordinator, headteacher and governors as part of the school's general monitoring.
- Regular discussions at staff and governors' meetings.
- Annual policy audits.
- The development of RE, PSHE and collective worship to reflect the diversity of both the school and society.
- The sharing of classroom work and practice.

This policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the headteacher, and any changes will be communicated to all stakeholders.

The next scheduled review date for this policy is 09/10/25

