



## Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Education Policy

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### Statement of Intent

At St Mary's Catholic High School, 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.

### 1. Legal framework

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

- The 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 (2021) '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

## 2. A whole-school approach to SMSC education

The governing body 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.

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.

### **3. 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
- Hearing pupils' voice through a suggestion box
- Establishing monitoring roles for pupils, e.g. help desk pupils to allow pupils opportunities to develop and display leadership skills
- 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, for example, International Day
- Arranging trips to places of worship
- Teaching about different beliefs and cultures
- Exploring moral values through lessons, stories and assemblies
- Arranging visits from various religious leaders
- RS lessons

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

- 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.

## 4. 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' associations.
- Hosting school events to which community members are invited as participants or audience members.

- Setting up work experience and volunteering opportunities for pupils with community organisations.
- 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.

## 5. 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.

The school is not obliged to promote teachings, beliefs or opinions in conflict with its own, but will not promote discrimination against pupils or groups based on their belief, opinion or background.