



SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL POLICY

Riston Church of England Primary Academy is a Voluntary Controlled, Church of England Primary School offering a comprehensive Christian Primary Education to families in East Hull.

The School is a caring community built on deeply theologically rooted Christian Vision, which permeates all aspects of School life. The curriculum is presented within a Christian world view. Such a world view gives perspective and meaning to all learning at our school.

We seek to foster the God given talents and gifts amongst children, staff and governors for the service of each other, the school, the wider community and the Glory of God. Our aim is that all children reach their full potential, not just academically, but also spiritually, physically, socially, and aesthetically.

Let us run with endurance the race that God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, on whom our faith depends from start to finish. Hebrews 12:1-2

This is the context in which this policy is written.

This policy was written in December 2022 and will be reviewed in the Autumn Term 2025.

Introduction

I have come in order that they might have life - life in all its fullness. John 10:10

‘The enabling of every child to flourish in their potential as a child of God, is a sign and expression of the Kingdom and is at the heart of the Church’s distinctive mission.’

(The Church School of the Future Review March 2012 - Dr Priscilla Chadwick Chair of the Review Group)

The Church school offers a spiritual and moral basis for the development of human wholeness and a sure foundation for personal and social values based on the person and ministry of Christ. A distinctive language is provided for understanding life and interpreting human experience. As a community of faith, the Church school should, in its best expression, reflect the nature of the Trinity, a life shared and defined by reference to others. Here we can begin to discover who we are, why we are, and - perhaps most importantly - what we might be.

The Way Ahead, Chapter 3 para 3.26

The Way Ahead report, published over a decade ago, sought to re-establish the distinctive nature of Church of England schools for the new millennium. The Church Schools Review Group, chaired by Lord Dearing stated: We believe that the revelation of God's love for all humanity within a holistic approach to education is at the heart of the church's purpose in our Church schools.

The Way Ahead, Chapter 3 para 3.24

Spirituality At Riston CE Primary Academy

As a church school and whole school community we have come to a consensus that there is no single definition of spirituality as we recognise that it can mean different, but equally meaningful, things to different people at different times.

We believe that Jesus Christ stands at the centre of everything we do, therefore everyone's personal view can change throughout their own development in school and throughout their life.

At Riston CE Primary Academy we aim to give children a range of experiences to develop their own spirituality and refine what it means to them.

The lenses through which we view spirituality

Our definitions of Spiritual Capacities are guided by the research of Shahne Vickery (2020). These definitions are evidenced and promoted through developing children's ability to:

- be guided by their beliefs and values and be willing to take a stand to defend them
- be self-aware and empathise with the experience of others in the school and wider community
- love themselves, care for themselves, believe in their potential to achieve, and find inner strength and resilience when facing challenges
- exercise imagination and creativity, appreciate beauty in the world and be alive to experiences of awe and wonder
- be intrigued by mystery and be open to an awareness of the transcendent in the whole of life
- be comfortable with stillness and silence and open to engage in reflection/meditation/prayer
- be ready to say sorry when mistakes are made, to forgive themselves and to forgive others
- be willing to take risks and to reflect, learn and grow following experiences of failure as well as success
- demonstrate curiosity and open mindedness when exploring life's big questions
- appreciate and be thankful for what is good in life and show generosity towards others

We explore these with pupils through the concept of windows, mirrors and doors to enable pupils to see that spirituality is something we:
learn about (windows)
something that resides within us (mirrors)
on which we can answer a call to action (doors)

Windows, Mirrors and Doors

Windows, Mirrors and Doors are taken from the work of Liz Mills (1997) and provide a useful way of articulating spirituality to all stakeholders in the school, including pupils.

Windows:

Are for 'looking out onto the world and becoming aware of its wonders.' Our curriculum and worship offers us opportunities to identify the wonders in the world – both human and natural – and those aspects that make us uncomfortable. In addition, pupils watch have a Picture News worship each week to increase awareness of and discuss contemporary issues that help us to see the wonder of God in action and global issues that cause pain and suffering.

Mirrors:

Are for 'looking into and reflecting, alone and together, to see things more clearly, for thinking and asking important questions, learning from our own and each other's responses. In addition to opportunities to reflect as part of our RE curriculum and worship, we also ensure pupils have the opportunity to reflect through 'stillness' in EYFS and weekly reflection on our Big Question. Reflection Prayer Spaces are used in our Hives (indoor and outdoor). Classroom Reflection Areas in each class enable reflection opportunities to be bespoke to individual classes.

Doors:

Are for 'looking through in order to then act or express this in some way in response; for moving on, making choices and doing something creative, active and purposeful in response. In addition to opportunities within RE lessons and worship, pupils are also involved in RE days where they are able to express their responses creatively as well as participating in Spirited Art (NATRE) to share their ideas with a wider forum.

Our focus on Courageous Advocacy supports children to make positive changes about issues that they are personally passionate about. We ensure that children leave with the confidence and skills to make themselves heard, knowing that they can make a real difference.

Moral Development at Riston Church of England Primary Academy

Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. Be devoted to one another in love. Honour one another above yourselves.

Romans 12:9-10

And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

A Christian perspective on moral development:

For Christians, morality is not just about good behaviour, it is about shared values that are rooted in Christian belief. Forgiveness is a central value in moral development. Christians believe that all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). This means that all people do wrong things. Christians use the term 'sin' to mean both wrong things that hurt others, as well as things that hurt God. At the heart of the Christian gospel is the message that God dealt with sin through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. There is mercy and forgiveness offered to all who repent. In addition, Christians believe that the Holy Spirit works in believers to transform and renew them. Jesus taught his disciples that, as forgiven people, they should also forgive others.

Forgiveness does not mean accepting the wrong-doing or ignoring the consequences. Justice is a fundamental value, indeed children seem to have an innate sense of justice. However, the need for justice must be set in the context of the importance of restoring and reconciling relationships. In church schools, a balance should be forged between these. **Truth** and **integrity** are also at the heart of the Christian message. Jesus taught that He was 'truth' (John 14:6) – so honesty and truthfulness should be prominent in church school policies and practice.

These beliefs shape the values that lie at the heart of a church school and will characterise its approach to moral development. Love predominates in all aspects of school life, since it was God's act of love that brought salvation to the world. **Agape** is the Greek word used for God's love in the New Testament. Agape love is self-giving and costly. Christians look to the life and teaching of Jesus to help them understand what this means in practice

An Ofsted perspective on moral development:

Pupils' moral development is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning

- willingness to reflect on their experiences.

Aims:

To foster moral development, the school aims to provide children with opportunities to:

- recognise the difference between right and wrong and begin to understand how Christian values inform a particular perspective on moral choices;
- understand how our moral choices can affect the lives of others;
- be able to work together to agree codes of behaviour that are appropriate for our school community;
- understand the centrality of forgiveness and reconciliation in the life and culture of our school;
- begin to engage with big questions concerning morality and ethical issues in the wider community and in the world, and to realise that each of us has a responsibility to work for justice.

Teaching and learning of Moral Development at Riston Church of England Primary School will therefore ensure that:

- the curriculum and all areas of our community life are explicitly rooted in Christian values, such as justice, service, perseverance, courage and truthfulness, as documented in all school policies;
- opportunities for moral development will be proactively planned into the curriculum and actively encouraged in all areas of school life;
- our Christian values are shared with members of our school community through our website and school documentation as well as through colourful images; posters, classroom displays and exhibitions around the school building;
- collective worship and assemblies celebrate practical demonstrations of Christian values lived out in the life of the school, local, and wider community;
- our positive learning and behaviour policy makes clear that every child is treated fairly and is always offered the opportunity for a fresh start;
- parents and carers are made aware, through our website and other documentation, of our school's expectations regarding behaviour, as well as the rewards and sanctions that we operate;
- children gain skills in conflict resolution through the school's approach to Restorative Practice and problem solving strategies;
- children are made aware of moral and ethical issues in the national and international context;
- the School Council and Worship Squad Leaders are involved, alongside teachers, senior leaders and governors in reviewing the impact of our Christian values on the behaviour, culture and ethos of our school.

Social Development at Riston Church of England Primary Academy

'The human body has many parts, but the many parts make up one whole body. So it is with the body of Christ.'

1 Corinthians 12:12

A Christian perspective on social development:

Social development is about living successfully in community. For Christians, community and relationships underpin life. The Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit) models a perfect community of equals, united by a bond of love. This is the same love that God has for his creation; therefore a relationship is implied. Christians claim that humans are 'made in God's image' therefore they are made for relationship. The incarnation – God becomes human in Jesus – reminds Christians that God has relationship with his creation, that he is 'involved'. This means that God understands what it means to be human.

The expectation that all relationships will be informed by Christian values. Our vision states that "I

come to bring life in all its fullness.” This is an image of a society in which all human beings recognise their shared humanity and are motivated by love to seek the good of others. These values and beliefs will be modelled by staff and governors and encouraged and celebrated in children. The Bible stories that underpin the school's values will be explored and creatively expressed so that they become familiar and inspirational to all.

An Ofsted perspective on social development:

Pupils' social development is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, including working and socialising with pupils from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; the pupils develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

Aims

To foster social development, the school aims to provide opportunities for children to:

- build relationships founded upon the Christian values (eg honesty and forgiveness);
- gain a clear understanding of the place of the church school within the wider Christian community including local, national and worldwide;
- access pastoral support from school staff, local clergy and parish team members; be equipped to become responsible citizens who recognise the importance of service and working for the 'common good';
- feel a sense of genuine pride in the school and their membership of it.

Teaching and learning of Social Development at Riston Church of England Primary School will therefore ensure that:

- the curriculum and all areas of our community life will be explicitly rooted in Christian values, such as friendship, service, generosity and compassion, as documented in all school policies;
- opportunities for social development will be explicitly planned into the curriculum and in all areas of school life;
- Collective Worship and assemblies will celebrate and reward practical demonstrations of our Christian values such as, service to the community, and acts of friendship and generosity, particularly shown towards children facing difficulties or challenges;
- strong mutually supportive links will be maintained and developed with our local community through participation in charity events and acts of service;
- strong, mutually supportive links will be maintained and developed with the local and national church and the worldwide Anglican communion through regular worship in the parish church, participation in parish events and local community projects.
- Our school also has a link with a church school in Sierra Leone, as part of a British Council Global Schools' Project
- an appropriately trained teaching assistant will provide pastoral support to children or family members facing challenges;
- our school community strives to be fully inclusive (eg modifying our school building to ensure access for all);
- the School Council and Worship Squad Leaders support and play an active part with staff and governors in monitoring and evaluating the social cohesiveness of the school community;
- the Senior Leadership Team prioritises support and engagement with networks (eg cluster meetings, school partnerships and attending headteacher conferences run by the Diocese);
- there is active engagement with parents and carers through the 'open door policy' and active support of PTA activities.

'After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no-one could count, from every nation, tribe, people, and language, standing before the throne.'

Revelation 7: 9a

A Christian perspective on cultural development

These words encapsulate a vision of people from many different cultural backgrounds drawn together and united in one purpose – worship. St John was given this revelation so that God's ultimate intention for humanity might be glimpsed, thus affirming all efforts to value people from different cultures.

The Christian Church was forged in a crucible of cultures. In Acts 2, the Holy Spirit is described as miraculously enabling the first followers of Jesus gathered in Jerusalem to speak about the 'mighty works of God' to people from all over the ancient world, each in their own language – love.

At the heart of cultural development, therefore, is the capacity, not only to understand and appreciate those elements that have shaped one's own life, but also to be open to people from very different backgrounds, and learn how to celebrate their story.

An Ofsted perspective on cultural development:

Pupils' cultural development is shown by their:

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

Aims

To foster social development, the school aims to provide children with opportunities to:

- gain a knowledge and understanding of the values from their own culture, heritage, traditions and an appreciation of how they have evolved and developed over time
- develop knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the cultures of those with whom they interact day by day, as well as other cultures represented in the UK
- develop a knowledge of the local Christian heritage through visits to local churches and the Cathedral, and to explore their relationship to it.
- develop a knowledge and understanding of the cultural diversity of Christianity through links overseas, RE, Collective Worship and events in school
- understand the relationship between religious belief and culture through a creative, challenging and interactive RE curriculum
- explore what it means to 'live life to the full'
- understand what it means to be part of a community characterised by openness, hospitality and an eagerness to learn from one another

Teaching and learning of Cultural Development at Riston Church of England Primary School will therefore ensure that:

- the curriculum and all areas of our community life will be explicitly rooted in Christian values, such as friendship, generosity, and creativity, as documented in all school policies;
- the curriculum will be delivered using creative and imaginative teaching strategies which allow individual gifts and talents to flourish;
- a range of art forms will be used to teach children about Christian heritage and tradition, and

also the heritages and traditions of other faiths;

- children are given cultural capital opportunities to take part in and respond to cultural and artistic enterprises (eg Spirited Arts project, and community art initiatives, as well as workshops with professional artists, filmmakers, poets, authors, dancers, etc), these are recorded in their Cultural Capital Passports;
- children explore current affairs and different interpretations of events by the media;
- children explore the ways in which cultural, racial, and religious prejudice can take root and learn how to recognise this and other forms of discrimination as well as ways to counter it;
- whole school projects which celebrate diversity within the local and wider community feature in our curriculum; links with our Diocese and dioceses overseas teach children that as a church school, we are a part of the World Wide Anglican Communion which comprises a rich cultural diversity of Christian traditions and practices.

Monitoring and Evaluation of SMSC at Riston Church of England Primary School

SMSC is the responsibility of all staff and governors, as it will have a fundamental impact on the quality and nature of the education offered by our school.

The lead teacher with responsibility for evaluating the effectiveness of SMSCD is Jennifer Marsden. The SMSC lead teacher will ensure that our current policy is regularly reviewed, up to date, and a true reflection of practise in this school;

The SMSC lead teacher has responsibility for ensuring that all staff, parents and governors understand how the school interprets SMSCD and to ensure that regular, appropriate professional development is provided;

The SMSC lead teacher will liaise with the SLT, the Curriculum Leader, the Foundation Governors of the governing body, the School Council and Worship Squad Leaders to monitor and evaluate the impact of opportunities for SMSC across the curriculum.

