



## **St. George's Catholic Primary School**

### **Spiritual and Moral Development Policy**

#### **Introduction**

Spiritual development across the curriculum is concerned with the individual's growth in faith through his or her deepening knowledge of creation and revelation. Moral development across the curriculum is about how individuals – pupils and teachers – increasingly live that faith within the community, in school, home, parish and the wider world.

#### **Spiritual Development**

In one of its discussion papers, the National Curriculum Council says that spiritual development:

*“...needs to be seen as something fundamental in the human condition which is not necessarily experienced through the physical senses and/or expressed through everyday language. It has to do with relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It has to do with the universal search for individual identity – 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.”*  
(*Spiritual and Moral Development, April 1993*)

Our faith asks us to respond to knowledge, beauty, love and truth, in whatever form, precisely as a revelation of their Author. Our task as teachers, therefore, is to ensure that pupils gradually come to understand that what we are teaching them, what they are learning, is not an end in itself.

Knowledge of the way the human body works, of geological phenomena, of the laws of physics or mathematics; an understanding of human passion, of human creativity and achievement, of human exploration of the meaning of the divine, all this contributes to our understanding of and response to Him. We need to help pupils explore beneath and beyond mere factual knowledge. In this way, our faith in God as Creator and Redeemer, the author of all knowledge, gives new meaning and depth to study.

Questioning is fundamental to teaching and learning. There are often no easy answers to difficult questions which arise in history, economics, religious education or literature. But if we encourage the pupils to understand that a number of answers may well be acceptable, provided they can be justified, that even then the questions might

not be fully solved, then we are preparing them to see where they will find the answers to the major questions they will face in their lives, to see where the real security and reassurance are. To lead pupils in the direction of open-ended enquiry is to help them in their spiritual quest.

2.

Pupils need to be given opportunities to reflect, in increasing depth, on what they have seen or read or done; to analyse their reactions; to justify the meaning they give to a particular experience.

They also need to be given time and space to explore for themselves, to question, to reflect and, indeed to reject. Reflection, if it is to contribute to the spiritual development, needs to be directed towards an understanding of ourselves and of how God is at work in our lives.

## **Moral Development**

Moral development is about a growing awareness of and a positive response to, the demands of living as an individual with others in the community.

*“All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God*

*The human person needs to live in society. Society is not for him an extraneous addition but a requirement of his nature. Through the exchange with others, mutual service and dialogue with his brethren, man develops his potential; he thus responds to his vocation.”*

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1878, 1879.)*

There are moral values and moral dilemmas in every subject we teach, though some offer richer opportunities than others for developing pupils' growing awareness of moral questions and moral choices. Through environmental education they learn about their impact upon the world around them. In history they learn about the achievements and failures of earlier generations. In mathematics pupils can discover how number can add weight to, or distort, an argument. Physical and Health education encourages them to respect their own and others' bodies. So, in all areas of the curriculum we look to identify the particular knowledge and skills which help pupils to become increasingly aware of moral issues and of the complexity of moral choices.

Another aspect of pupils' moral development is to recognise that “the education of the conscience is a lifelong task” (Catechism 1784). We endeavour to take the pupils beyond the immediate, emotional response, to encourage them to examine and justify their reactions. To learn the skill of thinking rationally and impartially about ethical issues is a key part of moral development. Across the curriculum, especially in science, technology, history, geography, literature and religious education, they will find examples of how moral thinking has changed over the centuries, they will be able

to analyse and reflect on their own response to the moral dilemmas and the moral decisions of others and will see the need to be well informed when they make moral decisions themselves.

### 3.

As teachers, we are constantly making moral decisions in the classroom. These are, perhaps, most obvious, and touch the children most immediately, in the ways in which we keep discipline; in our use of punishments and rewards. Pupils rarely object for long to a just punishment which is reasoned and reasonable. On the other hand, nothing rankles more deeply than unexplained or unjust punishment. Therefore our readiness to share with pupils, as much as possible, the reasons for our decisions, and the principles and consequences which have been taken into account, is one of the most formative ways in which we can help their moral development.