

Stonegate C E Primary School



# **SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL (SMSC) POLICY**

Adopted: October 2019  
Review: October 2022

# SCHOOL VISION

**Stonegate Church of England Primary School is a community founded on Christian Values: Courage, Friendship, Respect and Trust embracing every child and their family. We provide a safe environment, where a lifetime love of learning begins, the whole child is nurtured and each child is valued and able to thrive.**

## **Love of learning for life.**

I came to give life — life in all its fullness. John 10:10

We aim to offer children from all backgrounds an inspiring, aspiring and interesting curriculum, based on real experiences, which will encourage in the pupils a lifelong love of learning and an ambition to do well in anything they try.



## **Rationale**

“Church schools must be distinctively Christian and inclusive communities, seeking to bring children from different backgrounds together as a distinctive expression of Christ’s commandment to love one another...” (The Way Ahead)

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) policy along with the vision and core values statements set the whole ethos for Stonegate CE Primary School and is integral to all areas of teaching and learning as it infiltrates the whole curriculum. It is especially important in a Church School that there is a strong sense of caring for the whole school family and community and that each person feels valued as an individual.

Although the school promotes the teaching of Christianity, we recognise that spiritual development is not limited to religious beliefs and knowledge but embraces a much wider code of beliefs and attitudes.

This policy should be read in conjunction with the R.E. Policy and the Collective Worship Policy.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development at Stonegate CE Primary School should lead children to make their own informed decisions throughout life based on a strong basis of right and wrong, whilst respecting the views and beliefs of others.

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development**

At Stonegate CE Primary School we aim to provide a firm foundation of strong Christian values to prepare children for the society in which they live. This should be appropriate to their age so that at a later stage children will be equipped to make informed decisions for themselves.

It is important that the school works in close partnership with parents to share the values that we uphold whilst respecting that families may not share, nor wish to share, values imposed by the ethos of the school. It is expected however, that parents support our principles and policies whilst their child is in school.

Although we are a Voluntary Controlled Church School, parents still maintain the right to withdraw their child from R.E. and worship. On admission to the school however, it is made clear to parents that Christianity permeates the whole curriculum and ethos of the school. It is not possible for their child to remain completely uninfluenced by day to day activities which include Grace at lunchtime and a prayer in the classroom at the end of each school day.

### Aims

To foster Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development through:

1. The ethos of the school.
2. The Curriculum.
3. Collective Worship.
4. Church links to the community.

## **The ethos of the school**

The ethos and atmosphere of the school reflect the values and attitudes which characterise the community at Stonegate CE Primary School. Pupils are positively encouraged to promote good standards of behaviour, a sense of community and respect for the rights and property of others. The ethos is a culmination of all aspects of school life and involves all personnel - pupils, staff, parents, Governors and the outside community in which the school is geographically situated, as well as links with local congregations.

Behaviour and expectations are clearly set out in the Behaviour policy which can be found on the school website.

Spiritual, Social, Moral and Cultural development is recognised through the following:

### **Spiritual Development**

Spiritual development should be embedded in every aspect of the life and work of a church school. It is important that spiritual development is seen as a lifelong process which is primarily a journey of discovery rather than a ladder to be climbed.

Through spiritual development, pupils can be enabled:

- To think about themselves, how they relate to other people, to the wider world in which they live and to God;
- To reflect beyond and within themselves on God's creation and the precious nature of human existence;
- To develop greater self-awareness and self-esteem;
- To encounter a sense of awe, wonder and mystery: and,
- To experience opportunities for creativity, curiosity, freedom, imagination and response.

Activities should take place within the life and work of Stonegate CE Primary School which:

- Provide a safe and secure environment in which all pupils feel they are valued for the unique contribution each one of them can make.
- Encourage and promote participation in the life of the school in ways that contribute to the well-being of everyone.
- Ensure that pupils can express their beliefs, experiences, insights and feelings without a fear of ridicule, knowing that their ideas matter and are taken seriously.
- Respect the rights of pupils who do not wish to discuss personal or sensitive issues and enable pupils to share what they have in common and to celebrate their differences.

### **Spiritual Development across the curriculum**

In a church school, it is important there is evidence of spiritual development across the curriculum and that every curriculum area includes some aims and objectives which make spiritual development more explicit in the teaching and learning process.

The following are some examples:

- To develop the pupils' capacity for critical and independent thought
- To foster the emotional life of individual pupils, particularly with regard to the experience and expression of their own feelings

- To provide opportunities for the expression of imagination, inspiration, insight, empathy and understanding
- To promote opportunities for moments of stillness, silence and reflection
- To prepare learning materials and activities that encourage responses to Christian beliefs and ideas
- To explore issues concerned with the value and nature of human life
- To provide opportunities when pupils can reflect upon the inspiring quality of the world and focus on the power of nature or the creative imagination of human beings

Pupils who are developing spiritually are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

- A set of values, principles and beliefs, which may or may not be religious, which inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour
- An awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs a respect for themselves and for others
- A sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion an ability to show courage in defence of their beliefs
- A readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit, for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination
- An appreciation of the intangible - for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order, as well as for mystery, paradox and ambiguity
- An respect for insight as well as knowledge and reason an expressive and/or creative impulse
- An ability to think in terms of the 'whole' for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective
- An understanding of feelings and emotions and their likely impact

## **Moral Development**

Moral development should be embedded in every aspect of the life and work of a church school. It is important that moral development is seen as an educational process which is concerned with developing the pupils' ability to make judgements about how they should behave and act; it should aim to help them understand the reasons for their behaviour and the consequences of their actions.

Promoting moral development should form the basis of the way in which church schools prepare their pupils for life as adults who will have to make choices and decisions in an ever changing world.

Moral development is concerned with questions of intention, motive and attitude. Pupils should learn to distinguish 'right' from 'wrong', to develop a sense of personal identity and be encouraged to have an awareness of the moral traditions of others.

Moral Development in Stonegate CE Primary School needs to take place within a Christian context.

The Bible provides an excellent foundation in determining a baseline for Christian moral truth. We have Bible quotes which link to our 4 core values of respect, courage, trust and friendship.

## **Moral Development across the curriculum**

Opportunities for moral development can be said to be provided throughout the curriculum and the school when people are:

- Treated positively and with respect
- Helped to know about and have opportunities to consider the core values which underpin the ethos of the school
- Encouraged to develop skills of listening and decision making with regard to moral issues
- Made aware of moral dilemmas facing individuals and groups within society and the difficulties which may be encountered in the resolution of such dilemmas
- Helped to recognise the importance of taking personal responsibility for their actions and the consequences

## **Moral Development in RE, PSHE and Citizenship**

In RE, teachers can use contemporary experience in the lives of the pupils, the school and the community, together with the teaching of world faiths and the lives of individuals, to provide within the RE curriculum opportunities for the development of:

- Personal values in relation to the self and others, such as self-knowledge, self-control and responsibility e.g a topic on forgiveness
- Awareness of feelings which motivate action such as anger, hatred, greed, envy, love, joy, compassion, gratitude. One way to develop this awareness in RE would be through topics such as "Temptation" or "Bullying"
- Human qualities such as sensitivity, love, co-operation, respect for persons and property. For example the study of the stories of some Nobel Peace Prize winners provides opportunities for considering these qualities
- Understanding of commitment and responsibility. This can be illustrated by story, example, lifestyle and practices within a faith community
- Understanding of right and wrong. Exploring questions such as when we need rules, what the limits of rules might be, the meanings of punishment, justice and forgiveness and the application of religious codes such as the Ten Commandments (Jewish, Christian) or the Five Pillars of Islam (Muslim)
- A sense of justice. Exploring questions about what is fair. Examples might include work on fighting injustice and exploitation, defending the poor and outcast, strengthening the poor.

## **Social Development**

Through social development pupils will be enabled:

- To relate positively to others and respect differing viewpoints and ideas
- To participate fully and take responsibility in the classroom and around the school to use appropriate behaviour in a range of situations
- To engage successfully in partnership with others to exercise personal responsibility and initiative
- To understand that, as individuals, we depend on family, school, church and society

Activities should take place within the life of Stonegate CE Primary School which allow pupils:

- To share emotions – love, joy, hope, anguish, fear, reverence, etc to show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others
- To work as part of a group
- To interact positively with others in contacts outside school – sporting activities, visits, church services, music festivals
- To develop an understanding of Citizenship and to experience being part of a whole caring community including school, town/village and church
- To show care and concern for others by sharing and taking turns
- To realise that there are things that each person can do well
- To celebrate success and give support when things are not going so well to be able to cope with failure

Such activities include:

Circle Time

Nature groups programme

Prayer Space

PSHE

Greeting and meeting of stakeholders buddies

Adults taking a positive lead in assisting pupils to resolve conflicts and to deal with failure

Fundraising and charity work

Residential and off-site visits

Celebrating success (eg Friday assembly, sharing assemblies, reward systems) and certificates.

## **Cultural Development**

Cultural development should be embedded in every aspect of the life and work of Stonegate CE Primary School.

It is important that cultural development is seen as an educational process which is concerned as much with developing a sense of personal identity, as it is with encouraging an awareness of the cultural traditions of others.

Promoting cultural development should form the basis of the way in which church schools prepare their pupils for life as adults in a multi-cultural society and as global citizens.

Through cultural development pupils can be enabled:

- to think about themselves, and how they relate to other people in the wider world to gain a knowledge and understanding of their own culture and traditions

- to experience opportunities for exploring beyond their own cultural traditions and broadening their cultural horizons and aspirations
- to reflect beyond and within themselves on God's creation and the diverse nature of humanity
- to recognise the importance of love and understanding in the Christian faith and of developing attitudes which challenge intolerance, prejudice and injustice

Activities should take place within the life and work of the school which:

- encourage pupils to understand, value and learn from the rich cultural diversity within and surrounding the school, and in the national and international context
- ensure that the breadth of the Christian tradition is introduced to pupils, bearing in mind their age and ability
- provide pupils' access to, enjoyment of and participation in, the cultural life of the school, the church and the wider community
- promote equal opportunities throughout the school (with regard, for example, to race, disability, age or gender)
- engender an atmosphere and understanding that encourages respect and acceptance of cultural diversity
- enable pupils to share what they have in common and to celebrate their differences

### **Collective Worship (see separate policy)**

Daily collective worship is an important part of the day for a church school for it sets into context the whole ethos of the school of a caring Christian environment where all are valued. It is not simply a coming together as a school, but also an opportunity for all to share their beliefs and for some, to hear of Christianity for the first time.

Of paramount importance to teaching in Collective Worship is that children know how to apply what they have learnt, and that they know that Christian principles are for every day, not just for Sundays and church. Therefore we aim to develop a sense of community and responsibility to each other and that includes thinking about others and their needs.

The school supports a range of charities throughout the year and visitors are encouraged frequently to either speak in assembly or to see the children in the classrooms.

Fundraising is undertaken throughout the year and we aim to support at least three charities a year.

Friday assembly is one of celebration and each class teacher chooses two children to receive a certificate for good work or behaviour. Birthdays are also celebrated and children come out to receive a card and sticker. These assemblies take place as a whole school.

### **Reflection areas**

There is an area within each class that that is set aside as a reflective area. This should be changed regularly, but may include a Bible/prayer books; artefacts, a Biblical verse or children's work.

This area should reflect the Christian ethos of the school and encourage children to consider God in the midst of their busy school day. This is usually part of R.E. displays within the classrooms.

### **Church links**

Each week the Vicar of Wadhurst and Priest-in-Charge of Stonegate (from St. Peter’s Church) is responsible for leading/organising a weekly Collective Worship.

The Harvest Festival Service is held to coincide with Harvest at St. Peter’s Church, and all our gifts are distributed with those of the church. Children are encouraged to give, and emphasis is placed on helping others.

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development of pupils at Stonegate CE Primary School is an integral part of the daily life of the school, with Christianity as the foundation faith and model which underpins the ethos of the whole school.

### **The Curriculum**

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural aspects are found in all areas of the curriculum and in cross-curricular themes (Golden Thread from 2019 – 2020) but especially through the R.E. scheme of work which incorporates teaching and learning on aspects of relationships and feelings as well as introducing religious knowledge and elements of worship.

Pupils are encouraged to question, investigate and discuss from an early age and the main curriculum is taught through a termly topic. This enables the pupils to explore their knowledge and faith in a wider sense e.g. a topic on growth challenges the children to look at the wonders of creation and a topic on ourselves gives children the opportunity to look at relationships.

All potential SMSC themes for each Learning Journey are discussed during termly bespoke CPD sessions with a curriculum Consultant, Liz Rea, which is provided to all teaching teams (Teachers and TA’s).

### **The Broader Curriculum**

Where there is a positive climate for learning, just about everything a school does will contribute to pupils’ spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

These are starting points on which to build:

<i>Opportunities through</i>	<b>Spiritual</b>	<b>Moral</b>	<b>Social</b>	<b>Cultural</b>
<b>Collective Worship</b>	reflection on their own beliefs and values, and those of others	influence of values on behaviour	celebrating together	celebration of own and others’ religious and cultural traditions
<b>Management of behaviour</b> eg buddies	sense of well-being in a secure and fair environment	recognition of difference between right and wrong	ving together in the school community	recognising the culture of their school community
<b>Codes of conduct:</b>	learning respect for	living by the rules for the	fostering good relationships	communities need values

<b>Class &amp; school rules</b>	themselves and others and that holding values matters	benefit of each other	and respect for property	and rules for living together
<b>Awards and merit systems</b>	sense of being appreciated	positive actions and behaviour are rewarded	recognising the worth and achievement of others	reinforcement of the cultural values of the community
<b>Equal opportunities: SEN, gender, multicultural, multiethnic</b>	values of mutual respect, equal worth good relationships a sense of being included	recognising values and beliefs that may be different from their own challenging prejudice and stereotyping	diversity in society challenging discrimination equal opportunities for boys and girls – encourages complete integration	richness and diversity of cultures
<b>Community links</b>	being involved, participating, playing a part	recognition of the needs of others	working together	insight into one's own and other cultures
<b>Extra-curricular activities including visits/visitor programme</b>	sense of achievement and enjoyment when pursuing an interest, talent or skill	channelling interests, talents or skills positively	team work, meeting others, working with interest groups	extending interests, talents and cultural pursuits
<b>School Council</b>	views and values recognised	making decisions	representation and democracy	belonging, playing a part in school life, community life
<b>Preparation for adult life: PHSE and Citizenship Sustainable development Culture and creativity</b>	personal skills self-worth self-expression knowing oneself inspiration	right and wrong behaviour actions have consequences responsibility and roles care for the environment as a moral imperative	social skills being a 'good citizen' democratic process a better society/environment working together in groups and teams	appreciation of environment, art, music, literature aesthetic and creative qualities

## **Stonegate School Spirituality Statement (As found on the School Website)**

### **What Is Spirituality?**

It is very difficult to put into words what 'spirituality' actually is because it is a very personal experience. It differs from person to person, and often spirituality changes within people during their lifetime. Spirituality is not the same as having a religion or faith; a person can be spiritual without having a particular faith.

#### **Some definitions include:**

"Ones inner being. Our inner self where we can find resources within that come from a greater source I.E. God. Our soul."

"It is first of all the certainty to turn one's life into a more beautiful, harmonious and happy one."

"Spirituality may refer to almost any kind of activity through which a person seeks meaning, especially a "search for the sacred." It may also refer to personal growth, blissful experience, or an encounter with one's own 'inner dimension'."

#### **As a school, we have defined spirituality as:**

"Spirituality is not something we can see; it is something we feel inside ourselves. It is about awe and wonder, asking questions, inspiration and being aware of something 'bigger' outside of ourselves."

The language we use to define spirituality is not child-friendly, so when talking to children about it we will refer to:

A sense of awe and wonder

Care for nature and living things

Wanting to love and to be loved by people

### **Awe and Wonder**

Children are born inquisitive, and it is our duty to nurture this natural curiosity and guide them towards looking at the world and noticing, with awe and wonder, the natural and man-made delights all around us. We want to encourage them to ask 'big questions' about life, religion, nature, science and any other area of fascination.

### **Caring for Nature and Living Things**

We provide many opportunities for children to learn about nature and the role they play in protecting our world. As a Church School, this is especially important. .

## **Love**

We are a very caring school and pride ourselves on our ethos of family. Through our Christian Values, we teach children to care for friends, family and the community. Indeed, our PSHE and RE curriculums include learning about those we love and who love us.

## **How is Spirituality Nurtured?**

Children's spiritual development is fostered through all aspects of our provision. It is about the relationships and the values that we consider to be important, as well as the development of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes.

### **We give children opportunities to:**

Express personal beliefs and compare views with others, sharing feelings and opinions through discussions and stories.

Begin to develop their own system of beliefs which may or may not include religious beliefs.

Experience a love of learning through rewarding their enthusiasm and by encouraging exploratory play and learning.

Reflect upon the world around them and show a sense of awe and wonder towards aspects of the natural world or human achievement.

Reflect on the situations of others through role play, stories.

Experience a range of stories, music, art, drama and dance

## **What is the Role of the School Community?**

All members of the school community have a responsibility for helping to nurture children's spiritual development.

### **School staff can do this through:**

Establishing and maintaining a partnership between pupils, parents and staff; recognising and respecting the faith background of the children and their families;

Taking part in, and supporting, collective acts of worship;

Being good role models in their conduct towards other members of the community;

Promoting an attitude of respect for other people and for others' views;

Nurturing consideration for and generosity towards others.

Drawing on the experiences of pupils and their families during religious education lessons and beyond;

Recognising and being constantly aware of the needs and backgrounds of each individual pupil;

Being willing to develop their own knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and the faiths of others;

Having a positive attitude to the value of spiritual education.

**Pupils can do this through:**

Taking an active part in acts of collective worship;

Participating in activities which promote the skills allowing them to engage in examination of and reflection upon religious belief and practice;

Conducting themselves towards others considerately, in line with the code of conduct;

Respecting the views and beliefs of others.

**Parents can help through:**

Adopting a positive attitude to the value of spiritual education;

Supporting the school's Christian ethos and acts of community worship such as assemblies and church services;

Respecting the views and beliefs of others.

