



*St. Patrick's R.C. Primary School*



Nurturing Spiritual Development		
Date	Review Date	Coordinator
September 2018	September 2019	M Ryan

## Contents

Nurturing Spiritual Development in Catholic Schools

Introduction to the Guidelines

Legislation

Clarifying our Understanding

Introduction to the Audit The

School Audit

Selected Bibliography

Framework for a Spiritual Development Policy

## Nurturing Spiritual Development in Catholic Schools

### Introduction to the Guidelines

*"The human person is created to praise, reverence and serve God Our Lord, and by doing so save his or her soul. The other things on the face of the earth are created for human beings in order to help them pursue the end for which they are created. It follows from this that one must use other created things in so far as they help towards one's end, and free oneself from them in so far as they are obstacles to one's end."*

This description is part of what Ignatius of Loyola describes as "the Principle and Foundation" of his Spiritual Exercises. The Exercises are, in a sense, an opportunity to review spiritual development in one's daily life and are thus very apposite as a short hand description of what spiritual development is about in schools. The Guidelines that follow include more up to date descriptions and definitions of what spirituality is about in the light of modern research and legislative requirements, but the essence is captured in these three sentences. What follows, then, is unpacking this core understanding.

Above all else our understanding of spirituality is a holistic one. There is no aspect of life, and therefore no aspect of a school curriculum, from which God is absent. Our attitude to everything in creation is based on the reverence given in the first instance to God, and following on from that reverencing the creation that God "found very good". It would, therefore, be a distortion of Ignatius' words to imagine that using "other created things" is somehow permission to abuse God's creation. Praise, reverence, and service are incompatible with abuse of any kind.

This holistic approach to spirituality should mirror a holistic approach to the curriculum, hidden and explicit. These Guidelines are offered to help schools realise the potential for exploring the things of God in everything that the school does, and helping staff and pupils in their individual and collective journeys of faith.

## LEGISLATION

### The Law

Section 1 of the Education Reform Act 1988, states that the curriculum is to promote

"....the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school. "

This requirement is repeated in section 351(1) of the Education Act 1996 and in the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. Schools are therefore required by law to make provision for pupils' spiritual development.

### Inspection

OFSTED inspect the school's provision for spiritual development. A school's provision for spiritual development is assessed by OFSTED and their findings appear in one of the main sections in the Inspection Report. However, it is clear from OFSTED findings in recent Annual Reports of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMC) that some schools do not give this aspect of a child's development sufficient attention. Recent Annual Reports of HMCI have repeatedly highlighted shortcomings in the provision for spiritual education in a significant number of schools, including Catholic schools.

A number of key points appear in these reports:

- too often it is only Religious Education and collective worship which make an effective contribution to pupils' spiritual development
- curriculum subjects other than RE should contribute more to the provision for spiritual development
- more time could be allowed for pupils to reflect on spiritual issues
- spiritual development is a difficult area for many schools, including Catholic schools.

## Clarifying our Understanding of the term "Spiritual Development" -

### Definitions:

In the Catholic tradition, belief in God gives the realities we have been talking about a much sharper focus. Our faith:

- Names God as the author of all knowledge, all beauty, all goodness and all truth "One of the mistakes we make is to think that God only comes to us through religion. Wherever there is beauty and truth, there is God." (Sister Wendy Beckett. The Times. 16th Feb. 1994.)
- Asks us to respond to knowledge, beauty, love and truth, in whatever form, precisely as a revelation of their author.
- Enables us to speak of spiritual development in terms of a response to God and to experience it as a relationship with God.

*"St Ignatius of Loyola saw as the object of all spiritual development the readiness and the ability of the person to respond to God, because he understood that God comes to meet us in every event, in every circumstance, in every person, in sickness, in health in happiness, in work, in love, in easy and in difficult relationships. The spiritual quest is quite simply that of recognising the God who comes to meet us and of responding to that meeting." (Spiritual and Moral Development Across the Curriculum)*

This means the pupil needs to be:

- Reasonably familiar with the way God is at work in the world.
- Familiar with the life, words and actions of Jesus Christ, who is God made flesh in our midst.
- Given the opportunities to reflect on what they have seen and done, on how they react to it, and on the meaning they give to that experience, seen especially in the light of faith. *This contribution to self-knowledge, which is a necessary part of personal freedom.*
- Given to opportunity to develop a personal relationship with Christ.
- Familiar with something about the community of the Church, both local and universal - which is the setting and tradition in which, their relationship with Christ is developed.
- Familiar with the lives of some of the saints which can inform an inspiring part of this setting.
- Introduced to collective worship, the sacraments, various types and styles of prayer, away days and retreats, which all contribute to their relationship to Christ.

In a Catholic school, spiritual development is inseparable from RE., catechesis and the ethos of the school, through which pupils are introduced to the person of Jesus Christ and relate his teaching to their experience.

## The 1995 OFSTED Handbook

The 1995 edition of the Handbook appeared in three books, one each for primary, secondary and special schools, although there is little difference between them on the subject of spiritual development. The focus for inspection continued to be on a schools' provision rather than on outcomes, but definitions of spiritual development were now not included. Suggestions were given as to what constituted 'effective provision', which included:

- providing a knowledge of beliefs and values
- a curriculum with clear values
- approaches to teaching with clear values, eg. valuing pupils' ideas
- opportunities for understanding through reflection
- the importance of collective worship, especially in primary schools.

Religious Education was singled out for special mentions as it could make<sup>11a</sup> significant contribution to spiritual development<sup>11</sup> . especially in giving pupils the opportunity to consider ultimate questions and various answers to them.

## The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA)

In November 1997 QCA, (formerly SCAA), issued draft guidance on promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development to 50 volunteer schools as part of a project to produce guidance for schools.

The draft guidance on spiritual development took further the SCAA emphasis on human capacities and identifies particular qualities or human capacities in those who are developing spiritually such as:

- fortitude, which enables us to overcome difficulties
- trust
- striving, to fulfil potential
- courage, to do what is right
- a desire to search for truth to life's fundamental questions.

Building consciously on the previous work of NCC, SCAA and OFSTED, the QCA material clearly strengthens the new emphasis on the development of particular capacities as the central key to promoting spiritual development.

The first significant book on the subject entitled, 'Education Spirituality and the Whole Child' only appeared in 1996. It was a collection of papers delivered at a conference at Roehampton Institute in London the previous year. The first edition of a new journal 'The International Journal of Children's Spirituality' only appeared in 1996. An important monograph by Andrew Wright appeared in 1998 entitled Spiritual Pedagogy which is critical of much recent thinking on the subject by such writers as Hay, Lealman and Priestley.

Wright emphasises the need for schools to recognise the diversity of spiritual traditions and to engage in both a process of nurture and education. He asserts,

*'It is necessary to accept the reality of a diversity of contrasting and conflicting spiritual traditions... Education must come to terms with a plurality of spiritual traditions...'*

*Education will inevitably nurture children into a particular world view. The question is not whether this will happen, but how: consequently a primary task of spiritual education is to ensure that the spiritual tradition in which children are nurtured is appropriate, and that the process of nurture is effective...*

*In addition to nurturing pupils within a particular spiritual tradition the school also has the duty of allowing them critical access to alternative traditions so that informed insight and wisdom may flourish throughout the development of spiritual literacy. "*

Wright 1998, p.78, 86, 95 & 97

At its simplest, spiritual development can be described as a concern to foster the growth of the human spirit. However, this definition is insufficient to assist schools as it raises further questions such as:

- what is the human spirit?
- what activities foster the flourishing of the human spirit?
- what aspects of the 'life of the spirit', should be fostered in a school?
- what is the outcome of this process of development?

A Definition of Spiritual Development from Kent SACRE

A definition for schools needs to be more detailed and precise if it is to serve as a workable definition that can be easily unfolded and translated into school policy and practice. The Kent SACRE's definition is:

*Spiritual development is the concern to develop the most distinctive and desirable capacities of the human person, ie. those capacities that, above all, distinguish human beings from other living creatures. It is a concern which goes beyond what a pupil can know and can do and relates to what sort of person they are and are becoming.*

It is thus essentially to do with a pupil's 'being and becoming.' Certain features of this definition should be noted. This definition of spiritual development:

- is deliberately inclusive with a focus on a common spirituality
- involves nurture in particular values for it requires a school to make choices about the human capacities it wishes to develop
- does not seek to nurture children in a specific religious or spiritual tradition but will require the study of a range of alternative spiritual traditions. (Catholic schools must root spiritual development within our Catholic Tradition).

## **Why have schools found it difficult to nurture spiritual development in their children?**

Recent diocesan inspection reports and annual reports from HMCI indicate that schools have experienced difficulties in promoting pupils' spiritual development. A range of difficulties have been encountered, including:-

- the difficulty of distinguishing spiritual development from religious education and from moral and social development
- the difficulty in arriving at an acceptable workable definition which can be used as the basis for policy and practice
- the lack of sufficiently clear and detailed guidance from official bodies concerned with education
- the unfamiliarity of the term spiritual development in the field of education, for example the term very rarely appears in standard textbooks on child development or human development
- the lack of sufficient research on the spiritual development of children outside the context of a specific faith
- the diversity of views about spiritual development and the lack of a clear and widespread consensus as to what it means to promote the spiritual development of all pupils.

## **Introduction to the Audit**

The audit provided may be used in a number of ways. There are no right answers or right ways to use it. It is offered as a framework for reflection for individuals, departments, whole staff gatherings or working parties of staff, parents, parishioners and governors.

We encourage you to use it in whichever way suits you and your community. Take time to reflect, to consider, to reject, to discern, to determine, to consolidate, to review ..and then to renew.

We hope that following a process of prayerful reflection you will be able to celebrate and consolidate all that is good and identify further opportunities for growth.

<sup>11</sup>All knowledge exists, it simply awaits discovery. <sup>11</sup>

## Conducting a School Audit

### Spiritual Development in Our Catholic School

Some points for prayerful, reflective consideration for a school community.

To what extent .....	Comments following personal and Growth prayerful reflection	Opportunities for
Do we have a policy?		
Are we able to say how we address the spiritual development of pupils?		
Are pupils aware, within their own stages of understanding and maturity, that spiritual development is important?		
Have we sufficient resources for the school?		
When did we last review them?		
What structures can we put in place to monitor our provision for pupils' spiritual needs?		

### Spiritual Dimension Across the Curriculum

	Comments following personal and prayerful reflection	Opportunities for Growth
Do we provide opportunities for prayer/reflection/silence, the exploration of inner space? If so, how do we use them?		
Do we encourage pupils to express their creativity and imagination?		
Do we foster a sense of respect for the integrity of each person?		
Do we explore what commitment means?		

## Spiritual Dimension Across the Curriculum

	Comments following personal and prayerful reflection	Opportunities for Growth
Do we create an atmosphere which enables pupils and staff to speak freely about faith and belief?		
Do we treat pupils' parents, staff and governors with respect, regardless of personal feelings?		
Do we take seriously the 'spiritual rights' of the child, the development of the whole child and the need to develop spiritual literacy?		
Do we recognise the diversity of spiritual traditions and give pupils access to alternative views?		
Do we display an understanding of the development of the human spirit as something which cuts deeper than the cognitive/intellectual and affective/emotional dimension of a person?		
Do we encourage teachers to awaken, enliven, inspire and challenge as well as tend and comfort children's spirits?		
Do we provide opportunities for pupils to 'look inwards' and to reflect on beliefs, values and feelings, hopes, dreams, ideals and aspirations?		
Do we provide opportunities for pupils to 'look outwards' and to reflect on the natural world, the environment and human achievement, often 'against the odds'?		
Do we support teachers and other adult staff to be calm, reflective practitioners with space in their lives?		
Do we allow pupils to investigate and reflect upon their own beliefs and values across the curriculum?		

Do we expect religious education and worship to cover all aspects of spiritual development?

## Spiritual Dimension Across the Curriculum

	Comments following personal and prayerful reflection	Opportunities for Growth
Do we provide opportunities for pupils to share what is meaningful and significant to them, including the 'darker' side of life?		
Do we always invite and never coerce?		
Does our school encourage a balance of music, speech, silence and the creative arts when exploring spiritual development?		
Does our school enable pupils to express feelings of transcendence, wonder, awe, injustice or inequality?		
In each subject area can we identify where pupils explore: an imaginative approach to the world?		
, a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness?		
approach to the holy or the sacred?		
awareness of order and pattern in the world?		
Does our school adopt strategies to ensure pupils try to listen?		
to reflect?		
To be still?		
To sense wonder and mystery in the World?		

In light of the audit conducted, what key strengths are present in the school's provision for nurturing spiritual development? .

How will you celebrate and consolidate these key strengths?

How will you affirm those responsible for these key strengths?

What do you consider to be the key areas for development and growth?

How will you realistically build on the strengths and improve the school's provision without it becoming too heavy a burden on staff?

---

## Selected Bibliography

---

Ignatius of Loyola, *Spiritual Exercises*,  
(translated by J. A. Munitiz & P. Endean, Penguin. London, 2006)

Discerning the Spirit- Teaching Spirituality in the Religious Education  
Classroom  
(Andrew Wright - available at £6 each from CEM, Royal Buildings, Victoria St.,  
Derby DE1 1GW)

Don't Just do something sit there- Developing Children's Spiritual Awareness  
(Mary K Stone - available at £6 each from Religious & Moral Education Press on 01603  
612914)

TES Primary - November 1999 Issue

Spiritual Development in Schools - Invisible to the Eye  
(Alan Brown and Joan Furlong - available at £3.50 each from The National Society  
on 0171 2221672)

Spiritual and Moral Development Across the Curriculum  
(Available at £3 each from the Catholic Education Service on 0171 828 7604)

Shaping the Spirit- Promoting the Spiritual Development of Young People in  
Schools  
(Kent SACRE 1999 - available at £8.00 each from 01622 605000)

---

## Framework for Spiritual Development Policy

---

A policy for nurturing spiritual development in a Catholic School will be similar to other policies in the school and should be short, concise and meaningful to all:

It is likely to contain:

- o the school mission statement- in full or a precis
- a statement regarding the schools' understanding of spiritual development from our Catholic perspective
- reference to the schools' role in providing opportunities for the spiritual development of all within the community
- a named co-ordinator with a defined role and responsibility
- the relationship of this policy to subject area policies
- the place of spiritual development in relation to the mission statement and other policies on worship, moral, social and cultural development
- how the policy will be monitored and evaluated

Reference will need to be given within the policy or perhaps attached to the policy specific strategies.

They may include:

- the creation of a high quality, calm learning environment which emphasises beauty, awe, wonder and discovery
- the importance of the school being 'spiritually alive' with planned opportunities for prayer, meditation, retreat experiences and moments of 'sacred silence'.
- the recognition to develop the skill of being physically still, yet alert
- the means to develop an inner peace
- the importance of quiet reflection both in the classroom and in assembly
- the place of prayer
- strategies identified during the audit process.

- enshrines an inescapable moral dimension to spiritual development in that some capacities, such as empathy, will be encouraged whilst others, such as indifference to human need, will be discouraged .
- is similar in intention to what some have described as developing virtues or forming character .
  - has as its goal spiritual maturity, . wisdom and literacy
- has as its goal not only the child with spirit' but also the spiritual child.

(taken from ..Shaping the Spirit - Promoting the Spiritual Development of young people in schools. Kent SACRE 1999)

<b>Headteacher:</b>	M. Ryan	<b>Date:</b>	September 2018
<b>Chair of Governing Body:</b>	G. Wilson	<b>Date:</b>	September 2018