

Shine with the light of Jesus – Matthew 5:14-16. You are the light of the world.

Brinscall St John's C.E./ Methodist Primary School



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

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Review date: Spring Term 2025

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1. Statement of Intent

At Brinscall St John's CE/Methodist Primary School, our children and their learning are at the very heart of every decision made. This policy reflects our diverse mix of pupils and does not discriminate against any of the protected characteristics.

Brinscall St John's is a CE/Methodist Primary School whose ethos is founded on Christian teaching and values and in particular recognises the uniqueness and worth of each individual of the school, both children and adults alike, all of whom are loved by God.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of the Headteacher and all teaching staff. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development relates to relationships with other people and, for believers, with God. It involves the search for individual identity and with our responses to both joyful and challenging experiences such as death, suffering, beauty and encounters with good and evil. It promotes the search for meaning and purpose in life and for values by which to live.

The whole school looks to Christ for the basis of its existence. Prayer and worship are central to school life. This policy has been written in accordance with the guidelines from Blackburn Diocese. The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education of pupils at St John's is cross-curricular and not limited to specific SMSC lessons. It is expected that many unplanned opportunities will occur for spiritual development, and staff are encouraged to 'seize the moment' when appropriate. We value the profound effect that such moments may have on individuals.

Our Mission and Vision Statement:

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Within our school family, everyone is valued and encouraged to flourish. We encourage everyone to let their light shine in all aspects of their life, following the example of Jesus Christ.

We hope for each member of our school family to understand how much they are loved by Jesus, so we can each flourish, and shine His light out into the world around us by the way that we live.

2. Aims

St John's aims are embedded within our Christian vision - 'Shine with the light of Jesus', our Vision and Mission Statement and core Gospel Values of: love, stewardship, faith, serving others, forgiveness and determination. At our school, we seek to provide a safe, caring and stimulating environment for our children.

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We aim to provide opportunities to enable our children to experience life in all its fullness through a curriculum which is rich in opportunities to enable children to 'Shine with the light of Jesus' by:

- Keeping ourselves healthy as God's Holy Spirit lives within us;
- Widening the arts and cultural experiences for children, by developing links for the delivery of a broad and balanced curriculum;
- Knowing about, marvelling at and taking care of God's world.

We intend our pupils to acquire the skills and knowledge that will enable them to develop every dimension of themselves: to be confident and willing, caring and concerned, committed to their own development and yet aware of their responsibilities to others.

These are the aims of our school:

1. We seek to help the children to develop a personal relationship with God through Jesus; to know they are loved by Jesus, that they are a child of God, and wonder at His world.
2. Daily life in school, our ethos and interactions are underpinned by our Mission Statement and the Gospel Values that Christians seek to follow.
3. We provide an education for the development of the whole child – intellectual, social, spiritual, moral, physical and emotional.
4. Understanding that we are all part of God's family, we celebrate the uniqueness and diversity of all children, identifying, recognising and seeking to develop in each their own particular skills, abilities and talents.
5. Our children are challenged and supported to develop their abilities and strengths, whilst encouraging them to nurture resilience when facing challenges.
6. A safe environment is provided, where all children are treated equally with respect and understanding.

All our pupils will be encouraged to apply self-discipline, and we will provide opportunities for them to develop a sense of responsibility in school and in the wider community by:

- flourishing as God wants us to, and gain the confidence to try and learn new things;
- shining out His light into the world around – in how we put others first, care for each other and God's world;
- understanding what it means to be a child of God – in how we are, in all we do, in how we approach problems and in how we learn.

3. Spiritual Development

God is love. Whoever lives in love, lives in God and God lives in him. 1 John 4:16

The school's curriculum aims to develop in pupils:

- A set of Christian personal beliefs and values by which we live.

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- A sense of transcendence – that there is more to life than "meets the eye", more than a physical or material existence.
- An awareness of order, pattern, meaning and purpose in the world – leading towards an understanding that for Christians, creation is revelation of God's loving purposes.
- A sense of personal identity and self-worth and of all others as created in God's image.
- An understanding of Christian teachings on life and death, on suffering, grief and loss.
- An awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences; the development of self-respect and the ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life.
- An awareness that life involves choices between good and evil.
- An awareness of God's love and care for them personally.
- An understanding of the Christian belief of Jesus as Saviour.
- Opportunities to explore the Christian faith and begin to compare this with other faiths, development of personal beliefs, including religious beliefs; an interest in, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values; an appreciation that people have individual and shared beliefs on which they base their lives; a developing understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity.
- A sense of awe, wonder and mystery: being inspired by the natural world, mystery or human achievement; a sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them.

Therefore, the school provides opportunities in collective worship and throughout the curriculum and life of the school for pupils to:

- Be quiet and reflect on life and the world, and "wait on God".
- Become familiar with a variety of traditional forms of Christian prayer and worship.
- Give thanks to God for their creation, preservation, salvation, and the promise of eternal life.
- Use a variety of prayer forms and techniques, including use of their own prayers.
- Question, explore, discuss and give an account of their own beliefs.
- Understand and evaluate Christian life.
- Use their gifts of imagination and creativity in order to express their innermost thoughts and feelings through, for example, art, music, literature and crafts.
- Explore and express feelings and emotions: The sense of being moved by beauty of kindness; hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions and feelings and how to learn to use such feelings as a source of growth.
- Develop respect for others as independent, thinking, feeling people.
- Face difficult or distressing matters in a context of loving Christian teaching and support.
- Consider 'What If' questions in relation to their own beliefs and spiritual understanding.
- Relationships: recognising and valuing the worth of each individual; developing a sense of community; the ability to build up relationships with others.

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Spiritual Development has to take place in a particular context, in our case that of Christian belief and practice. Christian spiritual development shares features with other forms of spirituality in that it is concerned with coming to know ourselves, learning to reflect on experiences, exploring important questions of how to live and treat others, and so reaching a set of beliefs and values by which to guide our lives. Its distinctiveness, most importantly, consists in its capacity through a context of Christian worship, life and teaching, to offer opportunities for all in the school community to develop a relationship with God through Jesus.

Spiritual development in a Christian context is only possible when there is growth of the whole person. It therefore forms the basis for the other three areas of moral, social and cultural development. The aim of RE within school is to provide children with information about religious beliefs; to explore the way beliefs impact on a person's life and to encourage children to develop their own spirituality through big questions and reflection: "I wonder....." Within the context of our school, RE will support children in developing their own beliefs, values and attitudes through an exploration of shared human experience. We want children to develop an understanding of the significance of Christianity and other religions in the contemporary world, with such emphasis of Anglican and Methodist beliefs and practises as is appropriate to our school situation.

Although RE, SMSC and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich each other, they are managed separately within the school.

4. Moral Development

And what does the Lord require of you?

To act justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8

The school aims to grow an understanding that morality is not just about good behaviour; it is about shared values that are rooted in Christian belief. Love predominates in all aspects of school life and as Christians we look to the life and teaching of Jesus to help children understand what this means in practice. We aim to develop in pupils a moral stance which is based on Christian ideals of serving others, faith, love, forgiveness, determination and stewardship, based on recognition of others as created in the image of God. We seek to develop in pupils a clear understanding of all these values and set out in detail ways of encouraging and rewarding them in line with the mission statement. The school will seek to ensure that adult relationships in the school set the best possible Christian example. We believe that both adults and pupils can be helped to live out these Christian values through the action of the Holy Spirit.

The school aims to provide opportunities for moral development through the curriculum and school life to:

- Develop an understanding of right and wrong.
- Develop an understanding of the need for shared values and accepted rules of conduct in the school and community.
- Develop self-discipline and a loving concern for others.

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- Understand links between behaviour and beliefs, including the teachings of the Gospel.
- Stand up for and put into practice our Christian values despite external pressures.
- Develop an interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues.

In order to achieve this, children need to develop the following habits and skills:

- Appreciate the feelings and concerns of others.
- Develop and sustain relationships.
- Reflect on questions of right and wrong and on their own values.
- Discuss their own beliefs and feelings.
- Listen with respect to the views and opinions of others.
- Discuss and debate issues rationally and sensitively.
- Exercise care and responsibility for others.
- Understand the consequences of their behaviour and actions.

The school offers guidance to teachers on Christian approaches to teaching controversial or sensitive issues (see other relevant policy statement e.g. sex education).

The school seeks to recognise and affirm good conduct, commitment and service to others through its reward system and through celebration and thanks in the context of collective worship.

5. Social Development

***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***

Because Christians believe that we are "all one in Christ" and members of God's family in the Church and accept Christ's commandment to "love our neighbours as ourselves", the school sets out to foster the commitment and ability to live and work with others, to share resources and to show concern and responsibility for others in the school and wider community. Classroom management will seek to promote group co-operation and mutual responsibility. Children will be pointed to the value and importance of working, playing and praying together.

The school seeks to avoid a predominance of groupings based on a single sex or interest, or social or ethnic background. It sets out to offer a wide range of educational, social, sporting and extra-curricular activities to all children. In sport, there will be a balance of individual or team activities, which may be either competitive or non-competitive. Responsible leadership roles will be encouraged throughout a range of activities which will include the appointment of monitors and prefects. Children may also put themselves forward for election to become a member of both the School Council and our worship group, The Beacons.

The school aims to develop social skills and insights through the full range of activities in school involving children and adults, and by creating situations where pupils have to relate

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to visitors to the school and do so with increasing politeness, tact and confidence. Children will be encouraged to participate in and contribute to the life of the Church and the community through regular whole school worship in Church, community projects at times like Harvest, Christmas and our Pensioners Lunch. Children will be taught how to use modern communication technology, including mobile technology, the internet and social media, safely.

The school's programme of fund-raising, the way funds are raised and the Christian, charitable and other causes chosen will contribute to developing the habit of care and support for those in need. Pupils will be given the opportunity to choose charities the school should support, and to take an active part in planning and carry out fundraising. Social achievement and service to church or community will be recognised and celebrated.

Pupil's social development will also be shown in their 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. Pupils should also develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in, and contribute positively to, life in modern Britain.

6. Cultural Development

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 7:9

The school aims to broaden children's horizons by introducing them to a range of cultural activities and experiences, by building up an appreciation of their own cultural heritage and traditions, and introducing them to examples of the variety of human cultures, beliefs and ways of life. At the same time the school will seek to emphasise and express its Christian foundation, values, beliefs and way of life.

The school aims to provide opportunities which include the following:

- Experience and appreciation of the rich heritage and range of cultures in Britain, in particular through English, drama, history, R.E., music, art and sport.
- Appreciation and respect for other cultures, faiths and ways of life, in particular through use of the Diocesan R.E. syllabus, relevant curriculum materials and through the study of language, art, music, geography and technology and use of computer networking. This is supplemented by information shared from the New Life Home Trust in Nairobi and international links with other schools, educational visits to museums, events and places of cultural and historic interest (e.g. Blackburn Cathedral, Roman remains at Ribchester, Eden Camp and museums).
- Introducing children to Christian cultures and the multi-cultural nature of the Anglican and Methodist Churches and worldwide Church through R.E., Worship and other areas of the curriculum such as Art and Music.

The school sets out actively to promote mutual respect and harmony between different racial and ethnic groups.

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7. Cross-curriculum teaching and learning

- Development in SMSC will take place across all areas of the curriculum.
- SMSC has particularly strong links to Religious Education, Collective Worship and Personal, Social, Health and Education (PSHE).
- All areas of the curriculum will draw examples from as wide a range of cultural contexts as possible.
- In order to develop a strong sense of identity in our pupils, we will use classroom discussion to enable them to:
 - Talk about their experiences and feelings.
 - Express and clarify personal ideas and beliefs.
 - Speak about difficult events, e.g. bullying, death.
 - Share thoughts and feelings with other people.
 - Explore relationships with friends/family/others.
 - Consider the needs and behaviour of others.
 - Show empathy.
 - Develop self-esteem and a respect for others.
 - Develop a sense of belonging.
 - Develop the skills and attitudes that enable children to develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally.

Many areas across the curriculum provide opportunities for pupils to:

- Listen and talk to each other.
- Learn an awareness of treating all as equals and accepting people who are different because of their cultural, physical and learning difficulties.
- Agree and disagree.
- Experience good role models.
- Take turns and share equipment.
- Work co-operatively and collaboratively.

Practical activities to develop SMSC include:

- Working together in different groupings and situations.
- Encouraging the children to behave appropriately at meal times.
- Taking responsibility e.g. class monitors, lunch monitors, register monitors, assembly monitors, cloakroom monitors, delivering messages and looking after younger children.
- Encouraging teamwork in PE and games.
- Being part of a house team and contributing towards a shared goal.
- Appreciation of and respect for the work and performance of other children, regardless of ability.
- Hearing music from different composers, cultures and genres e.g. in music for reflection time at the start of collective worship.

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- Meeting people from different cultures and countries.
- Participating in a variety of different educational visits.
- Participation in live performances.
- Using assembly themes to explore important aspects of our heritage and other cultures e.g. festival days, the patron saints and global events.
- Studying literature and art from different cultures supported by visits from writers and artists and participating in workshops.
- Opportunities for the children to hear and see live performances by professional actors, dancers and musicians.
- Opportunities to make and evaluate food from other countries.
- Opportunities in music to learn songs from different cultures and play a range of instruments including steel pans and samba.
- Studying the contributions to society that certain famous people have made.

8. Assessment

An ongoing assessment of the moral, social and cultural development of a child will initially be the responsibility of the class teacher and thereafter by any member of staff who comes into regular contact with the child.

In many ways, it is both improper and impossible to assess spiritual development and so the eight areas simply mark out steps that might be taken in terms of progression in reflection and contemplation. In this way it is more aspirational than evaluative and judgemental.

9. Monitoring and evaluation

At St John's, we listen to the views of our pupils and their parents/carers. We operate an open door policy for the sharing of views and also have a formal system in place including:

- Annual pupil questionnaire.
- Pupil/teacher meetings.
- Annual parents' questionnaire.
- Parents' evenings/meetings.

SMSC provision is reviewed on a bi-annual basis in the following ways:

- Monitoring of teaching and learning and work scrutiny by the curriculum coordinator, Headteacher and governors as part of our general monitoring.
- Regular discussions at staff and governors' meetings.
- Regular policy audits.
- Development of Religious Education, PSHE and Collective Worship to reflect the diversity of both our school and society.
- Sharing of classroom work and practice.

10. Promoting fundamental British values

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British Values

The DfE have reinforced the need **“to create and enforce a clear and rigorous expectation on all schools to promote 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 Government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy. At St John’s these values are taught through our broad, balanced and enriched curriculum. Frequent opportunities to apply our agreed values: **Serving Others, Faith, Love, Forgiveness, Determination and Stewardship**, ensure that children practice key learning behaviours that support the school’s vision to create valued members of our community.

Democracy

Pupil voice is valued at our school. Pupils have the opportunities to contribute to the improvement of our school through the school council. The elections of members of the School Council are based on pupil votes.

Parents and children complete regular questionnaires and comments are used to improve the school.

The Rule of Law

A consistently applied **Behaviour Policy** is shared with the children and visible in all areas of the school. Expectations are reinforced regularly and opportunities are sought frequently to praise positive choices. Pupils’ modelling behaviour consistent with the school’s high expectations are recognised and used as role models to others.

Through **Collective Worship** and the school’s **PSHE/Citizenship curriculum**, children develop an understanding of law appropriate to their age. Visits from other external agencies such as the Fire service, Health professionals and ‘People who help us’ reinforces their understanding of the responsibilities held by various professions.

Individual Liberty

Children are valued for their differences and there is a wide variety of extra-curricular clubs to enable children to try new things, develop new skills and practice existing ones. Care is taken to provide equal opportunities for all genders.

Time and care is taken to know each child as an individual and regular circle time sessions give children a chance to share their feelings and options in a safe way.

Mutual Respect

Class rules are agreed at the beginning of each academic year to set clear expectations of respectful behaviour. If pupils show disrespect to one another, this is dealt with

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immediately through the school's behaviour policy and where appropriate Parents/Carers are contacted. Time is given for repair and restoration and to talk about the behaviour which is disrespectful to others. Regular circle time and various well-being events are held across the year. During these sessions, children are taught to value differences in others and themselves and to respect others.

A consistent behaviour policy is in place and children take responsibility, with support when needed, to resolve conflict and repair relationships.

Children participate in regular sporting events and competitions. These ensure children experience competitive events and have an opportunity to apply their sportsmanship skills with other schools.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs

The school follows the Blackburn Diocese RE syllabus which ensures that the children learn about all the main religions of the world. Collective Worship contributes to the knowledge of special occasions and children and their families come to share with the school information about how they celebrate these events at home. The local clergy visit the school for Collective Worship on a weekly basis and talks to the children. These talks coincide with main events occurring in the Christian calendar such as Advent. The children attend Church on a regular basis. Where appropriate, we provide our children with Educational visits to different places of worship and participate in Community Cohesion projects with schools within different areas of the community.

Through the national curriculum, we will:

- Teach our pupils a broad and balanced international history.
- Represent the cultures of all of our pupils across the subject.
- Teach a wide range of English and non-English literature.
- Commemorate World War 1 and 2.
- Demonstrate the historical importance of the Commonwealth.

Through our Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural programme, we will:

- Enable students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence.
- Enable students to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England.
- Encourage students to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and to understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely.
- Enable students to acquire a broad general knowledge of, and respect for, public institutions and services in England.
- Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling students to acquire an appreciation of, and respect for, their own and other cultures.
- Encourage respect for other people.

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- Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.