



SEVENOAKS
PREPARATORY SCHOOL

PSHE POLICY

This policy is currently being updated by Davinia Ablett and Donald Smith

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Introduction

The school positively asserts that Sevenoaks Prep offers an “education for life” and that this means the development of the whole person, mind, body and spirit. Central to the Prep then is the belief that the education provided is not only about the gaining of knowledge and the acquiring of essential skills, important though they are, but that it is also about the personal development of each child, in its fullest sense. The fullest sense, in terms of the 1992 Schools Act, is one that includes the “spiritual, moral, social and cultural development” of each boy and girl. The education offered is one of five closely interwoven strands.

The Pre Prep’s “Golden Rules and the Prep’s “Way of Life serve as an ever present backcloth to the ongoing life of the school. This is interwoven into the following strands of education:

- **Morality** – serves as an ever-present backcloth to the ongoing life of the school whatever a child’s religious denomination (however, the school follows a Church of England, Christian based programme of Common Worship in terms of Assemblies, Harvest Festival, Carol Service and End of Year Service).
- **Integrity and commitment** - where adults and young people are encouraged to value and be true to the highest ideals.
- **Personal relationships** - concerns adults and young people alike aiming to set, and being entitled to expect from others, good, caring standards of behaviour, marked by respect, responsibility, openness and honesty.
- **Discipline** - is concerned with critical openness through which all members of the community are encouraged to develop self-discipline. Discipline is not unthinking obedience but rather about the development of positive attitudes to oneself and others resulting in self-induced responsible behaviour.
- **Developing all pupils to their fullest potential** - encouraging and challenging the very able to develop to their fullest degree, and supporting and enabling low achieving and average pupils to value themselves and even surprise themselves through what they are able to achieve.

It is the task of the school to ensure that an adequate foundation of experience and knowledge, with opportunities for discussion, reflection and evaluation, is provided, so that pupils can be given maximum scope to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions.

Partnership

The role of Sevenoaks Prep School, in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of boys and girls is one of stimulus and nourishment. The school, however, realises that it does not do this by itself. It recognizes that parents have entrusted the education of boys and girls to it. Hopefully parents, even if they do not share the values on which the school is built, are nevertheless in broad sympathy with them and will play their part in encouraging and supporting what it is striving to do. There is a real sense then in which the school is engaged in a partnership with parents and they will play a significant part in the development of these values in their children.

The contribution of the wider family and, in some cases the involvement in a particular faith community and in all cases the involvement with society at large will also contribute in various ways to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Rate of Development

There are four distinct areas in which development can take place. It must not be assumed that the rate of development will be identical in each of them. It is believed that there are aspects of 'social development', which are generally straightforward and can be observed. However, this is not thought to be the case with 'spiritual development', as this tends to be somewhat erratic. Similar variations will be seen when attempting to propose educational aims and objectives in relation to these areas. It is obviously much easier to identify an appropriate body of knowledge and skills and an appropriate list of desired attitudes and values in some of these areas than in others.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of humankind are ones in which it is impossible to prescribe a rigid and bureaucratic set of aims, objectives and standards to be met. It is, however, possible to establish clear signposts to show the general direction of the desired development.

In Sevenoaks Prep School the insights of its Christian roots and modern educational ideas mesh in its desire to encourage individual autonomy and responsibility; and respect for individual difference, rather than mere conformity; and also a willingness to appreciate and celebrate diversity. What follows is an attempt to clarify the ways in which the school can encourage its pupils to develop as whole human beings.

Pupils' Spiritual Development

The Prep does not mean that it is primarily concerned with preaching Christianity to its pupils. The spiritual development, which must be encouraged, rests upon the encouragement to think, explore and discuss. It is concerned with how personal beliefs and values are acquired, especially on questions of religion; whether life has

purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour. It is not another name for religious education, although there are close connections. For example, spiritual development may be both an aim for religious education and an outcome of it.

The potential for spiritual development is open to all pupils. It is concerned with specifically religious concerns but by no means confined to the development of religious beliefs. The spiritual dimension of life at the school is seen as the set of beliefs, values, attitudes, experiences, and reflections by which individuals give direction and shape and meaning to their lives.

Spiritual development is also concerned with the promotion of the development of feelings and emotions, as well as identifying the importance of intellectual curiosity. It is concerned with deepening appreciation of music, art and literature. These areas, as well as those traditionally understood as religious, seek to explain what life is about and pupils are invited and encouraged to explore them. They are urged to approach these areas with serious intent and take on increasing responsibility for themselves in them. The methodology adopted is that of discussion, exploration and reflection through what is taught in its curriculum, participation in music, drama and artistic activity, through collective worship and through the school's ethos.

Spiritual Aims

- A willingness to reflect on and appreciate faith.
- Recognition of the right of others to hold their own views and respect for those who have different beliefs and customs.
- A willingness to seriously explore the religious faith, which has shaped the particular culture from which the pupil has come.
- A willingness to look beyond materialism.
- A willingness to reflect on and think critically about their experiences, responses and choices.
- A developing sense of awe and wonder in the face of the universe.
- A willingness to reflect on and appreciate works of literary, artistic or musical merit.
- A willingness to ask and explore.
- A growing ability to cope with the times of suffering which human life naturally presents: anxiety, stress, unhappiness, illness, divorce and death.

Pupils' Moral Development

Moral development is concerned with a pupil's knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Moral development then is concerned with fundamental judgements and precepts about how people should behave and act and reasons for such behaviour. The intention at Sevenoaks Prep is that pupils, as they develop a sense of morality, will be invited to explore the place of reason in ethical matters and, as autonomous moral agents, acquire value systems which are their own, together with an understanding that their behaviour and actions should be derived from a moral set of beliefs and values. It is crucial for the school to expect high moral standards from all members of its community and it is in

this context that it is felt important that teachers explore the basis of moral behaviour. It is important for boys and girls to understand that any social grouping depends for its continued existence on the broad acceptance of rules and laws.

In the classroom situation, in consistency with the purpose of developing pupil autonomy and personal responsibility, moral education focuses on values clarification. It is important, however, to be clear and consistent when dealing with matters of morality, especially where there is a high degree of consensus in society.

Moral Aims

To Prep aims to foster:

- A developing sense of self-discipline and responsibility not only for their own actions, but also for their responsibilities to others.
- A developing awareness of, and pride in, their own unique gifts, talents and privileges, and a parallel rejection of all forms of prejudiced perception of others on the basis of class, race, sex, religion or nationality.
- An appreciation of the importance of honesty, truthfulness and the development of personal integrity.
- Sensitivity to the feelings, needs and rights of others.
- A growing disposition towards generosity, rather than selfishness, by helping those less fortunate or weaker than ourselves.
- An appreciation of the importance of being kind to others and a clear rejection of unkindness, cruelty or bullying.
- A developing of a mature sense of self-confidence and self-worth and a consequent willingness to lay aside arrogance.

Pupils' Social Development

Social development refers to the progressive acquisition of the competences and qualities needed to play a full part in society. It is primarily concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society by being a member of the community. The school can only complement and extend what the home and society in general can achieve in helping to prepare boys and girls to participate constructively in society.

Upon entry to the school a pupil will be required to learn the obligations and constraints, but also the satisfaction, that go with being a member of a group or community. The approaches obviously vary hugely to meet the age of the child. A youngster entering our Nursery at 3 years old will quite often be experiencing community life for the first time, whereas an 11 year old entering Year 7 will have been through the Primary School programme. As they develop boys and girls will also become aware of their own identity as individuals, as well as the importance of taking into account the feelings and wishes of others within the group or community, and they will be given opportunities to experience a variety of social roles. Social development is seen to be closely related to the development of moral principles.

Social Aims

- To provide opportunities for pupils to work in groups and in pairs to experience a variety of social roles.
- To provide opportunities for boys and girls to experience working co-operatively in partnership.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn to respond to the initiatives of others, and what it means to share a common purpose.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to understand about the 'political' aspects of living in society.
- To provide opportunities for pupils to be involved in a decision-making process which involves democratic participation.

Pupils' Cultural Development

Cultural development refers to pupils' increasing understanding and command of those beliefs, values, customs, knowledge and skills which, taken together, form the basis of identity and cohesion in societies and groups. This area of development is principally concerned with the pupils' understanding and appreciation of the music, art, drama, poetry, science and technology of the society in which they live.

The purpose of education is both to develop and strengthen the cultural interests, which the pupils already possess and expose them to a breadth of stimuli, which will allow them to develop new interests. It is important to realise that cultures change and consequently pupils will be taught about features, which have influenced and shaped the present, as well as about how the present generations, themselves included, are maintaining, interpreting and reshaping their cultural traditions.

It is also acknowledged that the school will not be the only means whereby a boy or girl is influenced culturally and, indeed, that it may not be the strongest of these. The school can have an immediate impact upon its pupils and does have a contribution to make. Such contributions may include an introduction to the values and customs held within a nation's culture, and to those of other significant cultures, including those represented in the school. In the Prep's context, with the presence of a significant minority of pupils from other nations and cultures it is important that they feel that their values and customs are respected.

Cultural Aims

- To provide pupils with the knowledge of the nature and roots of their own cultural traditions and practices, including historical, social, religious, aesthetic, ethnic or political and also of the key features of other major cultural groups within their own society.
- To develop an understanding of the diversity of religious, social, aesthetic, ethnic and political traditions and practices within their society.
- To encourage a personal response and accomplishment in a range of cultural fields, which might include, as a minimum: literature (both prose and verse);

music; technology (including information technology); art and design; and physical movement, particularly in the realms of sport.

- To enlarge pupils' capacity to relate what they learn, in school generally and in particular areas of the curriculum, to their appreciation of wider cultural aspects of society, and to evaluate the quality and worth of cultural achievements.

Achieving the Aims

The moral, spiritual, social and cultural (personal) aspects of a pupil's development do not form part of any separate curriculum area's scheme of work. The formation of character, beliefs, values and a spiritual centre, is really the development of character and is not something that can be attained by formula, curriculum organisation or prescription. Personal meanings, beliefs and values which constitute a person's spirituality, and the qualities of character and value from which morally good and socially responsible action proceed, are built up steadily, slowly, continuously and cumulatively in the on-going process of how we relate to each other as human beings.

No single system or institutional structure within the school, no single department or procedure is responsible for the moral, spiritual, cultural or social developments of the boys and girls at the Prep. The school, however, can endeavour to provide an ethos where such development can take place through the general day-to-day quality of relationships. The so-called hidden curriculum is also of immense importance and can aid development. Some areas of the school's life may have a greater part to play in the process of these characteristics than others. As far as the pupil is concerned the precise nature of this variance will be individual and possibly idiosyncratic. What is important within these four areas is that positives must be emphasized, and actions and attitudes, which favour the opposite, should be discouraged.

In an attempt to achieve its aims, the school does have a number of more formal structures which are intended to contribute to the general process of moral, spiritual, social and cultural development. It is not intended that these structures obviously and clearly deliver moral, spiritual, social, or cultural development, but that collectively they underpin the more important aspects of the general social relationships that exist within a school. They also provide some of the contexts within which creative personal interaction and development may take place.

1) The Curriculum

All subjects and all teachers can, and do, contribute to personal development simply by the way staff interact with pupils during lessons. However, certain subjects such as Scripture (RE), English, Theatre Studies, History, Geography, PE and Biology by their subject matter have a particular contribution to make.

2) Assemblies

Assemblies, by what they applaud, celebrate, encourage and disallow, make a highly significant contribution to the articulation and demonstration of the values that the school wishes to promote and develop. Assemblies are of a broadly Christian character, which provide the opportunity for worship and reflection. There is a moral or social theme for all assemblies. Every pupil will attend three assemblies per week.

3) The Form System

Each boy and girl is a member of a Form whose teacher is responsible for their

academic, social and personal welfare. As part of their role, teachers conduct two Form Periods a week which, as well as dealing with routine administration, will at times, both explicitly and implicitly, deal with the promotion of personal values. Depending on the Year Group pupils will make presentations; participate in discussions on current affairs and follow-up on PSHE topics.

4) Co-curricular Activities

There are numerous and diverse co-curricular activities which make a major contribution to personal development. A wide variety of trips and tours, visits to the theatre and art galleries, concerts, a debating society, a thriving House Charity System and the Social Entrepreneurs Project to name but a few, all contribute to the social and cultural development of pupils.

5) Responsibility and Leadership

The system of School Prefects, House Captains and sports team captains provide both formal and informal opportunities for girls and boys to exercise leadership, service and responsibility.

6) Special Services

During the school year there are occasions, such as the Pre Prep Harvest Festival, Carol Service and End of year Leavers' Service, which are celebrated in and through Christian acts of worship.

7) Models and Examples

Spiritual, moral, cultural and social values could be said to be caught rather than taught. In Sevenoaks Prep School boys and girls will encounter a wide variety of different people, through teachers, non-academic staff, prefects and older pupils as well as visitors to the school. All these will provide material for reflection and evaluation in the development of their own character.

8) The School Ethos and Rules

There is so much more to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development than just conforming to a set of rules. It is important, however, to have a well-regulated and disciplined environment for any educational achievement. The school has a "Way of Life", School Song and "Golden Rules" introducing and reinforcing the school codes of behaviour. These are based on the fundamental tenet of mutual respect, and these together with the general ethos of the school are expressions of the values that the school seeks to encourage. They are considered to be a vital ingredient in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all the boys and girls.

Evaluation

It is accepted that there are no correct definitions of these terms and that there are no easily definable criteria to measure the success of any policy, which aims to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of boys and girls. But this should not diminish their importance in the life of the school. It is the controversial and complex nature of these values, which demonstrates their significance in life and highlights the need to address them in an educationally valid way. Personal development is an erratic, unpredictable and long term phenomenon, and the effects of even the most sensitive moral instruction or spiritual reflection may be different from what is hoped for. There also may be a wide divergence between a person's

stated beliefs and values, and behaviour and relationships. This makes any evaluation of a school policy difficult in regard to outcomes.

Particular outcomes cannot be guaranteed, but it is important that the Senior Management Team of the school monitors and reviews the policy from time to time with regard to its general effectiveness.