

Shaping the spirit

Promoting the spiritual development of
Young people in schools

Spiritual Development is the
Concern to develop the most
Distinctive and desirable
capacities of the human person,
i.e. 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 do and
relates to what sort of person they
are and are becoming.

Kent SACRE definition

Guidance on spiritual Education
From Kent SACRE revised 2004



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**Guidance on Spiritual Education from Kent
SACRE Revised 2004**

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1 Promoting spiritual development in schools

1.1 What is the purpose of this document?

This Kent SACRE publication is intended to help schools to promote pupils' spiritual development by offering:

- a summary of influential recent writings on spiritual development from government agencies
- a definition of the meaning of the term spiritual development
- an understanding of the goal of the process of development
- practical suggestions for work in curriculum subjects and in various areas of school life
- suggestions which will enable schools to meet the expectations of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED), and to write post OFSTED Action Plans.

1.2 Why should schools promote the spiritual development of children?

Three answers can be given to this question.

1.2.1 Answer 1: To develop the whole child

It is widely agreed that a central aim of schools should be to teach pupils basic skills such as learning to read and write. However, it is also widely accepted that schools should develop in pupils a wide range of knowledge and understanding, skills and attitudes and so promote the development of the whole child. However, it can be tempting for schools to narrow or limit their aims which can result in an over emphasis on:

- basic skills
- core subjects of the National Curriculum at the expense of foundation subjects, Religious Education and cross curricular possibilities
- academic achievement and league tables
- preparation for work

Such a narrowing of the aims of the school will result in limiting the development of abilities and capacities which schools have traditionally fostered. Schools who take seriously the promotion of the spiritual development of pupils in their care will ensure that they retain:

- a broad and balanced curriculum which offers rich and varied opportunities for spiritual development
- as a central aim, a concern to develop a child's spirit as well as mind and body.

1.2.2 Answer 2: It is statutory responsibility

Section 1.(2) of the Education Reform Act 1988 required the curriculum in a maintained school to be broad and balanced and 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 thus required by law to make provision for pupils’ spiritual development.

Answer 3: OFSTED will 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 (HMCI) 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. (See Appendix 1 for specific references to spiritual development in recent reports).

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.

1.3 Why have schools found promoting pupils’ spiritual development difficult?

Recent Annual Reports from HMCI pointed out that schools have experienced difficulties in promoting pupils’ spiritual development. A range of difficulties have been encountered, including:

- the elusiveness of the nature of spiritual development
- the difficulty in arriving at an acceptable workable definition which can be used as the basis for policy and practice
- 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 pupils in the non religious and pluralist context of most maintained schools
- the lack of sufficiently clear and detailed guidance from official bodies concerned with the education
- the suspicion, of some, that the term ‘spiritual’ is a cloak for the term ‘religious’ and that its aim is to make pupils religious
- 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 difficulty of distinguishing spiritual development from moral and social development.

These are genuine difficulties but it is possible to begin to address many of these concerns and to begin to promote the spiritual development of pupils in schools in effective ways.

2 **Background and context: Spiritual development as an educational aim in recent years**

This section gives a brief summary of recent developments in the understanding of the term spiritual development in schools in documents from various government agencies. It seeks to show that:

- change and development has taken place in the way the term spiritual development has been understood
- the requirement to promote pupils' spiritual development in schools has only very recently been taken sufficiently seriously
- official bodies concerned with education have produced only a limited amount of guidance and support materials to enable schools to meet the expectations now laid on them.

2.1 **The 1944 Education Act**

The word 'spiritual' appeared in the preamble to 1944 Education Act but it was understood by many to be the preserve of religious education, which at the time included both religious instruction and collective worship. The preamble to the 1944 Education Act stated:

“It shall be the duty of the Local Educational Authority for every area, so far as their powers extend, to contribute towards the spiritual, moral, mental and physical development of the community.”

It appears that the word 'spiritual' was used deliberately, rather than the word religious, because the former was seen to be a broader and more inclusive term.

2.2 **The appearance of the term spiritual in official education documents from 1945-1988**

The term spiritual appeared in a number of official documents following the 1944 Act, for example there is a chapter on 'Spiritual and Moral Development' in the Department of Education and Science Report *Half Our Future* (the Newsom Report) of 1963. However the term spiritual received little serious attention in the field of education in schools until after the 1988 Education Reform Act.

In 1977 the Department of Education and Science (DES) issued **The Curriculum 11-16** which listed a number of 'areas of experience' to be addressed in the school curriculum. A revised list of 'areas of learning and experience' appeared in 1985 in a later curriculum document, entitled **The Curriculum from 5-16**. The term 'spiritual' was listed in both documents as an area of learning. The different areas identified in each document were:

Areas listed in 1977

aesthetic and creative
ethical
linguistic
mathematical
physical
scientific
social and political
spiritual

DES, The Curriculum 11-16
(1977)

Areas listed in 1985

aesthetic and creative
moral
linguistic and literary
mathematical
physical
scientific
spiritual
technological

DES, The Curriculum from 5-16
Curriculum Matters 2 (1985)

A supplement to *The Curriculum 11-16* report was also issued which defined the meaning of the terms used. The spiritual area of experience was the only area of experience where two definitions were given, which were:

- a. *“The spiritual area is concerned with: the awareness a person has of those elements in existence and experience which may be defined in terms of inner feelings and beliefs; they affect the way people see themselves and throw light for them on the purpose and meaning of life itself. Often these feelings and beliefs lead people to claim to know God and to glimpse the transcendent; sometimes they represent that striving and longing for perfection which characterises human beings but always they are concerned with matters at the heart and root of existence.*
- b. *The spiritual area is concerned with everything in human knowledge or experience that is connected with or derives from a sense of God or Gods. Spiritual is a meaningless adjective for the atheist and of dubious use to the agnostic . Irrespective of personal belief or disbelief, an unaccountable number of people have believed and do believe in the spiritual aspects of human life, and therefore their actions, attitudes and interpretations of events have been influenced accordingly.”*

Supplement to Curriculum 11-16 HMI (1977)

These ‘descriptions’, as they were called, aroused some debate. The second description was widely considered to be unsatisfactory as it tied ‘the spiritual area of experience’ too narrowly to a religious viewpoint and thereby excluded those without religious beliefs. The first was generally accepted as more helpful as it was broader and more specific in seeking to define the ‘spiritual area’.

In 1985, The Curriculum from 5-16 gave a new and considerably broader description of the ‘spiritual area of learning and experience’:

‘This area of learning and experience points at its most general to feelings and convictions about the significance of human life and the world as a whole which pupils may experience within themselves and meet at second hand in their study of the works and the way of life of other people.

The Curriculum 5-16 DES 1985/1989 p. 32

However, despite highlighting and identifying this dimension of learning in

these documents on the curriculum, they made little significant impact in changing the aims and curriculum of most schools to include a concern with spiritual development.

2.3 The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA)

The term ‘spiritual’ did not become important to most schools until after the 1988 ERA where it states,

“The curriculum for a maintained school satisfies the requirements of this section if it is a balanced and broadly based curriculum which-

- (a) *promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical developments of pupils at the school and of society.*
- (b) *prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.”*

ERA Ch. 1, Section 1. (2)

Although this requirement led to some discussion as to what was now expected of schools, it did not at first have a widespread impact on schools, as far as spiritual development was concerned. Most schools were busy implementing the new National Curriculum. There was no significant concern to promote pupils’ spiritual development in the stream of Curriculum Guidance documents which flowed from 1989 from the National Curriculum Council. The statutory requirement to promote pupils’ spiritual development was in many respects widely ignored until 1992.

2.4 The National Curriculum Council (NCC)

In 1992 and 1993 two significant developments took place with the appearance of a Discussion Paper from the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the appearance of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) which resulted in raising the status of spiritual development in schools. David Pascall, the new chairman of NCC, expressed a concern about the neglect of the expectation to promote pupils’ spiritual development and delivered a number of speeches which highlighted the need to address the issue of pupils’ spiritual and moral development. In a speech to the Religious Education Council in May 1992 Pascall said,

“In our classrooms, the spiritual and moral development of pupils together with religious education have not always been given the priority they deserve.”

In 1993 the NCC issued the first major official document on the subject since the 1988 Education Act, entitled **Spiritual and Moral Development: A Discussion Paper** which was sent to all schools. (This paper was reissued, unchanged, in 1995 as SCAA Discussion Paper No. 3). The Discussion Paper does not give a crisp definition of the term spiritual development but suggests that it, “needs to be seen as applying to something fundamental in the human condition” and that “it has to do with”:

- relationships
- a search for identity, for meaning, purpose and values
- our response to challenging experiences such as suffering and death

The “many aspects of spiritual development” included:

- the development of beliefs and appreciation of the beliefs of others
- the capacity to experience awe and wonder and to be moved by beauty or injustice
- a sense of transcendence
- self-knowledge, self-acceptance and self-respect
- the capacity for creativity.

NCC, (1993) p. 5 & 6

2.5 The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED)

The second significant development was the passing of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 which created The Office for Standards in Education, (OFSTED), in September 1992. Each school’s provision for promoting the spiritual development of its pupils was now to be inspected. Schools now had to take the legal requirement to promote a pupil’s spiritual development more seriously. The school’s efforts to promote the spiritual development of its pupils was to be inspected alongside its provision for moral, social and cultural development.

Three somewhat different accounts of spiritual development have appeared in the three editions (1993, 1994 and 1995) of the OFSTED Handbook for the Inspections of Schools so far published. A discussion document also appeared in 1994. (See Appendix 2 for full references to spiritual development in the OFSTED Handbooks).

2.5.1 The 1993 OFSTED Handbook for the Inspection of Schools

In the section giving the Framework in the 1993 edition of the Handbook, the focus of inspection was on the **outcomes** of the school’s provision. Spiritual development was to be judged by the extent to which pupils display:”

- a system of beliefs
- the ability to communicate
- a willingness to reflect on experience
- a sense of awe and wonder

The Handbook also offered further guidance, in Part 4, by amplifying the evaluation criteria given in the Framework. It was expected that RE would play a major role in this area, but that other curriculum subjects could play their part in inviting pupils to reflect on questions of meaning and purpose. Examples of possibilities in different subject were given where pupils could consider:

- the terms church, Christendom and monasticism in history

- stories poems and plays which address the human quest and fundamental questions of life and death in English
- attitudes, values and beliefs of different cultures in modern languages
- ancient myths which attempt to explain the origin of the universe in classical studies.

A school was considered to exhibit high standards in the promotion of spiritual development when pupils displayed:

- a capacity for reflection
- curiosity
- a sense of awe and wonder
- an ability to discuss beliefs

2.5.2 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: An OFSTED discussion paper, February 1994

In this discussion paper, OFSTED expressed its desire to inspect not only the provision for spiritual development but also the pupils' **response** to that provision, i.e. the outcomes or "the fruits" of the school's efforts (p.3). Although the paper was aware that this aim would not be easy to achieve, it does suggest some cognitive outcomes that could be assessed, e.g. a knowledge of the beliefs and practices of major world religions, that might be taken as evidence of spiritual development. The importance of religious education was again underlined as it played "a major part in promoting pupils' spiritual development" (p.8). The paper placed a particular emphasis on "seeking answers to life's great questions" (p.8) and the need for pupils to engage in a process of exploration (p.9).

2.5.3 The 1994 Handbook for the Inspection of Schools

As in 1993, the Handbook offered further guidance although some of the points expressed brought little further illumination as to what was expected of schools. Vague phrases such as "valuing a non-material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality", were offered in the guidance material, without any further explanation, as ways of understanding what was meant by the spiritual dimension. Spiritual development also was said to be concerned with:

- aspects of the inner life
- acquiring insight
- attributing meaning to experience

Significantly, it was also asserted that,
 "'Spiritual' should **not** be seen as synonymous with 'religious.'"

2.5.4 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 school's 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, e.g. valuing pupils' ideas
- opportunities for understanding through reflection
- the importance of collective worship, especially in primary schools

Religious Education was singled out for special mention as it could make "a significant contribution to spiritual development", especially in giving pupils the opportunity to consider ultimate questions and various answers to them.

2.5.5 Some reflections on the views of OFSTED

A study of the OFSTED Handbooks will not enable schools to have a very clear view about what they must do to promote spiritual development. The OFSTED requirements and guidance are too superficial and too limited in scope. In particular OFSTED also focuses too narrowly on the practice of reflection as the key aspect involved. Kent SACRE suggests that a broader and richer understanding of spiritual development is required. (See chapter 3).

2.6 The School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA)

In 1996 SCAA set up the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community and a consultation document appeared, part of which was concerned with the promotion of spiritual development in schools. A major national conference was held in January 1996. In July 1996 SCAA issued Discussion Paper No. 6, 'Education for Adult Life: the spiritual and moral development of young people'. It broadly endorsed the views expressed in the 1993 NCC Discussion Paper but also offered its own views of, "what constitutes spirituality", which included:

- the development of the inner life including creativity and imagination
- an inclination to believe in ideals
- a propensity to foster particular attributes such as love and goodness
- the quest for meaning, truth and value
- a capacity to respond to the 'ultimate' or God

Spiritual development was said to be closely related to moral development. Spirituality was defined as "a form of skill or aptitude" and "the essential factor in cultivating spirituality is reflection and learning from experience." (SCAA 1996 p.12). The interesting new feature here is the emphasis on the development of particular human capacities such as courage and the exercise of the imagination.

2.7 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 guidance will be piloted over an 18 month period. A final document is expected in 1999.

The draft guidance on spiritual development takes further the recent 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.

2.8 Research and Publications

A number of educationalists, such as Jack Priestley and David Hay, began to raise the issue of the spiritual dimension of the curriculum before the 1988 ERA. In addition, in 1979 during the International Year of the Child, John Bradford of the Children's Society produced an interesting booklet entitled *The spiritual rights of the child*. However, it is only in the last decade that we have witnessed a growing interest in the subject of spiritual education in schools with:

- national conferences, e.g. an annual conference on spiritual education at the Roehampton Institute
- new research centres and projects in Universities and institutions of Higher Education, e.g. at the University of Nottingham
- a stream of articles in different education journals, e.g. Carr (1996), Hay (1990, 1992), Hill (1989), King (1985), Lealman (1986)
- a number of dissertations on spiritual development for higher degrees e.g. Beesley (1988) and Henderson (1990)

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 the 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 1988, p.78, 86, 95 & 97.

(The book *Spiritual Pedagogy* is essential reading for anyone who wishes to reflect critically on recent writing on spiritual education).

2.9 Implications for schools

A number of implications can be drawn from the work to date on spiritual development. The effective promotion of spiritual development requires a school to:

- take seriously the ‘spiritual rights’ of the child, the development of the whole child and the need to develop spiritual literacy
- carefully consider what sort of person the school wants each child to become
- use an inclusive definition of spiritual development which will accommodate a wide range of different views about what it means to be spiritually developed
- recognise the diversity of spiritual traditions and give pupils access to alternative views
- 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
- encourage teachers to awaken, enliven, inspire and challenge as well as tend and comfort children’s spirits
- provide opportunities for pupils to ‘look inwards’ and to reflect on beliefs, values and feelings, hopes, dreams, ideals and aspirations
- provide opportunities for pupils to ‘look outwards’ and to reflect on the natural world, the environment and human achievement, often ‘against the odds’
- provide planned and unplanned opportunities, throughout the curriculum, for pupils to stand back and reflect on:
 - ◆ the meaning of their everyday experience
 - ◆ deeper/ultimate questions and issues which arise out of their learning experiences
- offer a broad and balanced curriculum which is able to provide a rich variety of opportunities to promote spiritual development
- carefully select and promote, specific human capacities such as courage and resilience and above all the ‘capacity for response.’

3. Framing a definition of spiritual development

3.1 What is meant by the term spirituality in religious traditions?

The term spirituality is used in a number of religious traditions, although not in all. It had been defined in diverse ways and the various definitions and descriptions remain controversial. However the term is often used in:

- a broad sense to describe the beliefs, values, practices, lifestyle and goals of a particular tradition
- a more restricted sense to refer to the inner person, an inner journey or the affective or experiential side of a religion

Specific traditions usually offer their own definitions with their own particular emphases. Some influential recent attempts to offer an overall definition of spirituality are:

“..... that inner dimension of the person called by certain traditions ‘the spirit’. This spiritual core is the deepest centre of the person. It is here that the person is open to the transcendent dimension; it is here that the person experiences ultimate reality.”

Ewart Cousins
In McGinn B, et. al. (1986) pxiii

“The experiential side of religion as opposed to outward beliefs, practices and institutions, which deals with the inner spiritual depths of a person.”

in Goring R Ed. (1992) p.499

“..... those attitudes, beliefs, practices which animate people’s lives and help them reach out towards super-sensible realities.”

Gordon Wakefield
in Wakefield G Ed. (1983) p.361

The spiritually developed person is described in a number of traditions as one who is fully alive or awake, as enlightened or able to see to the heart of things.

3.2 What is meant by the term spirituality in non-religious contexts?

The word spirit is used in everyday language in such phrases as ‘high spirits’, ‘low spirits’, ‘a spirited performance’ or ‘team spirit’. When speaking of the make-up of a person the phrase ‘body, mind and spirit’ is often used. The term spiritual is also used when no other term seems adequate. On 6 September 1997, the day of the funeral of Diana, Princess of Wales, the editorial in the Times asserted,

“But there is a plane above that of politics, a spiritual sphere whence a rare individual can inspire a nation”

On the same day in his tribute to his late sister at the funeral in Westminster Abbey, Earl Spencer, speaking of the two young princes, said,

“.....we, like you, recognise the need for them to experience as many different aspects of life as possible to arm them spiritually and emotionally for the years ahead....”

The terms spiritual and spirituality are now also widely used outside traditionally religious and everyday contexts to describe:

- aspects of areas such as art, architecture, music and sport
- a wide range of techniques, practices and therapies which seek to liberate and heal people
- dimensions of the work of a number of professions, for example much has been written recently about the spiritual dimension of nursing, e.g. Bradshaw (1994)

The term spiritual often has a range of different and sometimes distinctive meanings within these various contexts.

3.3 Spirituality and spiritualism are not the same

The term spirituality should not be confused or linked with the term spiritualism. The term spiritualism is usually associated with a belief in the possibility of communicating with the spirits of the departed and, more specifically, with a movement started in 1848 in America by the Fox sisters from New York State. It is not a mainstream religious movement and is often associated with the paranormal.

3.4 What is meant by the term spiritual development in a religious context?

The term spiritual development when used in a religious context usually means both:

- the goal of the spiritual life in that tradition, and
- the teachings, disciplines and practices which enable an adherent or the community to achieve its spiritual goal.

Some traditions place an emphasis on the spirit as opposed to the body (or the physical and material), but many do not do so and see them as complementary aspects of the person. It is mistaken to assume that 'spirit' is necessarily opposed to 'matter' or 'body', even though this false dichotomy is endorsed by some dictionary definitions of the word spiritual. It is also mistaken to simply equate the word spiritual with the term 'mystical' although they are connected. The term spiritual has a broader meaning than the term mystical in many traditions.

3.5 What is meant by the term spiritual development in an educational context?

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 goal of this process of development?

3.6 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, i.e. 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 spiritual 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
- 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'.

3.7 Seeking common ground amidst a diversity of spiritual traditions

Stewart Sutherland, a former Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI) and Professor of Religious Studies, suggested that any understanding of spiritual development will be based on views about human nature and fulfilment. He wrote,

"The account we give of spiritual development will, in the end, have to do with our understanding of what it is for a human being to flourish. One's view of the spiritual development of pupils will, in the end, be based upon one's view of what human beings are and what they might be."

Westhill College RE Centre Consultation January, 1993, p.1

However, there are different religious and non-religious views about "what it is for a human being to flourish" and so different view about:

- human nature and what it means to be a person
- ways to develop the human person
- the goal of human development

These different views about the nature of humanity are associated with different views about the nature of reality and whether, for example, they are or are not based on a belief in God.

It is necessary however, especially in a maintained, non-denominational school, to **seek common ground** in identifying those human capacities and goals for development which most will accept as both worthy of further development and capable of being developed in the school. However, any account of human nature and what it means to be a spiritually educated and mature adult will not be value free and will emerge out of a particular cultural context. It cannot be entirely neutral. The account of desirable spiritual capacities given here is no exception and has been influenced, in particular, by the values of the Judaeo-Christian tradition and Western thought about the person.

3.8 Recognising and learning and about diverse spiritual traditions

Different and often conflicting views about reality and human nature, what it means to be a person and the goal of spiritual development should not be bracketed out or overlooked. Pupils as they mature should become aware of the diversity of belief and practice in the various spiritual traditions. There is thus a clear cognitive dimension involved in teaching about these different traditions. Andrew Wright (1998 p.87-88) has suggested there are four types of spiritual tradition:

- **an atheistic spirituality** which denies or is uncertain about the existence of God and which seeks to foster the human spirit through a range of secular spiritual traditions such as humanism
- **an agnostic spirituality** which applies to those with no religious allegiance and little desire to engage in religious practices
- **a religious spirituality** which applies to those who only nominally or loosely adhere to a religious tradition but who, if pressed, would deny that they were atheist
- **a theological spirituality** which applies to those who are religiously active and committed to a particular community such as a Christian denomination, Orthodox Judaism or one of the new religious movements.

Some writers have mistakenly suggested that the different spiritual traditions and the various views they hold about spiritual development are all, at their heart, really saying the same thing, i.e. they are all seeking the peak of the same mountain but by pursuing different routes. A careful examination of different spiritual traditions will indicate that this is not the case. For example, some traditions claim that a conscious relationship with God is central and essential to gaining full spiritual maturity, whilst others deny the existence of God. Spiritual traditions do often have much in common but they do have distinctive features.

As has been suggested schools will, whether they recognise it or not, induct their pupils into some kind of spiritual tradition and set of spiritual values. A school needs to ensure that this is not an induction, by default or by design, into:

- a merely secular form of spirituality which brackets out or ignores for example in collective worship, any religious options

- a vaguely and superficially religious spirituality which blurs the distinctions between theological traditions and excludes any consideration of secular alternatives.

4. Developing Spiritual Capacities

4.1 Developing particular spiritual capacities

At the core of Kent SACRE's understanding of the spiritual development of pupils in schools lies the idea of spiritual capacities, i.e. that humans possess certain abilities which may be called spiritual, which are capable and worthy of development in schools. The capacities might also be called spiritual values. It is thus necessary to identify those human qualities, capacities or values which:

- can rightly be called spiritual capacities
- are judged to be distinctive of human beings
- are worthy of development
- can be developed in schools

4.2 Categories of Spiritual Capacities

Those spiritual capacities, which are both worthy and capable of development in schools, are here placed in 'families' of similar qualities under the following headings:

- self-awareness and self-knowledge
- sensitivity and responsiveness
- inner strength and resilience
- ideals and aspirations
- love and relationships
- striving and seeking
- reflection on experience

It is the specific capacities identified within each 'family' that are of importance and not the set of headings or categories in which they are placed. Some may wish to group the spiritual capacities differently. These specific capacities are considered to be **CORE spiritual capacities**. An alternative, although in many ways similar, list of qualities, produced by the Christian Education movement is given in Appendix 4. A list of further spiritual qualities and refinements of some of the following capacities can be found in Appendix 5).

Underlying many of the specific capacities is the fundamental human capacity of being able to **respond** to various stimuli and situations. Promoting spiritual development thus involves developing young people's capacity to be **response-able** in different contexts.

4.3 Spiritual capacities identified

Schools are encouraged to assist pupils to develop the following specific spiritual capacities.

4.3.1 Self-awareness and Self-Knowledge

Pupils will be given opportunities to become aware of their own:

- inner world of thoughts and feelings, hopes and fears, personality, needs and wants
- gifts, abilities and strengths as well as their limitations and weaknesses
- identify, i.e. of an enduring self which continues through the flux of different experiences of life and the passage of time

4.3.2. Sensitivity and Responsiveness

Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- transcend the present moment, e.g. in recalling the past, reflecting on the future, or exercising their imagination
- become aware of moral obligations, e.g. keeping your word
- be moved to deep emotion, reflection and /or action, by aspects of life such as the natural and made world, music, art, architecture, literature, poverty, injustice, innocent suffering, mystery and human achievement
- express gratitude and appreciation.

4.3.3 Inner Strength and Resilience

Pupils will be encouraged to develop the ability to:

- direct their own future, e.g. through setting targets, planning to achieve them and taking appropriate action to do so
- exercise self-control over the expression of instincts and impulses, thoughts and feelings
- respond creatively to difficult and challenging experiences, such as turning a crisis or tragedy into an opportunity for bringing about change, e.g. if a child was injured on a busy road it might lead to action to introduce road calming measures and pedestrian crossings
- respond with courage to challenging situations e.g. in confronting difficult situations on the playing field, losing a game or resisting peer pressure
- be hopeful, patient, persevering and resilient in the face of difficulty, e.g. in learning from the experience of disappointment.

4.3.4 Ideals and Aspirations

Pupils will be given opportunities to:

- create and invent works of beauty, value and usefulness
- develop worthwhile beliefs and values
- learn about the process of spiritual development, the stages of the spiritual life and the goal of spiritual development in a range of religious and secular spiritual traditions
- pursue ideals and visions for the future

4.3.5 Love and Relationships

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- sympathise and empathise with other people in such a way that it becomes possible to grasp something of another person's inner world and to respond accordingly, e.g. to celebrate another person's success or to offer sympathy and support to someone who is grieving
- develop intimate and enduring relationships with other people (and, for some, with God)
- value themselves, other people and the environment
- seek to create, maintain and repair relationships with others, e.g. to be able to give and receive love and affection, to forgive and be forgiven
- display an active goodwill towards others, e.g. to be a modern day good Samaritan
- be compassionate
- express regret and apologise, when appropriate to do so

4.3.6 Seeking and Striving

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- seek for meaning in experiences of change, loss, suffering, beauty, birth, and death and to allow that meaning to influence their lives, e.g. respond to an appeal for children in need
- seek to learn from the insights of different spiritual traditions
- seek the truth
- seek to do what is right

4.3.7 Reflection on experience

Pupils will be encouraged to:

- reflect on the way their attitudes and values have been formed by their experience of life
- reflect on moral choices, e.g. when it is right to be totally honest with another person
- ask questions and seek answers to deep or ultimate questions such as our place in the world, the purpose of life, our origins and final destiny, the nature of ultimate reality and the possible existence of God (see Appendix 4 for a list of some ultimate questions)
- reflect on the fact that we are all mortal

4.4 Are some spiritual capacities more important than others?

There is no simple answer to this question. The answer will depend on the aims and values of the school and the perceived needs of the pupils in a particular school. One school (or year group or class) may have pupils who need to learn to be more considerate towards others. Another school (or year group or class) may have pupils who need to develop a clearer awareness of their own abilities and stronger belief in their own ability to succeed. Schools will need to identify the perceived needs of pupils as one criterion by which to select the capacities to be developed. It is not possible, or appropriate, to produce a single blueprint that will suit all schools, yet schools should avoid a highly selective 'pick and mix' approach which seeks to develop only a narrow range of specific capacities.

5. Policy and Planning

5.1 What do schools need to do to promote spiritual development effectively?

Spiritual development is a whole school issue and to promote it effectively the school needs to:

- appreciate and understand the full range of spiritual capacities which might be promoted in schools
- achieve a consensus about the most important capacities to be developed in the school, through a whole school process of discussion and consultation
- identify any particular capacities which might be appropriate for the needs of particular individuals and groups, whilst seeking to develop the full range
- identify key capacities that **are already being developed** and in what contexts this takes place and whether opportunities for further development can be created
- identify which capacities **are currently underdeveloped** and identify contexts where further development might take place
- identify any key capacities that are **hardly developed at all** and consider what opportunities exists or can be created, for development to occur
- identify the different contexts, e.g. curriculum subjects or collective worship, where opportunities exists to promote the capacities selected.

5.2 Do schools need to write their own definition of spiritual development?

Schools are, of course, at liberty to produce their own definition of spiritual development, but need to be aware that it is no easy task to do so and that possible pitfalls are involved. Some current accounts of spiritual development focus too narrowly on particular aspects of that development such as:

- **inwardness**, as if spiritual maturity means only the ability to be introspective and reflective
- **feelings**, as if spiritual development is virtually the same as emotional or affective development
- **religious beliefs and values**, as if spiritual development means virtually the same as nurture in a particular religious tradition or simply knowing what religions have to say about the subject.

The 1993 NCC Discussion Paper, *Spiritual and Moral Development* pointed out that,

“The potential for spiritual development is open to everyone and is not confined to a particular faith. To limit spiritual development in this way would be to exclude from its scope the majority of pupils in our schools who do not come from overtly religious backgrounds”

(NCC, 1993, p.2)

5.3 Contexts for promoting spiritual development throughout the school

It is possible to identify different contexts where suitable opportunities for promoting spiritual development arise, in many areas of school life. These include:

- Religious Education
- Collective Worship
- National Curriculum Subjects
- non statutory subjects and aspects, e.g. personal and social education, environment education or citizenship
- teaching and learning strategies
- the quality of relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils
- teachers as role models, i.e. the models of mature adulthood which teachers convey
- the ethos and values of the school
- aspects such as visits, visitors, clubs and extra curricular activities

Schools will need to identify what could be done in these different contexts, for example in providing opportunities to reflect on the beauty of nature on a geography trip intended to study aspects of the countryside, or by producing a clear code of conduct about staff behaviour towards pupils which might, for example, encourage staffs to apologise to pupils, when appropriate to do so.

5.4 Making progress in spiritual development

Pupils can progress spiritually during their time in schools but such progress cannot always be easily detected. There will be much variation from pupil to pupil. Nevertheless, progress can sometimes be detected, both by teachers and by pupils themselves, for example, through opportunities provided by drama for a shy and reserved child who may flourish and become visibly more confident and assertive. Similarly, a child who was easily frightened might become more courageous and less fearful through involvement in competitive sports. Pupils can also be given the opportunity to reflect for themselves on the capacities which they are developing during their time in school and the feedback to staff may provide an interesting indicator on whether the school's provision is perceived to be effective by pupils.

5.5 Developing policy statements for curriculum subjects

Subject leaders of curriculum subjects should review and, if necessary, extend their aims to include in their policy statements the following kinds of statements, as appropriate.

This subject aims to:

- consider understandings of reality and human nature, development and maturity presupposed by the subject
- reflect on the kinds of truth and truth claims involved in the subject and the type of evidence used to establish those claims
- identify specific ways in which the subject can contribute to a pupil's personal development and provide planned opportunities to do so, e.g. times for quiet reflection at appropriate points, identified in the scheme of work
- employ teaching and learning strategies which encourage the development of such qualities as curiosity, critical thinking and questioning and the willingness to reflect on questions of ultimate meaning, purpose and value

5.6 Producing a whole school policy

A whole school policy on spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is needed. Policy and practice on spiritual development needs to be set in the wider context of a school's overall aims and values and its concern for the development of the whole child. A comprehensive and effective policy will need to refer to:

- a named Co-ordinator for spiritual development with a defined role and responsibilities, ideally a member of the senior management team
- the provision of funding for INSET and training for all staff
- the aims, ethos, and values of the school
- the law
- the expectations of OFSTED, both the general expectations in the OFSTED Handbook and any specific areas needing developing mentioned in the last report on the school
- perceptions about the needs of pupils in the school which will influence policy and practice
- the school's brochure and development plan
- expectations and provision in all curriculum subjects, e.g. the need to include a reference to spiritual education in departmental or subject policies and to identify appropriate opportunities for promoting spiritual development in schemes of work
- expectations and provision in other areas of school life, e.g. collective worship
- cross-references to other whole school policies such as teaching and learning, equal opportunities, bullying and the use of tutorial time
- strategies for monitoring and evaluating the school's provision, e.g. a review of subject policies and schemes of work and lesson observation
- strategies for recording and reporting on provision and achievements, e.g. pupil self assessment
- the date of policy and date for its review
- the way that the policy was drawn up

6. Promoting spiritual development through curriculum subjects

We had the experience but missed the meaning

T S Eliot, Four Quartets

A number of suggestions are given for all National Curriculum subjects and RE, in alphabetical order, for some opportunities, potential areas and different ways in which each subject can promote spiritual development. The following suggestions are not directly related to the specific spiritual capacities identified earlier but it should not prove difficult to make connections between the suggestions and the spiritual capacities which might be developed. Schools will need to decide which suggestions are appropriate and those, which can be developed with pupils of particular ages. The list of suggestions given is by no means exhaustive. It is not suggested that all subjects will be able to promote spiritual development to the same degree but the potential of some subjects, for example physical education for developing ‘team spirit’, should not be underestimated.

6.1 Art

Art provides opportunities for pupils to:

- appreciate the way that the spirit of an artist is given expression in works of art through discussion, the articulation of ideas and opinions and through their own work
- appreciate the religious impulse present in some great works of art and the way that religious traditions have expressed themselves in painting, sculpture and architecture
- develop their aesthetic and critical awareness through the study and analysis of styles and forms used within spiritual and religious traditions
- experience visual images that can evoke a range of emotions
- express their deepest concerns and feelings through creating images and objects in art, craft and design
- respond to themes which reflect moral, social and personal issues
- reflect upon meaning, issues and values expressed within art forms, developing understanding and tolerance of differences in beliefs and values depicted within the art of different cultural traditions
- express their own ideas through making art for a variety of purposes

6.2 Business Education and Vocational Subjects

Business Education and vocational subjects can provide opportunities for pupils to:

- reflect on the meaning of life in reflecting on the implications of choices individuals make about work and leisure
- consider alternative lifestyles, when examining the question why people go to work, e.g. when a materially impoverished lifestyle may be nevertheless

- spiritually rich
- recognise the need for work to satisfy spiritual needs alongside other needs, when considering the question of motivation
- understand the spiritual dimension in the non-profit making objectives of businesses
- develop a sense of awe and wonder at the human ingenuity underlying the sophistication and complexity of the processes of production and distribution which seeks to ensure that the right goods reach the right person at the right time and in the right condition
- develop tolerance and understanding towards different viewpoints when debating key economic and business related issues

6.3 Design and Technology

Design and Technology provides opportunities for pupils to:

- design and produce both functional and aesthetically pleasing items, e.g. cars and traffic systems
- manipulate materials, change them and combine them for functional and aesthetic effect, e.g. the design and production of a church gate
- appreciate the human drive to create, innovate and advance in technological achievements, e.g. reviewing the work of a fashion designer
- communicate ideas and aspirations for the natural and made world, e.g. designing a concept transport system for the year 2005
- raise questions about the effects (good and bad) of technical changes on human and all life, e.g. the use of water power

6.4 Drama

Drama provides opportunities for pupils to:

- appreciate the way a person's spirit can be expressed through drama
- develop a sensitivity and tolerance towards the views and values of others through role play and improvisation
- appreciate that performance can evoke a rich variety of emotions including catharsis in tragedy

6.5 English

English provides opportunities for pupils to:

- give impression to personal thoughts, views, beliefs, opinions and feelings in creative writing
- understand the different ways in which humans have given expression to their hopes and fears, e.g. in myth and legend, parable, biography, poetry, song and hymn
- look at stories which tell of human achievement, "against the odds", which have the capacity to inspire
- allow pupils to tell and reflect on their own stories
- select a wide variety of texts which can both comfort and challenge
- reflect on issues raised in texts, e.g., relationships
- appreciate how values expressed in language and literature can change over time, e.g. attitudes towards women and marriage

- engage with issues of belief, value and truth in the discursive framework of essay writing
- experience and share a sense of wonder at the beauty of language expressed in poetry, literature and the spoken work
- develop a reflective and self-disciplined approach to issues

6.6 Geography

Geography provides opportunities for pupils to:

- reflect on the amazing variety in environments and peoples across the globe
- reflect on differences and similarities between people in near and distant parts of the world
- experience awe and wonder at different aspects of the natural world, especially places of outstanding beauty, e.g. physical landscapes such as mountains, hills, valleys, river and ice features and seascapes
- reflect on the power and implications of the workings of nature, e.g. the consequences of natural events such as earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, hurricanes and flooding
- experience awe and wonder at the best achievements of a built environment, e.g. stunning urban architecture or civil engineering on a grand scale, such as the Thames Barrier, the Channel Tunnel, Canary Wharf in London, the Millennium Dome and smaller urban regeneration areas such as attractive residential areas around former docks
- consider the moral and practical issues of pollution, conservation and sustainability of our environment
- raise questions about the ambiguous nature of some achievements, e.g. the Great Wall of China, the Pyramids
- explore and develop their personal attitudes and values and those of their own culture in relation to those of other cultures, e.g. the role of women in some developing countries whilst seeming inappropriate by Western standards, may represent an appropriate division of labour in a developing country given its current state of development

6.7 History

History provides opportunities for pupils to:

- consider questions of meaning in asking why things happened and what might have happened
- develop a critical awareness of different views about the nature of humanity and the best way to order human society
- develop sensitivity to the views, opinions and actions of others, e.g. when addressing the religious dimensions of a topic such as the Crusades
- be aware of the influence of the Church on life, culture and the landscape, e.g. on Kent in the past
- visit historic sites, e.g. reflect on the grandeur of a cathedral or the associations of a castle with an event from the past
- handle artefacts from the past and reflect on feelings of empathy with the past
- consider the lives, writings and influence of inspirational figures from the past, e.g. Annie Besant, Thomas Becket, Winston Churchill, Charles Darwin, Francis Drake, Mohandas Gandhi, Florence Nightingale

- develop the awareness of the factors which shape and influence human lives for good or evil
- reflect on the ‘darker side’ of human nature and its capacity for inhumanity, e.g. explaining the Holocaust
- reflect on the spiritual, religious and moral issues which are implicit or explicit in topics, e.g. the influence of religious belief on everyday life in the Middle Ages
- reflect on goals and values, e.g. whether the pursuit of fame, wealth or possessions brings fulfilment and happiness
- reflect what might be learnt from the past

6.8 Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

ICT provides opportunities for pupils to:

- reflect on the way that using a computer can either isolate people from one another or bring people together, e.g. using the Internet
- consider the implications of greater access to information, e.g. the use of CD Roms and the Internet
- experience awe at the potential of technology, what it can do and may be able to do, e.g. control a spacecraft
- experience the empowerment possible through the use of software and hardware, especially CAD CAM, e.g. the mass production of food
- experience the wonder of achievement with high quality presentation, e.g. producing a graph from a spreadsheet
- develop responsible use of ICT and the ability to know when and when not to use it

6.9 Mathematics

Mathematics provides opportunities for pupils to:

- reflect on pattern, shape, sign and symbol
- reflect on the idea of truth in mathematics
- consider the concept of infinity in patterns and number
- engage in increasingly challenging problem solving activities, persevere to overcome difficulties and experience the pleasure and satisfaction in reaching a solution
- consider the implications of considering people as numbers or percentages e.g. when people become mere numbers or statistics in a pie or bar chart
- share a sense of wonder in the power and beauty of mathematical reasoning and argument
- work with the discipline of mathematical rules and logic
- wonder at the mathematical order of the world and universe

6.10 Modern Languages

Modern languages provides opportunities for pupils to:

- consider different lifestyles
- reflect on the implications of the fact of different languages
- consider the issue of communicating in different languages
- consider the ways of communicating with others e.g. Braille, signing, gesture
- gain tolerance and appreciation of other beliefs and customs through an understanding of the language and literature of another country

6.11 Music

Music provides opportunities for pupils to:

- appreciate the way that a person's spirit can be expressed in writing and performing music
- appreciate that a religious impulse has often been present in the creation of great works of music
- appreciate the way that religious and other traditions use music, e.g. in worship or to help people to relax
- appreciate through listening, performing and composing, the capacity of different types of music to move the spirit in different ways, e.g. to inspire, console, refresh and lift the human spirit
- experience the physical and emotional sensations that music is capable of evoking
- be moved by experiencing a wide range of different types of music, e.g. religious music from the Christian tradition such as Gregorian chant (plainsong), choral music, organ music, gospel music, spirituals, hymns and carols, or ragas from the Sikh tradition
- promote discipline, inner strength and resilience through practice to achieve an ideal sound or technique
- develop sensitivity and responsiveness to others, a sense of a shared commitment and group identity through the experience of live music making and participation in performances, e.g. in a class or school concert.

6.12 Physical Education (PE)

Physical Education provides opportunities for pupils to:

- understand that humans are a psychosomatic unity and that body, mind and spirit influence each other
- develop the human qualities of self-discipline, commitment, perseverance and self confidence involved in developing physical skills and in achieving success in physical education
- raise questions about a culture that can overvalue physical shape, size, appearance and physical fitness
- appreciate the continual and never ending striving for advance towards perfection in physical activities
- experience the pleasure, exhilaration and aesthetics of mastering a skill, achieving and watching excellence
- learn and achieve balance and control of the body
- enjoy and know the quality of stillness
- learn about their own strengths and limitations
- learn to respect and abide by the 'rules of the game'
- reflect on questions relating to cheating and fair play, e.g. the use of drugs in sport

- learn to co-operate with others and develop team spirit

6.13 Religious Education (RE)

Although spiritual development should be promoted throughout the life and work of the school, RE is likely to be the lead curriculum subject where spiritual education should be a central aim.

RE provides opportunities for pupils to:

- develop an awareness of the human quest to make sense of the world and the human predicament and seek an ultimate meaning and purpose
- become aware of ultimate questions and learn about and be challenged by, the different answers offered by Christianity and other major religions to these questions
- learn about beliefs and values and different understandings of the spiritual life, spiritual development and spiritual practices in religious and other traditions, e.g. the use of silence and meditation
- evaluate for themselves the various truth claims made by religious and spiritual traditions
- encourage an understanding and respect for those who hold views different from their own
- develop their own beliefs and values
- respond to religious stories, artefacts and places of worship

6.14 Science

Science provides opportunities for pupils to:

- consider the fact of life, growth, decay and death and how different organisms are dependent upon each other
- reflect and wonder at the fact of order, regularity and pattern in the natural and physical world, the vastness of the universe and the variety of life and consider the question of the possibility of a Creator
- raise questions about the view that science can provide a comprehensive and complete view of life and enable them to see the parameters of the subject and that it does not seek to answer all the questions that humans ask
- raise questions about a narrow view of truth which requires proof for any belief and consider that there can be different kinds of truth and that scientific truth is not necessarily a superior kind
- appreciate that science and religion are not necessarily contradictory ways on understanding the world and that, for many, scientific and religious views are complementary

NB Teachers of science should avoid misrepresenting religious views, e.g. by saying that “all Christians take the story of creation in Genesis literally” for this is untrue. Similarly teacher of RE should not decry science and established scientific theory

- consider topics where science and religions both have something to say, e.g. about the origins of the world, issues in medical ethics, genetic engineering

- reflect on the ethical implications of scientific discoveries and the potential uses for the advantage or to the detriment of humankind, e.g. the splitting of the atom
- experience awe and wonder, e.g. in looking at something through a microscope or telescope
- experience the joy of discovery
- learn about discipline and perseverance in scientific enquiry and about the need to be honest about results
- develop enquiring minds which continue to ask, “why?”

7. Promoting spiritual development in other areas of school life

7.1 Environment Education

Environmental Education provides opportunities for pupils to:

- reflect on the relationship between the human spirit and the earth on which it dwells
- reflect in silence watching the waves on a beach, staring at the sky at night or looking at a single celled organism through a microscope
- consider the way different environments can produce a range of responses such as like or dislike, appreciation or disgust, comfort or discomfort
- consider a range of issues such as the extent of world poverty, why litter offends many people, ways to achieve sustainable development, and the need to secure the environment for future generations
- discuss the views of world faiths about the natural and made world, the way they should be treated and their views about creation

7.2 Collective Worship

Collective worship provides daily opportunities for pupils to:

- experience times of mental and physical stillness
- experience regular times when they can be receptive to their own inner worlds of thoughts, feelings and imaginings, and to reflect on them
- consider the value of religious belief, prayer and worship
- experience the deepest concerns of their own spirits in reflection or offer them up in worship and prayer, if they wish to do so
- experience a sense of community

7.3 The Ethos of the school

The ethos of the school will be displayed in:

- the celebration of individual and collective success
- ways in which the school helps pupils deal with difficulties such as conflicts with others and grief and loss, e.g. by responding to a request to provide a place of remembrance in the school grounds for a pupil who has died
- values and attitudes promoted
- the school culture
- the extent to which pupils believe they are listened to, e.g. through creation of a School Council
- staff attitudes to pupils
- pupils' attitude to all staff
- the extent to which bullying is treated with the utmost seriousness
- the way pupils interact in the playground
- attitudes towards visitors
- the management of pupils' behaviour
- the way that conflicts are resolved
- systems for rewards and sanctions

- the pastoral system
- admissions, e.g. the attitude towards pupils with special needs
- home-school links

7.4. Teaching and Learning Strategies

Teaching and learning strategies can promote pupils' spiritual development when there are opportunities for:

- active learning
- questions about meaning, purpose and value to be addressed in different curriculum subjects
- consideration of ultimate questions in different contexts
- pupils to give a personal response to what is being learnt
- build pupil's self esteem, e.g. in circle time
- pupils to communicate with staff both formally and informally about their concerns and questions, both personal and academic
- pupils to talk with each other in lessons
- times for quiet, stillness and silent reflection in contexts outside collective worship
- the suspension of planned lessons to address matters of pressing concern, or to respond spontaneously to unplanned opportunities, e.g. if there is a tragic event locally, for pupils to have the opportunity to reflect on their own mortality, a sense of loss and ways of coping with unforeseen events or to celebrate of the success of a local figure

7.4 Relationships between staff and pupils

Relationships are more likely to foster pupils' spiritual development when all staff are willing to:

- give due regard to developing the ethos of the school
- accept the responsibility that their status means that they are significant role models for children
- encourage and inspire pupils
- trust, respect and listen to pupils
- take seriously the need to develop a child's spirit as well as its mind, heart and body and learn about ways in which this can be achieved



8. A Summary of Key Points

Five Ps to consider:

**PRIORITY
PLANNING
POLICY
PUPIL
PRINCIPLE**

If pupils' spiritual development is to take place a school will need to:

8.1 Make it a PRIORITY

This will require:

- the involvement of senior managers
- a place in the school development plan
- staff training

8.2 Involve the whole school in PLANNING

If the full potential for spiritual development is to be realised throughout the school, whole school planning is needed, with staff, governors and parents involved in the process.

8.3 Produce a whole school POLICY

and include a statement about the provision of spiritual development in **each subject POLICY.**

8.4 Think about the needs of the whole PUPIL

Schools will need to ask themselves searching questions about the sort of person they are seeking to develop through their work and the curriculum which is on offer. Promoting spiritual development requires a broad, balanced and rich curriculum which seeks to develop the whole person. What sort of person is likely to emerge from the school if a child's mind is developed but its spirit is neglected?

8.5 Think about the PRINCIPLE involved

Promoting spiritual development involves taking seriously the educational principle that school should be concerned about:

- the development of the whole child
- the formation of character
- learning about and learning from spiritual traditions
- the development of pupils' beliefs and values.

9 Resources

Bibliography of material on spiritual education and spiritual development in schools

The following is a list of articles and books on spiritual education and spiritual development in schools and spirituality in religious traditions. It is not exhaustive although it lists most recent material on the subject. It is a very eclectic list and includes material from the fields of Christian Theology, Education, Psychology, Religious Education and Religious Studies. Further detailed booklists can be found in Hay (1998), p. 200-210 and Wright A (1998) p.103-129. Recommended reading is given in a separate shorter booklist after this detailed list.

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Recommended Reading

The references below give only the author and date of the publication recommended. Full details of the books or articles are given in the earlier detailed booklist.

1. **Classroom Practice**

See Burns and Lamont (1995) and Fuller (1996)

The Charis Project. (1996 – 1997) is one of very few to offer suggestions in specific subjects CEM' Looking Inwards Looking Outwards, (1997) is outstanding for work at Key Stage 4.

On the practice of meditation see Fontana & Slack (1997).

Hammond et.al. (1990) is a major work in RE but the range of exercises is limited.

Kavelin Povov (1997) is a very useful book which sets out to develop virtues in young people.

Stone (1995) offers useful although limited suggestions for work in RE in primary schools.

2. **Stories, Readings and Quotations**

There is much of value in the many books on assemblies and collective worship. See the detailed booklists in the Kent SACRE publications Developing Good Practice in Collective Worship (1994) and Developing More Good Practice in Collective Worship (1997).

BBC (1996) and Waters (1996) are useful collections of poems.

Jack Canfield et. al. have produced many books with short and very moving accounts of incidents in people's lives, and often children's lives in their Chicken Soup series. Condensed Chicken Soup for the Soul is particularly useful.

Anthony De Mello's book are very popular with some in blending Eastern and Western insights.

Kahil Gibran's The Prophet is also popular.

See accounts of peoples lives, e.g. Frank (1995), Keenan (1993), Mandela (1994).

Wright C (1998b) gives a useful collection of stories and reflections.

3. **Research into the spiritual development of children**

The monograph by Andrew Wright (1998) is essential reading.

See also the work of Bradford (1995), Coles (1992), Hay & Nye (1998), Myers (1997), Priestley (1985) and Robinson (1975)

Best (1996) is a useful collection of recent essays.

Carr (1996) and Hill (1989) are valuable essays.

See also The International Journal of Children's Spirituality, published by Carfax

4. **Spirituality in world religions and other contexts**

For short overviews see Cole (1997), Jones et.al. (1986) and Wakefield (1983). See Carmody (1996) and Parrinder (1976) on mysticism in world religions. For more detailed and academic accounts of spirituality in specific religions see the series published by RKP and SCM entitled Buddhist / Christian / Hindu / Islamic and Jewish Spirituality.

Van Ness (1996) offers an academic study of the use of the term spirituality in contexts such as sport, the arts and psychotherapy.

Appendix 1

References in recent HMCI Annual Reports on spiritual development

“Most if not all National Curriculum subjects should contribute to pupils’ spiritual development. In practice this potential is exploited only rarely. Too little time is allowed for reflection on issues which pupils could relate to themselves and their lives in the wider community.”

1996 Annual Report, Section 212

“Provision for pupils’ spiritual development is good in about two thirds of [primary] schools but is poor in one school in seven. Most of the provision is through collective worship and assemblies or in RE.....Some schools make a good contribution to spiritual development in arts and humanities subjects but they often fail to exploit the potential of other subjects.”

“Pupils’ spiritual development however remains problematic for most [secondary] schools and this is often the least satisfactory of the four areas of development [spiritual, moral, social, and cultural]. Three quarters of schools do not meet the legal requirement for collective worship.”

[In special schools] “..... almost half of schools provide insufficient support for pupils’ spiritual and cultural development”

1997 Annual Report, Sections 35, 86 & 141

“Less than half of primary schools make good provision for spiritual development; provision is generally better in church schools than in county schools.... Overall.... this remains an area of considerable confusion. Schools lack clear guidance about what constitutes spiritual development and how it relates to but is different from religious education.”.....

“..... in nearly half of [secondary] schools provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Much of the responsibility rests with the teaching of religious education and upon the collective act of worship. In other subjects such as English, history and art, the teaching makes useful but erratic contributions to spiritual development..... Many schools provide valuable assemblies, but with a focus on moral and social issues rather than spirituality.”

“About one third of all [special] schools provide insufficient support for pupils’ spiritual and cultural development but all types of schools are becoming more successful in making explicit provision of this kind and in identifying potential contributions from other subjects.”

1998 Annual Report, Sections 56, 132 & 133

[In primary schools] “Religious Education, not surprisingly provides more opportunities for SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT than any other subject, but collective worship, usually referred to as ‘assembly’ in schools, makes the most significant contribution to spiritual development.....Provision for spiritual development generally receives greater attention and is significantly better in voluntary aided church schools than in the maintained sector.”

[In secondary schools] “Provision for pupils SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT is unsatisfactory in two-fifths of all schools. Where provision is good the school makes clear its commitment to spiritual values. In a number of schools prayer plays an important role in encouraging pupils to reflect on spiritual matters. Teachers often lack understanding of spiritual development or of the ways in which it may be promoted. Seven in ten schools fail to comply fully with the requirement for collective worship.

[In special schools] Although the provision for spiritual development is improving, one in five schools gives inadequate attention to this aspect of the curriculum.

1999 Annual Report, Sections 60, 141, 206

(Quoted with permission from Her Majesty’s Stationery Office)

Appendix 2

References in OFSTED Handbooks to Spiritual Development

This section gives the references to Spiritual Development in the 2003 OFSTED Handbook for the Inspection of Schools. References to spiritual development are sometimes interwoven with references to social, moral and cultural development and it is not always clear when the points made refer specifically to spiritual development. Judgements have been made about which elements relate to spiritual development and quotations have been extracted accordingly. The format of the text (although not the wording) in the OFSTED Handbook has sometimes been changed to make the meaning clearer by producing bullet points. The inspection of Spiritual Development falls within Section 3.2 of the OFSTED Handbook. The relevant sections have been reproduced here for easy reference.

3.2 How well are pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities developed?

Inspectors must judge pupils' personal development, what the school does to cultivate it, and how well pupils mature during their time in school. Inspectors should also take into account variations between any groups of pupils.

Inspectors must evaluate and report on:

- **Attendance, commenting on pupils' punctuality**
- **Attitudes and behaviour, including incidence of exclusions**
- **Other aspects of personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Assessing the extent to which the school actively enables pupils to:

- Develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness;
- Understand and respect other people's feelings, values and beliefs;
- Understand and apply the principles that help distinguish right from wrong;
- Understand and fulfil the responsibilities of living in a community;
- Appreciate their own and other people's cultural traditions.

Inspection focus

Inspectors should search for evidence of pupils' personal qualities that stem from what the school does to cultivate pupils' attitudes to learning, behaviour, values and personal development. Consider the relationship between the sixth form and the rest of the school and observe the extent to which students contribute to the life of the school as a whole. Evaluate what the school does and the effect this has on pupils.

In all inspections focus on:

- whether the school does all it can to promote good attendance and punctuality to school and lessons and how well parents and carers support this;
- whether pupils feel safe in school;
- how effectively the school ensures that pupils want to work in lessons and are willing to complete homework, and are supported to do so;

- how well pupils take up responsibility for learning;
- whether all pupils feel fully included in the school community and are active participants in it;
- whether, as a result of the provision, pupils become mature and responsible members of the school community and are well prepared for living in a diverse society;
- whether, as a result of the provision, pupils gain self-knowledge, spiritual awareness and an understanding of, and respect for, others' feelings, values and beliefs; and
- how well the school promotes good and civilised behaviour, and how well pupils with identified behavioural difficulties respond to the school's intervention strategies.

Observe teaching and pupils at work in lessons and at other times. Staff should be consistent in the way they behave towards pupils and how they set and enforce school rules. Pupils should learn good working habits and think for themselves. Does the school treat them maturely and involve them in making decisions about school life? Observe pupils around the school and their behaviour when they are not directly supervised. Does behaviour reflect the school's values and codes of conduct?

Making judgements

Inspectors need to explain their judgements by illustrating the school's effect on personal development.

Judgements on pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, should be consistent with other areas inspected, especially teaching and learning, care, support and guidance of pupils, and the leadership and management of the school.

Other aspects of pupils' personal development, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

The characteristics in table 10 illustrate where to pitch overall judgements about personal development.

Table 10. Judgements about personal development

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| <p>Very good(2) Where pupils develop to become mature, caring, sensitive and accepting of others' beliefs, the judgement is likely to be excellent. (1)</p> | <p>Pupils show curiosity, insight and imagination, and reflect seriously on life's fundamental questions. They show a very good understanding of, and respect for, themselves and other people and cultures. They value strongly social, cultural and ethnic diversity and treat others with high levels of interest and compassion, listening to them in a disciplined manner. They take full responsibility for their actions which they can regulate closely. Their values and behaviour are based on openness, equality, honesty and justice. They take a well-informed stance on neighbourhood, national and global issues.</p> |
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| Good (3) | Pupils accept responsibility for their own actions and understand how they fit into the school and the wider community. They acknowledge the potential of social, cultural and ethnic diversity, showing a good awareness of the values, beliefs and cultures of others and of the need for rules in different societies. They value fairness and justice and have a secure perception of what is right and wrong, amending their own behaviour accordingly. They show respect for the views of others and seek to debate and understand differences in school, and in relation to local, national and global issues. |
| Satisfactory (4) | Pupils show a developing understanding of themselves and a growing awareness of their place in society. They know about the need for rules in school, the local community and the wider world. In their dealings with others they behave responsibly and with respect. They appreciate different cultures and faiths throughout the world, and that different people conduct their lives in different ways. They show tolerance and reasonable levels of understanding, being willing to listen and to accept criticism and differences while putting their viewpoint from a basis of sound local and international knowledge. |
| Unsatisfactory (5) | Pupils lack confidence in their own beliefs and values. They have factual knowledge, but only limited understanding of the cultures and faiths of others. Their views are ill informed and show little depth of thought or individuality. A significant minority of pupils show insensitivity to the views of others and the effect of their own attitudes and behaviour upon them. They find it difficult to observe a clear set of values or identify their own responsibility in the school and society generally. They show little awareness issues likely to affect them in the wider world. |
| Poor (6) Where pupils demonstrate an immature, uncaring and insensitive approach to others and do not tolerate their beliefs, the judgement is likely to be very poor. (7) | Pupils demonstrate an insecure sense of their own identity. They struggle to justify their attitudes, or are intolerant. They are often negative about social compliance and have a weak moral code. They show only a limited Understanding of different cultures, faiths and backgrounds, and lack interest, respect and tolerance. They exhibit suspicion or prejudice towards those with different beliefs, or of different race, class, sex or sexual orientation. They find it difficult to acknowledge the achievements of others. They are unable to discuss moral or controversial issues, and have little understanding of global issues. |

Inspecting other aspects of pupils' personal development, including the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, with guidance on using the criteria

How well do pupils develop self-knowledge and spiritual awareness?

Where schools foster successfully pupils' self-awareness and understanding of the world around them and spiritual questions and issues, they will be developing a set of values, principles and beliefs - which may or may not be religious - to inform their perspective on life and their behaviour. They will defend their beliefs, challenge unfairness and all that would constrain their personal growth, for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision and all forms of discrimination.

Do teachers foster awareness, curiosity and wonder by providing opportunities for pupils to observe, reflect and ponder? To what extent do teachers raise questions of faith sensitively and appropriately? Do they encourage pupils to talk about themselves and draw on their personal experiences? Is enough time provided for pupils to think and listen attentively to one another in lessons? Teachers should help pupils to make connections across their work and raise further questions to help them think more deeply, developing their self-knowledge and spiritual awareness.

Schools are required by law to provide a daily act of collective worship, mainly Christian in character unless the local Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) has determined otherwise. Inspectors must evaluate the provision and its quality in contributing to spiritual development. Where the school does not meet its statutory obligation, this must be reported.

How well do pupils understand and respect other people's feelings, values and beliefs?

Where the provision is effective, pupils develop an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs. They will empathise with others, showing concern and compassion, and have an understanding of feelings and emotions, and their likely effect on others. They will have respect for others' needs and interests, as well as their own, and a desire to explore their own and others' views.

Evaluate the extent to which the school fosters this understanding and respect. Do teachers treat pupils with respect, openly discuss beliefs and explain festivals and customs with confidence? Check how far pupils appreciate that individuals can feel and show strong commitment in different ways. How far are pupils aware that, for some people, divinity is fundamental to their beliefs and that others are motivated by their faith in human kind? Do they realise that different religions influence the way people live their lives and the way in which they relate to others? They should know that it is important to try to see other faiths and nations from the point of view of the believer or citizen and not through personal prejudice.

How well do pupils understand and apply the principles that help distinguish right from wrong?

Pupils who are morally aware have an ability to distinguish right from wrong, based on a knowledge of the moral codes of their own and other cultures.

They are confident to act according to their own principles and have an ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' actions. Pupils should develop a willingness to express their views on ethical issues and personal values and make responsible and reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas.

Do teachers and other adults offer strong models in the way they behave? Do they explain why some actions are wrong and make sure the pupils understand?

How far are pupils involved in setting codes of behaviour, for example, through a school council? Is the school's code of conduct explicit and applied consistently? Do teachers make sure that bullies understand the effect of their behaviour?

How well do pupils understand and fulfil the responsibilities of living in a community?

Pupils who are socially aware adjust appropriately and sensitively to a range of social contexts. They relate well to others and work successfully as a member of a team. They support each other and help those experiencing difficulties. Pupils share their views and opinions, participate in decision-making and jointly take responsible action in the school community to solve problems. They show respect for people, living things, property and the environment.

Effective schools plan pupils' social development carefully. They draw on the local and wider community as resources to enrich pupils' social experience. Equally, they provide opportunities for pupils to contribute to the community, for example through community service. These can provide a worthwhile range of activities that require pupils to adjust to different social contexts and, sometimes, to exercise leadership.

Schools that are helping pupils to understand and fulfil the responsibility of living in a community, will:

- foster a sense of community, with inclusive values;
- encourage pupils to work co-operatively in teams and groups;
- encourage pupils to recognise and respect social differences and similarities;
- provide opportunities for engaging in democratic processes and participating in community life.

How well do pupils appreciate their own and other cultural traditions?

Pupils who are culturally aware recognise and understand their own culture and the influences that have shaped them. They appreciate cultural diversity and accord dignity to other people's values and beliefs. They challenge racism and value race equality. They show openness to new ideas and a willingness to modify their beliefs in the light of what they have learned. Pupils are interested in participating in, and responding to, artistic and cultural experiences. They have a high regard for human achievements in all cultures and societies.

Schools that are encouraging pupils' cultural development will:

- use artefacts, resources and library materials representing a range of cultures;
- draw on perspectives from a range of cultures, for example, in learning about art forms, the development of language or scientific and mathematical ideas;
- celebrate different cultures through assemblies, social activities, and other aspects of school life;
- provide opportunities for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events;
- develop partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend pupils' cultural awareness, for example, through theatre, museum, concert and gallery visits;
- reinforce the school's cultural values through displays, posters and exhibitions.

Appendix 3

Some characteristics of a spiritually developed person

The following list of spiritual 'characteristics' is to be found in Looking Inwards, Looking Outwards, Teacher Handbook CEM, 1998, p.10. (Quoted with permission).

The spiritually developed person may be described as displaying some or all of the following:

SELF KNOWLEDGE

- has growing awareness of own gifts and strengths, limitations and weaknesses
- is increasingly aware of an inner life in terms of thoughts, feelings, temperament, character and needs
- utilises imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight to express innermost thoughts and feelings in an appropriate way.

REFLECTIVE AWARENESS

- questions what it means to be fully human;
- searches for meaning in the challenging and joyful experiences of life, such as change, hardship, suffering, delight and despair, birth and death
- is open to, and reflects upon, experience of awe and wonder arising from the natural world, mystery and human achievement and entertains the possibility of an ultimate reality.

LOVE

- discerns the value and worth of self, others and the environment;
- seeks to build caring, unselfish relationships with others;
- is alert to the implications of own actions for others and the environment;
- may acknowledge and hold important a loving relationship with God;
- is self-giving

STRIVING

- has the will and inner strength to do what is right and good;
- maintains courage, patience and hope in response to, and in the face of, adversity;
- understands that acceptance can at times be the most appropriate response
- strives to live for others as opposed to living purely for self
- strives to transcend (rise above) the immediate and the mundane.

SENSITIVITY

- is moved by beauty or kindness and, for some, by an awareness of God;
- utilises feelings as a source of growth;
- is perceptive about people and situations, making appropriate judgements;
- understands and control emotions and feelings;
- is open to the spiritual dimension of a variety of experiences.

APPENDIX 4

Some Ultimate Questions

The following list of questions gives examples of the sort of questions that have been called ultimate or fundamental questions. It is important to realise that sometimes young children may be asking an ultimate question about for example the fact of pain or evil, if they ask a question like, “Why are there stinging nettles?”

1. **Authority**
Who can I trust?
Who should I listen to?
Who should I obey?
What can I believe?
Who can I believe?
Whose rules should I follow?
Why shouldn't I steal?
Where can I find the truth?
Am I answerable to anyone?
2. **Morality**
How do I decide what is right?
Where do our ideas about right and wrong come from?
Why is honesty better than dishonesty?
Why shouldn't I cheat at sport?
Do I need values?
3. **Values**
What really matters to me?
Do people matter more than things?
Why is courage better than cowardice?
Why is justice so important?
Are people more important than animals?
4. **Origins**
How did the universe begin?
How can something come from nothing?
Why is there anything rather than nothing?
Is there a Creator or is everything really just a cosmic accident?
If there is a God, who made God?
Are we alone in the universe?

- 5. Identity**
Do I know the 'real' me?
Do others see me the way I see myself?
Do I see myself in the way others see me?
How can I get to know the real me?
Am I being true to the real me / myself?
What am I becoming?
Who cares about me?
Do I matter?
Are we really free?
- 6. Destiny**
Where am I going?
Can I determine my own future?
What will become of me?
Can I change?
Can I "buck the trend"?
What can I hope for?
Am I doing all I can?
Is death really the end?
Why must we die?
Is there life after death?
Is there a heaven or hell?
Is there an ultimate reward or punishment?
Will evil prevail?
Is reincarnation true?
What future is there for the human race?
How will the world end?
- 7. Meaning**
Why do we keep asking 'Why'?
Does anything make sense?
Is there a God?
Why is life unfair?
Why is there so much suffering?
Why do we not stop the suffering?
What brings lasting happiness?
Is there a reason why things happen to us?
- 8. Purpose**
What is it all for?
Why go on?
Who are the winners and losers?
Does life have any purpose?
What does it mean to be successful?
What should I aim for?
Can I be different?