

# 1. Introduction and Policy

## 1a. Introduction from Kent Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and the Advisory Service Kent (ASK)

The Kent Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) and the Advisory Service Kent (ASK) are pleased to offer this guidance which builds on and replaces that provided in 1999. It:

- aims to support meeting statutory requirements with regard to providing opportunities for children's and young people's spiritual (moral, social and cultural<sup>1</sup>) development within the educational context<sup>2</sup>
- explains and exemplifies key areas of legal requirements and educational thinking about the importance of addressing the needs of the child or young person in its broadest sense, their personal as well as their academic development<sup>3</sup>
- encourages through for example the self-evaluation and planning process to give a clear priority to spiritual development. It is necessary to recognise and provide a wide-range of opportunities for spiritual development and to encourage children's and young people's positive responses to them. By doing so this makes a vital contribution to developing and reinforcing a school's ethos and values. It underpins and reinforces the need to live out in the life of the school the fact that 'Every Child Matters'.

## 1b. Kent SACRE definition of spiritual development

- The key function of SACRE is to offer advice to the Local Authority on matters pertaining to religious education (RE) and collective worship. There are obvious and explicit links between both these areas and spiritual development. SACRE wants to underline the importance of spiritual development across the whole of school life in effectively supporting the personal and academic development and well-being of all our children and young people. We encourage all our schools and settings to offer a range of experiences and opportunities that supports the spiritual development of all our children and young people to contribute towards enabling them in becoming successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. Such a focus will also make a contribution to helping schools in their duty to promote and enhance community cohesion.

We remind all our schools that they are required to provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum<sup>4</sup> that:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of learners at the school and within society, and
- prepares learners at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.

These overarching aims provide the essential context within which schools develop their curriculum.

We recommend that schools seriously consider:

- making sure that the spiritual (moral, social and cultural) development dimensions of school life are taken seriously as contributing to improving the personal and academic development and well-being of children and young people
- ensuring that teaching and learning opportunities include developing the skills and capacities that help children and young people respond spiritually (morally, socially and culturally) to the experiences of life and living.

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1 Whist the main focus of this resource is on explaining and exploring the spiritual dimension within an educational context this can not be totally separated from the moral, social and cultural aspects of personal development.

2 Educational context includes all Local Authority schools and settings

3 The Education Act (2002).

4 This responsibility extends across the whole curriculum and throughout statutory schooling. So whether a child or young person is in Year 2 of the primary school or is studying GCSEs, BTECs or Diplomas in the secondary school this provides the basis for their educational entitlement.

SACRE's definition of spiritual development with the educational context is:

**Spiritual development is the concern to develop the most distinctive and desirable capacities of the human person<sup>5</sup>, i.e. those capacities that, above all, distinguish human beings from other living creatures. It is a concern which goes beyond what children and young people know and do and relates to what sort of person they are and are becoming.**

Some key questions to consider:

**What sort of children and young people do we want our pupils/students to be and become?**

What is the **essential knowledge and understanding** we want them to have?

What **skills and attributes** do we want them to develop?

What **values** do we want them to base their behaviour on?

**How can we support our children and young people in their spiritual (moral, social and cultural) development?**

What do we mean by **spiritual** (moral, social and cultural development) within an **educational context**?

How does our **ethos** contribute to our children's/young people's personal development and well-being? How do we know and what can we improve?

How does the way they **learn** and the way in which we **teach** contribute to developing these areas? How do we know and what can we improve?

How does the **curriculum** we provide, including the **way we organise learning**, and the **wider experiences and opportunities** we offer support their development across these important dimensions of personal development? How do we know and what can we improve?

How do the **wider and extra-curricular opportunities** support the range of spiritual development opportunities we provide for all our children and young people? How do they respond? How do we know and what can we improve?