

St Thomas More Catholic School Bedford
Specialising in Leadership and Humanities
“Primus Servus Dei”

Spiritual Development Policy

Philosophy

In the light of our mission statement we aim to build a community in which there is a climate of care and a dedication to serve each other in order to build up the community and the individual. Spiritual development is fundamental to the human condition and is expressed in this community in the quality of the relationships with each other and with God and the profound respect shown for each other. In this pluralistic society, we see spirituality as enabling pupils to reflect on values and beliefs around them through times of silence and personal reflection. People grow spiritually when they have quality time to stop and pose themselves ultimate questions often in response to world or personal events. Respect for doubt as well as faith is seen as a worthwhile part of the spiritual journey. The adults in this community are in the privileged position of accompanying young people on their search for meaning and personal identity. Often students and staff need time to live with questions, often the human spirit is nurtured with the faith and witness of others.

Purpose

The purpose of spiritual development is to set free the spirit so that it can explore within and outside in pursuit of the truth. It calls to fullness the potential for physical emotional academic and spiritual growth. It is a celebration of truth and realisation “The truth will set you free” (John’s Gospel.)

The Reality of the Individual

We acknowledge the integral worth of each member of the community. We herald each other as, “God’s masterpiece, his work of art.” (Ephesians), full of the creativity and artistry of God. We recognise the unique and unrepeatable worth of each individual and value the gifts that each person has to offer to this community. It is this sense of value which directly impacts on the way we are “in relationship” with each other and our God. We aim to involve not only the students and adults in this school community but also their families, the local community and the wider Church.

Opportunities and Strategies for Spiritual Development.

Firstly, it is our staff, who have a key role to play in fostering spiritual development. The training of staff in spirituality is seen as a priority. It is also explicit in the Induction Programme as part of the formation of new staff. Prayer is an integral part of Religious Services, meetings, in-service training and Monday morning briefing. There are visible reminders across the school highlighting the liturgical season. Interfaith services also seek to provide an invitation to all to come and to pray.

The predominance of the mission statement serves as a visual reminder around the school of what we are about. This is also inscribed on all documentation and communication to parents so that the context in which we are working is clearly stated. The building around us speaks of care and quality in its clean fresh environment. In addition prayer focal points and entrance displays proclaim our vision. We seek to develop spirituality by communicating what we are doing in school through More News and on our website. Opportunities for prayer and reflection are on our website so that pupils and their families have the opportunity for a source of reflection. Each curriculum area has reflected on spirituality in their own subject; they have contributed additional ideas as to how subject specific spirituality is developed. This has been collated following the training in January 2017 into a curriculum booklet. Subject areas proclaim their message/banner within their area.

Organisation, Monitoring and Evaluation.

The Head teacher, Deputy and Chaplaincy Co-ordinator have collective responsibility for monitoring progress of Spiritual Development. Pastoral Managers and Subject Co-ordinators are responsible for ensuring that the spiritual development of pupils is clearly on the agenda and visible in their area where appropriate. Assemblies are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team. Liturgies too are monitored by the Chaplaincy Team. Spiritual Development is firmly on the agenda of our school, it is lived out by witness and challenge particularly by the Leadership Team

The Future

To progress further we aim to:

- ❖ Create opportunities for staff to replenish their own spiritual batteries with a wellbeing CPD initiative and the opportunities for staff prayer regularly and the Taize Prayer for staff and local people
- ❖ Continue to build up resources to facilitate spiritual development.
- ❖ Share the existing good practice on Spiritual Development with other schools, including the Induction unit for staff.
- ❖ Keep SMSC as an abiding part of the School Improvement plan.

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June 2017