

Update on Spiritual Moral Social and Cultural education in schools in the new Common Inspection framework September 2015

The School Inspection Handbook explains, in paragraph 132, that inspectors will consider the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development when forming their judgement about a school's overall effectiveness.

Paragraph 98 says that a school will be judged to have serious weaknesses (the lowest category possible) if one or more of the key judgements are 'inadequate' and/or there are "important weaknesses in the provision for pupils SMSC development"

RE is one of the most obvious vehicles for the exploration of SMSC. It is in RE that the "bigger" questions of life are considered.

Spiritual The handbook states that the **spiritual development of pupils is shown by their:**

- Ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values
- Sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them
- Use of imagination and creativity in their learning
- Willingness to reflect on their experiences

Questions to consider: spiritual development

One of our associate education experts and trained inspector, Jeremy Bird, suggested that schools should ask themselves:

- Do teaching and collective worship provide opportunities for reflection?
- To what extent does the curriculum motivate pupils, and encourage them to imagine and enquire?
- 'Who am I?'
- 'From life to death: where are we going?'
- 'Why is it hard to believe in God?'

Moral The handbook states that pupils' **moral development is shown by their:**

- Ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England
- Understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions
- Interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues, and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues

Questions to consider: moral development

- How well do pupils adhere to the school's behaviour expectations?
- Do they behave well without adult supervision?
- Do staff follow agreed behaviour processes, and use rewards/sanctions consistently?
- Are pupils articulate in discussing ethical issues?
- Do they show understanding of values such as tolerance and respect?
- 'What is the best type of guidance?'
- 'What does justice mean to Christians?'
- 'Technology – beauty or beast?'

Social The handbook states that **pupils' social development is demonstrated by their:**

- Use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other pupils, including those from different religious, ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds
- Willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, co-operating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively
- Acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; they develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain

Questions to consider: social development

- How well do pupils collaborate in their learning and play?
- Do all groups of pupils feel valued and included in the life of the school?
- How much do pupils talk about their school experiences in relation to British values?
- 'What are we doing to the environment?'
- 'How and why do people worship?'

Cultural The handbook states that the **pupils' cultural development is shown by their:**

- Understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others
- Understanding and appreciation of the range of different cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- Knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its central role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- Willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, sporting and cultural opportunities

- Interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

Questions to consider: cultural development examples

- What opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about democracy?
- Can all pupils talk about their learning (showing depth and understanding) in various subjects such as art?
- Do pupils show values such as respect and tolerance in their day-to-day life at the school, both in classrooms and around the school?
- 'What is Christianity?'
- 'Who am I?', 'What does it mean to be a Jew?'
- 'How should a mosque call its members to prayer?'
- How does a Hindu worship?

In addition the handbook informs schools that from July 1st 2015 each school has a legal duty to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism and this legal duty can be carried out through an effective SMSC curriculum.

The **National Centre for Diversity** has developed an Ofsted recognised online audit tool to support schools in evaluating, reviewing and then putting into action areas for development with regard to SMSC – more information from www.nationalcentrefordiversity.co.uk telephone 01133880145