



Dixons City Academy

Policy Documentation

Policy: Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development

Responsibility for Review: Principal
Date of Last Review: June 2017

Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development

Statement of Policy:

As a non-faith organisation, the Academy is committed to offering students the opportunities to:

- distinguish between right and wrong
- discuss moral issues in a non-prejudicial and accepting way
- develop and talk about their own attitudes and values, whilst appreciating others may choose other valid life-choices which they may not agree with theirs
- take responsibility for their own decisions and actions
- develop an understanding of social responsibilities and citizenship and become great humanitarians, with a determination to change the world for the better
- celebrate a diversity of cultures whilst recognising core British values which bind all communities' together (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs (Section 24 of the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015).

Procedures:

The Academy aims to create an ethos which will foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all students. This development is underpinned by the following:

- the whole curriculum (see policy) with an emphasis on breadth
- the Personal Development Studies programme
- assemblies
- the Academy Contract & Positive Behaviour Policy (see Pride Rules and Values)|
- extra-curricular activities and educational visits
- opportunities for student voice, including the School Council
- the whole school vision and values

Spiritual Development

Students will:

- Reflect on their own beliefs and show interest and respect in the faith of others
- Develop a sense of enjoyment and wonder in the world around them
- Think critically and creatively about the world around them
- Seek answers to ultimate or 'big' questions

Moral Development

Students will:

- develop the skills and confidence to make decisions and distinguish right from wrong
- understand and respect school rules and how democracy is underpinned by the rule of law
- understand the consequences of behaviour
- listen and respect the views of others, even if theirs differ

Social Development

Students will

- Be able to work with people with different social characteristics
- see themselves as part of the school and wider community and contribute accordingly
- Develop the ability to resolve conflict harmoniously
- Accept fundamental British values; democracy, rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of other faiths and beliefs and understand how the school Pride rules reflect these

Cultural Development

Students will

- Understand different cultural heritages
- Understand the diversity of British society and how immigration has led to multiculturalism
- Understand the history of Britain and the influence of parliamentary democracy
- Celebrate diversity whilst understanding the commonality of humanity and our core values as a learning community

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The Academy's primary aim is to underline the spiritual concerns of humanity and humanitarianism (e.g. matters of life and death, the purpose of life, choices in life, etc.) The weekly silence allows all students an opportunity to reflect on pertinent moral and spiritual themes and often links to contemporary issues. All students study Religious Education from Year 7-13. The emphasis in RE is an understanding of major world religions and what brings them together as well as separates them. In addition, students have the opportunity to consider big questions about the meaning of life. Students are expected (and do) show respect for people of different views and faiths.

Collective Worship

As a non-faith school, most collective gatherings allow the opportunity for silent reflection/prayer, rather than proscribed worship. At appropriate times of the year, and on appropriate occasions, the Academy will provide quality acts of worship to open up avenues for students to explore, provide opportunities for experience, but not indoctrination. As a non-faith school, this worship may be from the perspective of any major world religion, or may be more humanistic. The Academy believes it is important to give students these opportunities in order to:

- prepare students for life - to be equipped to take part in an act of worship (to be at ease in these situations)
- educate the whole person, including the spiritual dimension – to provide experience of collective worship so that the spiritual development of students is not left to the personal biases of individual staff within subject areas or to educate students into secular prejudices

- provide an experimental medium for exploring key spiritual concerns of human life - educational worship is an exploration of beliefs, both religious and humanistic

Spiritual Development in the Taught Curriculum

Religious Education

Religion is an expression of the spiritual dimension of life. The aim of the curriculum work is to help students:

- in the appreciation of religious faith and the varieties of faith
- to appreciate that faith is a journey and that the acceptance of religion as a personal commitment will lead to a change in the direction of one's life
- to see practical and social consequences of religious faith so that they may form their own beliefs and judgements and their own allegiances and commitments
- to understand the similarities and differences between religious teachings.

This will aid students to appreciate the religious dimension in their search for meaning in life.

Religious Education will attempt to aid students to gain insight into their own religious beliefs and loyalties, sort out their personal and spiritual values and practices so that they may take up their own spiritual allegiances. RE will also challenge theological inaccuracies and misunderstandings. It will contribute to the moral and social development of our students, developing consideration for others, an appreciation of human rights and responsibilities and a concern for justice in society. It will develop in students respect for the practices of different religious faiths and a sympathetic understanding of their underlying values and concerns. It will develop acceptance for the variety of beliefs and the customs of the citizens of our world.

All Years 7 to 9 will study faiths in Religious Education both in a linear way and through a series of topics which will bring out acceptance and understanding of other faiths and cultures. Moreover, it will stimulate the students to search for meanings which they can own. Philosophy of religion is also taught in Year 8 and students have the opportunity to explore several ethical issues.

All students in Years 10 and 11 will study aspects of religious teachings including the dilemma that moral issues such as war and conflict cause for the believer. The two major faiths that are studied are Christianity and Islam for entry in GCSE Short Course RE.

In Year 12 and 13, students study attitudes and tolerance to different faiths as well as definitions of radicalisation and extremism.

All Areas of the Curriculum

All subjects will contribute in their particular ways to the spiritual development of students as they enable them to discover, learn and evaluate the world around them.

The role of the teacher in the Academy is to enable students by discussion to think about religion and appreciate the variety of faiths by:

- using art, drama, music, languages, science and technology as well as humanities to heighten awareness of the spiritual dimension in our lives
- creating tasks which question students and enable them to work out their own position on issues, both moral and religious

It is important that we remember that it is the home and community which plays the major part in forming a student's view of religion and developing the spiritual dimension. It is the school's role to provide the intellectual content and context to promote the development of critical thinking.

MORAL DEVELOPMENT

It is the role of every teacher to constantly reinforce the school rules and expectations and to help students make the right choices. PDS does focus on several aspects of moral development and decision-making, for example; drugs and alcohol education and sex and relationship education. .

The Academy believes that students should be listened to seriously and their views taken into account. However, students must understand that not all views are equally valid and they will be challenged if the views expressed are intolerant or unaccepting of any group or individuals. Staff will particularly challenge ill-founded ideas from the internet or other sources which could be used to justify discrimination or hatred of any groups or individuals. Students are particularly taught acceptance and respect of all minority groups; sexism, racism and homophobia are all deemed equally unacceptable (see Equality Policy). The Academy greatly values personal integrity in all members of its community. By integrity, we mean truthfulness and acting in good faith in all human relationships. Our staff model integrity and being honest and upright at all times.

The Academy aims to educate children to consider major world needs. This will be done through weekly silences, assemblies, PDS, charity events, innovation days and themed humanitarian days.

Moral Development in the Taught Curriculum

The aims of curriculum work can be summarised as follows:

- to challenge students to justify their moral position
- to enable them to share with others their reflections, listen to others and struggle to resolve their disagreements with civility
- to facilitate the extending and generating of their moral reflections beyond their own immediate experience to national and international issues

The role of the teacher in Academy has the following elements:

- being alert to the moral dimensions of issues which are raised for and by students in the world around them
- the setting up of activities and tasks for students to enable them to work harmoniously with students they may not naturally gravitate to

All aspects of the curriculum, in all years, give rise to moral issues. Examples:

- examining the economics and organisation of industry raises questions about the fairness of salary differentials, investment practices and the power hierarchy
- consideration of the role of drug companies in funding medical research raises ethical issues

SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Students in the Academy are members of the Academy's Community; this involves an increasing awareness of their own identity as individuals and a need to work with the feelings and wishes of others. Both the formal curriculum and extra-curricular promote team work and co-operation.

The development of social skills is monitored both formally, in assessments, and informally, by the pastoral staff. Supportive measures are available where they may be needed.

In tutor groups throughout the Academy, students are in mixed ability, sex, previous school and ethnic groups. This fosters positive interaction between students of different backgrounds and enables all students to be exposed to a wide variety of experiences. Teachers actively guide students to work in groups outside of friendship groups.

There is a planned programme of personal, social, and citizenship education, which aims to develop student awareness of moral issues as well as fostering a sense of responsibility and community values.

All students are interviewed regularly by their Form Tutors, Heads of Year, IN staff and Subject Tutors, both individually as well as in groups, in order that their full potential is reached. Records are kept of positive achievement, behaviour and effort. Concerns are regularly monitored and prompt action is taken when required. All staff are trained to report any concerns about changes in a student's behaviour which may indicate that they are not safe and their moral, spiritual or social development is being undermined.

Expected standards of behaviour are discussed by students and all staff, including administration staff and our PRIDE values and Positive Behaviour system permeates all that we do. Effective communications through all sections of the Academy is maintained by an active Academy Council. All students are given the opportunity and responsibility of acting in a supporting role in various Academy initiatives, e.g. assistance with visitors, Year 8 Helpers Scheme, library duties, parents evening, community service.

Individuals are encouraged to participate in extra-curricular activities outside of normal Academy timetable – these activities range from music lessons, extra sports, and extra IT. The needs of the individual on an international basis are highlighted by the students' and the Academy's active support of a variety of charitable organisations. Additionally all students Year 7-9 undertake compulsory stretch lunchtime activities with a view to developing a well-rounded educational experience.

Effective communication is maintained between the Academy and parents to ensure students maximise their potential. Parental contact is made through the student planner, interim and full reports, parents' evenings, achievement evenings, information evenings, letters and the active participation of the Friends of Dixons (Parents' Association).

In any aspect of the curriculum, external speakers are used to expose the students to a variety of viewpoints and opinions, although always in alignment with our core values. The emphasis in this Academy is to allow students to take responsibility for their own actions and provide them with a solid base of information on which to build the kind of self-confidence and self-discipline expected from successful adults.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The Academy reinforces the values and customs of society as a whole and celebrates diversity and multi-culturalism. The Academy is a morally driven institution whose core values (Purpose, Respect, Integrity, Determination, and Excellence) and our drivers of Diversity, Challenge, Achievement inform all that we do.

The cultural influences of home, community and religion are explored in order to extend the students' awareness and breadth of understanding. This is achieved through the formal curriculum, through extra-curricular activities and the value placed overtly on the students' own cultural interests and achievements.

The Academy seeks to provide an education, which not only develops and strengthens students' current awareness, but also allows them to develop new cultural insights by:

- avoiding cultural bias
- promoting an appreciation of cultural diversity
- achieving a balance between 'high' culture and more immediate local cultural expressions

Students are given the opportunity to learn about past features which have influenced and shaped the present, and about how present generations (including themselves) are maintaining, interpreting and reshaping their cultural tradition.

Objectives

Students should be able to:

- know about British culture and society
- be aware of, and celebrate, cultural diversity
- understand the interdependence of groups within society
- know about societies and cultures other than their own

Cultural Developments within the taught Curriculum

The Academy seeks to enhance the cultural development of students by way of:

- the formal curriculum
- extra-curricular activities
- incorporating students own home influences into discussions

Cultural Development is achieved through:

- mixed cultural grouping, both in tutorial bases and teaching sets
- fostering cultural development and awareness through issues discussed in various areas of the curriculum, e.g. Humanities/English, Religious Studies and PDS, Performing and Creative Arts

- organised visits which explore and investigate sites of contrasting cultural backgrounds, e.g. excursions to religious buildings such as mosques, synagogues and churches, and heritage sites such as Fountains Abbey, and sites of historical interest such as Saltaire
- the use of (vetted) visiting speakers and members of the wider cultural community who express the same views of celebrating diversity whilst emphasising commonality that the Academy believes in
- extra-curricular activities which empathise with individuals, communities and cultures throughout the world, e.g. Academy Amnesty International Group
- foreign exchanges which prompt a greater understanding of the difference and similarities in attitudes and values of a diverse, multi-cultural world
- links within locality through community service, Bradford Festival, work experience and other initiatives in various areas of the Academy