



Oaklands School

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) Policy

It is our aim to ensure that the requirements for SMSC are fully met since they underpin the mission statement, ethos, values, culture and learning experience we provide for all our children in ensuring that we develop the whole person. Oaklands School celebrates the cultural and religious diversity of our community.

Aims

- Our goal is to encourage an appreciation of life-long learning and a desire to participate in and contribute to the community so that pupils become fulfilled and responsible citizens.
- In all sections of our school we aim to promote the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Awareness and Development of all of our pupils.
- To use every opportunity to develop self-confidence, respect and courtesy in all pupils.
- To teach our pupils what it means to be a good human being and the kind of society that makes that possible.
- To expect the best of our pupils and ourselves. This underpins all the behaviour management procedures, curriculum provision and delivery.
- To provide a safe caring family atmosphere in which every individual can grow and develop.
- To promote respect and harmony amongst all.

SMSC development appears in all areas of the curriculum but especially in Assemblies, Religious Education, Circle Time, Citizenship, Personal, Social and Health Education. Playtime, Lunchtime, After School Club, Charity work, House Activities, Prefect duties, School and Food Councils and our range of extra-curricular activities all contribute to our pupils' SMSC development.

Principles

It is our aim to develop in every young person the values, skills and behaviours they need to get on in life. All children receive a rich provision of classroom and extra-curricular activities that develop a range of character attributes, such as reliance and grit, which underpin success in education and employment. The school ensures that principles are actively promoted that:

1. Enable pupils to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence

The school does all it can to help its pupils develop into self-assured, confident, happy, positive young people. Pupils are taught to articulate their feelings and justify them in both informal and formal settings, and are given responsibility and trust to develop their confidence. The school develops these traits by celebrating achievement and encouraging pupils to have the confidence to undertake difficult tasks and have a wide range of experiences. Pupils are also encouraged to question things that prevent them developing into confident adults – particularly lack of aspiration and unfair discrimination. Adults and older pupils in the school act as role models for younger pupils.

The development of self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence are encouraged through School Council, assemblies, posts of responsibility, buddies and monitors, pupils acting as guides, being models for younger pupils and reporting on events in and out of school. Pupils also help at school fairs, take part in local events such as 'Light up Loughton', sing at a local elderly people's home and every pupil can participate in school

teams, the orchestra, choir etc. A wide range of resources are used to reinforce these values from Jewish artefacts to use of IT programmes and stories from different cultures.

2. *Enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and to respect the civil and criminal law of England*

The school tries to ensure that pupils understand that while different people may hold different views about what is 'right' and 'wrong', all people living in England are subject to its law. The school's ethos and teaching supports the rule of English civil and criminal law. Pupils are made aware of the difference between the law of the land and religious law.

Staff regularly emphasise the importance of the class, playground and school rules in PSHE lessons and assemblies.

3. *Encourage pupils to accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality in which the school is situated and to society more widely*

The school aims to develop pupils who know how to act responsibly, and who become more independent as they grow older. Pupils are shown the value and importance of making a positive impact on the lives of other people. Pupils are given responsibility within school and are encouraged to serve other people in the wider community. Specifically, the school does the following:

- Supports local and national charities
- Links with foreign schools e.g. pen pals with a Parisian School
- Organises a day trip to France (when considered safe)
- Publishes and enforces behaviour sanctions
- Facilitates the school council
- Facilitates the food council
- Promotes the PSHE curriculum
- Organises regular assemblies

4. *Enable pupils to acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services*

Pupils are taught how public institutions (e.g. Parliament, the police force, the Post Office) and services (e.g. healthcare, welfare services and education) operate. Pupils should understand how public services have evolved and how they relate to the daily lives of pupils and their families. Educational visits to relevant organisations can enhance pupils' experience in this area. The school encourages visits from the police, staff from the NHS and various members of the wider community.

5. *Further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures*

Pupils are encouraged to regard people of all faiths, races and cultures with respect and tolerance. The school fosters an awareness of the tenets of all the principal religions represented in Great Britain and we try to prepare pupils to interact easily with people of different cultures and faiths. We help them to gain knowledge and respect for their own and other cultures, including customs, traditions, dress and food. We develop opportunities for pupils through links with other organisations, as well as the content of curriculum.

We emphasise tolerance and harmony during assemblies and PSHE lessons, we invite parents to talk about their own cultures with children, we celebrate themed food days such as Chinese New Year.

6. *Encourage respect for other people, paying particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010(2)*

All schools are already required to comply with the Equality Act 2010. However, if a school did not follow the requirements of the Equality Act, the only recourse was for an individual to seek a judgement against the

school in the appropriate court or tribunal. By including this requirement in the standard the Secretary of State has the power to take regulatory action where a school is in breach of its requirements. There is absolutely no change to the duties that any school has under the Equality Act – this change is purely one of enforcement. This change does not extend equality requirements, nor does it discriminate against any religion or undermine religious freedoms. The standard does not mean, for example, that schools must promote alternative lifestyles or same sex marriage. Rather, it requires respect for other people, even if they choose to follow a lifestyle that one would not choose to follow oneself.

We encourage respect and equality for other people at all times via our PSHE curriculum, school policies, assemblies and our School ethos.

7. Encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic process, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England.

We help our pupils to understand why democracy is perceived within England as the fairest form of political organisation and why taking part in democracy is a good thing.

The school precludes the promotion of partisan political views in the teaching of any subject in the school and takes such steps as are reasonably practicable to ensure that where political issues are brought to the attention of pupils:

- while they are in attendance at the school
- while they are taking part in extra-curricular activities that are provided or organised by or on behalf of the school
- in the promotion at the school, including through the distribution of promotional material, of extra-curricular activities taking place at the school or elsewhere

they are offered a balanced presentation of opposing views.

Provision

Much of our provision is inter-related and there is much overlap. However, for the purpose of considering School improvement and auditing provision they are considered distinctly. Teachers consider SMSC in their Schemes of Work and in the way they deliver their lessons. In all sections of the school, we promote the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC) of our children, via Assemblies, Religious Education (RE), Circle time, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and teaching across the curriculum. Lunch, playtime and extra-curricular activities also contribute to our children's SMSC development.

Special opportunities include:

- Educational trips such as visits to the William Morris gallery, Imperial War Museum
- School Plays and Concerts
- School Events such as the Dance Display, the School Fete and Book Week
- School Council and Food Council
- Visits to the school by the Anti-Bullying Drama Workshop company, and representatives from charities
- Visitors in assembly, including representatives from different faiths
- Assemblies taken by pupils, covering topics such as recycling and looking after the environment
- Celebrating achievements of our pupils in and out of the classroom
- Merit badge and certificate to two members of each class weekly
- Behaviour awards
- Lunchtime awards
- Friendship awards

- Prefect, Games Captain and House Captain responsibilities
- Visits to the local library, the local old people's home and other links with the local community
- 'Crucial Crew' visits where children learn about the emergency services
- Charity events and links with the local charities e.g. Chigwell Riding Trust and international charities such as the Wynaud Trust in Zambia
- Special curriculum days in school
- Entering competitions such as Art, General Knowledge, Mental Maths, Poetry and Music
- Sports events such as Swimming Galas, Netball Tournaments, Football matches, Cross-Country events and Sports Day
- Outward Bound trips (day/2-night stay/4-night stay)
- Public events such as Prize Giving and Open Days
- The School Travel Plan

Spiritual Awareness and Development

Our pupils are given opportunities to learn about and learn from other religions in RE lessons. RE makes a distinctive and essential contribution to spiritual development. It promotes discussion and reflection on key questions of meaning and truth, such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, and beliefs about God. It considers how religious and other beliefs and concepts may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity. RE looks at how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God. It enables pupils to develop a sense of belonging, and consider their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.

Opportunities to develop their own spirituality through creativity in Art, Music, Poetry and Drama are provided. There is a programme of visits to places of worship such as to synagogues and churches.

Our programme of Assemblies each week takes a coordinated approach to exploring particular themes and topics of a religious and moral nature. There is an emphasis on involving pupils and members of staff in leading assemblies. Visiting speakers from local churches and faith representatives are a regular feature. Festivals of various faiths are included. There is a Harvest Festival Service and traditional Carol Service in the parish church.

We aim to be a 'giving school'. The School has a programme of activities to fundraise for its annual and nominated charities for the year. All pupils are encouraged to get involved.

The study of science offers children many opportunities to examine the fundamental questions of life, for example, the evolution of living things and how the world was created. Through many of the amazing processes that affect living things, children develop a sense of awe and wonder regarding the nature of the world.

Music contributes to spiritual development through emotion, creativity, imagination, silence, reflection and an understanding that music has the power to touch humankind at a very deep level.

Moral Awareness and Development

Through our consideration of moral issues in Assemblies, PSHE, and RE our pupils are able to consider and make informed decisions about moral and ethical issues without fear of prejudice. Lively discussion and debate is encouraged in lessons enabling our pupils to express their own values and to show respect for those of others. We have a clear moral code as a basis for good behaviour, respect of others, which is promoted throughout the school.

RE provides opportunities to promote moral development through engaging in such issues as truth, justice and trust. It explores the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, guidance from religious leaders and sacred texts.

High standards of manners and courtesy are expected and pupils are corrected as necessary. Through our family atmosphere older pupils are encouraged to help younger pupils. Where problems arise, circle time is used effectively.

Our pupils are encouraged to show respect for the laws of the land. We have good relations with our community police officers and they come to our assemblies periodically throughout the year.

Social Awareness and Development

The growth of the individual right through from Lower Kindergarten to age 11 is paramount. We provide a very high adult-pupil relationship so that all our pupils can receive individual attention and their needs can be met. We foster good relations between teachers and their pupils as well as pupil to pupil. Pupils are taught PSHE by their class teachers.

There are many opportunities for our pupils to develop socially in the classroom: through pair work, group work, team work; through discussion and debate, being able to ask any question without being ridiculed; working independently; through teamwork in sport, where pupils of differing ages and gender often play in school teams together. Opportunities to compete in local and national sporting activities are high on our agenda.

We provide many leadership opportunities through the Prefect System. Pupils are used to guide prospective and new pupils and their families around the school, particularly at our Open Morning events, and to make them feel part of the family. The House system exists to enable pupils to work, compete and play together. The reward and behaviour systems are integral to the House System. Weekly celebratory assemblies with the awarding of certificates create opportunities to develop self-esteem. The annual Prize Giving is a prestigious occasion in the school calendar.

We have a School Travel Plan to encourage pupils to travel to school safely. Through our close liaison with Essex County Council we have a lockable bike shed for some 6 bikes/scooter and encourage pupils to attend bicycle safety sessions if they wish to ride to school.

The student voice is important. There is a School Council and Food Council that give pupils the opportunity to represent their year group and to work together. The School Council discusses pupils' concerns and suggestions and makes recommendations. They learn how to chair and participate in a formal meeting, plan agendas and take minutes. They also involve their classmates by reporting back and taking their peer group's point of view to the Council. The Chairperson and Secretary attend periodic meetings with the Headmistress.

There are many extra-curricular opportunities available for pupils to develop their interests, such as Choirs, Orchestra, Speech and Drama, Languages, Karate and sports. Pupils are encouraged to show their talents by entering a variety of national competitions. These include: Art, Science and Story Writing. Pupils are given the opportunity of instrumental lessons and to also take the LAMDA awards, developing their confidence in public speaking.

There are a wide range of educational visits, for example to the fire-station, farms, historical sites, religious buildings, Epping Forest, theatres, galleries and overseas trips.

There is a programme within school for pupils identified as Gifted and Talented.

RE contributes to social development through considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns, and by investigating social issues from religious perspectives. RE provides opportunities for pupils to articulate their own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.

The teaching of PE offers opportunities to support the social development of our children through the way we expect them to work with each other in lessons. Grouping allows children to work together and give them the chance to discuss their ideas and performance. Their work in general enables them to develop respect for other children's levels of ability and encourages them to cooperate across a range of activities and experiences. Children learn to respect and work with each other and develop a better understanding of themselves and of each other.

Cultural Awareness and Development

We celebrate the range of cultures represented within the school and recognise the contributions made by each one of them. Pupils are encouraged to share their experiences, which enables the whole school community to have a genuine appreciation for each other.

RE provides opportunities to promote cultural development through enabling pupils to engage with people, literature, arts and resources from differing cultures. It considers the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to and are influenced by cultural identity and practices. Effective RE promotes harmony between people of different religions and beliefs, and respect for all, by combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how co-operation between people of different religions and beliefs can support the pursuit of the common good.

Through languages we explore a cultural perspective beyond our own community, promoting curiosity about the wider world and the respect for and understanding of other cultures and multilingualism. We highlight an awareness of the similarities and differences in lifestyle and culture of not only France, but other countries too, developing opportunities to challenge prejudice and stereotype. We share information about our cultural and linguistic backgrounds too, incorporating ideas into lessons where appropriate. We place great importance on developing our pupils' language skills through Modern Foreign Languages. French is taught from Transition and a language day is often included as a special event.

To enrich the curriculum, there are visits to museums, art galleries, places of worship and concerts. Overseas trips include, for example, day trips to France.

In Art, different cultures are explored; here they can develop an understanding of different times and cultures through their work on famous artists, designers and craftspeople. Cultural development is gained through access to World music, and an understanding of the categories within Western music, including Classical, Jazz and Popular Music.

We recognise the challenges of the cultures in which our young pupils are growing up and we raise awareness of various issues such as radicalisation, cyberbullying and mental health.

Individual pupils' gifts and talents are recognised and opportunities provided to develop them, including participation in assemblies with speaking and listening activities, playing instruments, singing and writing for the School Newsletter.

The study of literature in English offers wide opportunities for SMSC development. Children are encouraged to appreciate the beauty of language and poetry and to think about the characters of people in the stories. They are given many opportunities to be creative, to listen to each other and to discuss and put forward their own points of view.

Science raises many social and cultural questions. Children have the opportunity to discuss issues such as the effects of smoking and the moral issues that surround this. They are encouraged to reflect on the way people treat the planet and how science can contribute to the way we use the earth's resources. Science teaches why people are different and by developing children's understanding of physical and environmental factors, it promotes respect for other people.

Through History pupils learn appreciation and understanding of different cultures. They learn how knowledge of what has happened in the past affects society and the world today.

Fundamental British Values

The school actively promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

We aim to educate our pupils to have:

- An understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process
- An appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their well-being and safety
- An understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence
- An understanding that the freedom to hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law
- An acceptance that people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour
- An understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

Some of the ways in which we teach our children about these values is by:

- including in suitable parts of the curriculum, as appropriate for the age of pupils, material on the strengths, advantages and disadvantages of democracy, and how democracy and the law works in Britain, in contrast to other forms of government in other countries
- ensuring that all pupils within the school have a voice that is listened to, and demonstrate how democracy works by actively promoting democratic processes such as a school council whose members are voted for by the pupils
- using opportunities such as general or local elections to hold mock elections to promote fundamental British values and provide pupils with the opportunity to learn how to argue and defend points of view
- using teaching resources from a wide variety of sources to help pupils understand a range of faiths
- considering the role of extra-curricular activities in promoting fundamental British values.

Recent changes to SMSC at Oaklands School

During the academic year 2014-2015 we reviewed our SMSC provision in line with the new regulations. The key changes require the promotion of the British values of:

- Democracy
- The rule of law
- Individual liberty
- Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Democracy

Our school is a democracy for all its stakeholders. All staff have a voice and, most importantly, so do the children. The voices of children are heard through our School Council, Food Council and Pupil questionnaires. Elections for School Council and Food Council representatives and for senior pupil positions of responsibility are carried out in each class. Children are always able to voice their opinions and we foster an environment where children are safe to disagree with each other. All staff have an open door policy to share their views and opinions. Our large support and inclusion teams ensure that this can happen.

Democracy is currently shown by:

- the choosing of Year 6 pupils for positions of responsibility
- holding mock elections
- pupil questionnaires.

Future plans include visiting parliament and inviting our local MP to visit. In the Early Years simple stories are told that demonstrate democracy.

The rule of law

Rules are important in our school and we all have shared responsibility for them. Whether they be class rules, school rules, or rules/laws of the world they are consistently reinforced. An understanding of rules and the importance of them is part of our ethos. We refer to them daily as well as in specific school assemblies. Pupils are taught the value and reasons behind rules and laws; it is important for us that all children realise the value of them to keep us safe. Visits from authorities such as the Police; Fire Service; local counsellors and local community support officers are regular parts of our schools lives and help reinforce our high expectations of behaviour both inside and outside of school.

Individual liberty

Our pupils are actively encouraged to take risks and make choices. They do this knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment where they are free to make mistakes. As a school we provide boundaries for young pupils to enable them to make choices safely, they are encouraged to know, understand and exercise their rights and personal freedoms. Challenge and choice are key parts of all our lessons, we encourage pupils and staff to 'take a risk' in their learning in a safe, managed environment. We also offer numerous extra-curricular clubs and opportunities. Pupils are given the freedom to make choices at every step of their school lives with us, knowing that our schools are safe places to explore individual choice and liberty.

Individual liberty is reflected in activities such as:

- Crucial Crew
- Assemblies
- PSHE lessons
- sex education
- e-safety.

In the Early Years much emphasis is placed on being healthy and staying safe. Childline posters are on display and pupils are encouraged to approach any member of staff if they wish to discuss any personal issues. The school has two Designated Safeguarding Officers: the Headmistress and the Head of Early Years.

Mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs

Our Ethos and Visions are at the core of how we educate the children. We believe these to be key to developing mature and responsible young people. They are referred to in all lessons and displayed around the school. The children are constantly reminded of these values through our Behaviour Policy, our assemblies and our PSHE programme. The school promotes respect for others, including for children, parents and staff.

We believe that children should have a clear understanding of their place in the culturally diverse society in which we live, with opportunities to experience diversity. We work closely with members of different faiths and religions who share their knowledge to enhance learning and acceptance within our schools. We regularly go on trips to various places of worship, such as to synagogues or churches. In addition to this our RE and PSHE, lessons foster an ethos of acceptance, of working with others and of respecting others opinions despite our own situations or beliefs. Whilst actively promoting British Values we will also ensure that we shall challenge any pupils, staff or parents if expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British Values, including 'extremist' views.

Political Indoctrination

We are proud of our diverse community and aim to incorporate a multitude of different faiths and beliefs into our education. Our curriculum is balanced and aims to reflect the nature of the world in which we live. For example, if marriage were to be discussed in lessons, we would expect our teachers to reflect the fact that marriage for same sex couples is part of the law of this country even if they are not required to endorse it.

We recognise that Article 9 of the European Convention on Human Rights guarantees freedom of thought, conscience and religion, and that religion or belief is a protected characteristic under the Equality Act 2010.

Our teachers aim to ensure that their conduct recognises their responsibilities under those duties to others. They are expected to respect the rights of others and to respect those with different beliefs; expressing a view in an unprofessional way that involves singling out pupils on grounds of sexuality, or presenting extreme views without balance on a topic such as marriage for same sex couples, would be considered inappropriate.

Other related policies and documents:

Safeguarding Children; Every Child Matters; The School Aims; Sex Education Policy; Equal Opportunities Policy; PSHE Handbook and schemes of work.