

Finton House School
Moral, Social and Spiritual Development Policy

This policy is provided to all staff in the Staff Handbook, is available from the school office and is kept in the Library.

Moral Development

Aspects of children's moral development that we encourage:

We encourage honesty, good manners, kindness, generosity, tolerance, helpfulness and a caring attitude. We encourage good citizenship and care of the environment, i.e. not to drop litter nor pollute the atmosphere; children are taught to treat others as they would like to be treated themselves and they are encouraged to know the difference between right and wrong. Children are taught not to take other people's possessions; to be courteous to others and to respect them. Good behaviour is praised; moral values and issues are discussed with the children.

Finton House is a non-denominational school but we encourage a respect for and interest in all religions.

Most assemblies are either spiritual or moralistic. Religious Education combines spiritual with moral teaching. We have fund-raising events when the children concentrate on thinking about and helping those less fortunate than themselves. In science, environmental topics are studied, focusing on the need to care for our planet.

Spiritual Development

1. Definitions.

Spiritual development is a growing awareness that

"There are more things in heaven and earth, Horatio than are dreamt of in your philosophy."

This includes a sense of wonder at creation, beauty, poetry, music - but is not necessarily religious. Spirituality means an interest in immaterial things, ideas of goodness, love. Religion is spirituality allied to a belief in God, whether this be the religion of Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Christianity or any other theology.

To quote the OFSTED Discussion Paper (Feb 1994) on the subject, the Framework for Inspection (revised Autumn 1993 edition) describes the scope of spiritual development as follows:

"Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal existence which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection on life and intimations of an enduring reality. "Spiritual" is not synonymous with "religious"; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupil's spiritual development."

Spiritual development, then, is concerned with how an individual acquires personal beliefs and values, especially on questions about religion, whether life has a purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour - questions which are " at the heart and root of existence", it is therefore also about what a school provides - through its curriculum, through collective worship, through its ethos and climate - to help individuals to make sense of these questions, and about what it does to help form pupil's response to life and to various forms of experience, or even to questions about the universe.

2. What sort of "spiritual" aspects of life ought we to be encouraging the children to be thinking about?

We should try to instil in the children knowledge of right and wrong, truth and values which are not material. Religious Education teaching is in the main Christian but also incorporates the religions represented in the community - Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism, Hinduism. Stories from the Old and New Testament are taught - but with no denominational slant. Much great Art and Music is based on the Bible and if for no other reason the children should be conversant with Bible stories. Assemblies often have religious content and the great Christian and other religious festivals should be observed.

Harvest
Diwali
Ramadam
Christmas
Easter
Hannukah....etc

Guest speakers from other faiths are invited to give assemblies.

Ways of Encouraging Integration

In schools with a higher proportion of children of different races, children of a particular race often have a 'best friend' of the same race and rarely form friendships with children of other races. This is not the case at Finton House as there are sadly so few children of different races.

If, as more children of other races entered the school, it became a problem that children of a particular race felt the need to stick together then more group work encouraging children of mixed races to work and carry out activities together could be introduced or developed, friendships possibly resulting. Friendships, however, cannot be forced and it is natural to choose friends with whom we have a lot in common.

THE WAY FORWARD: WAYS OF INCREASING CHILDREN'S KNOWLEDGE AND UNDERSTANDING OF OTHER RACES

Children from all races are given the opportunity to share their experiences of religious and cultural practices and traditions etc in class and the Festivals of different religions are explored in RE and are, where appropriate, the theme of an assembly. This could perhaps be developed, however, with more assemblies and displays around the school, making children more aware of different countries around the world and their customs, language, diet and religions.

There are many opportunities in our teaching that could perhaps break down racial stereotypes - particularly through Humanities, Topic, PHSCE, English, Art and Music, Drama and Dance. The possibility of having termly cross-curricular themes throughout the school could perhaps be explored.

Nearly all new books on the market are now multicultural. It is necessary to continuously take stock of the existing books in the school to make sure that they do not reinforce racial stereotypes. More books, particularly reading books, reflecting today's multicultural society could be introduced.

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