

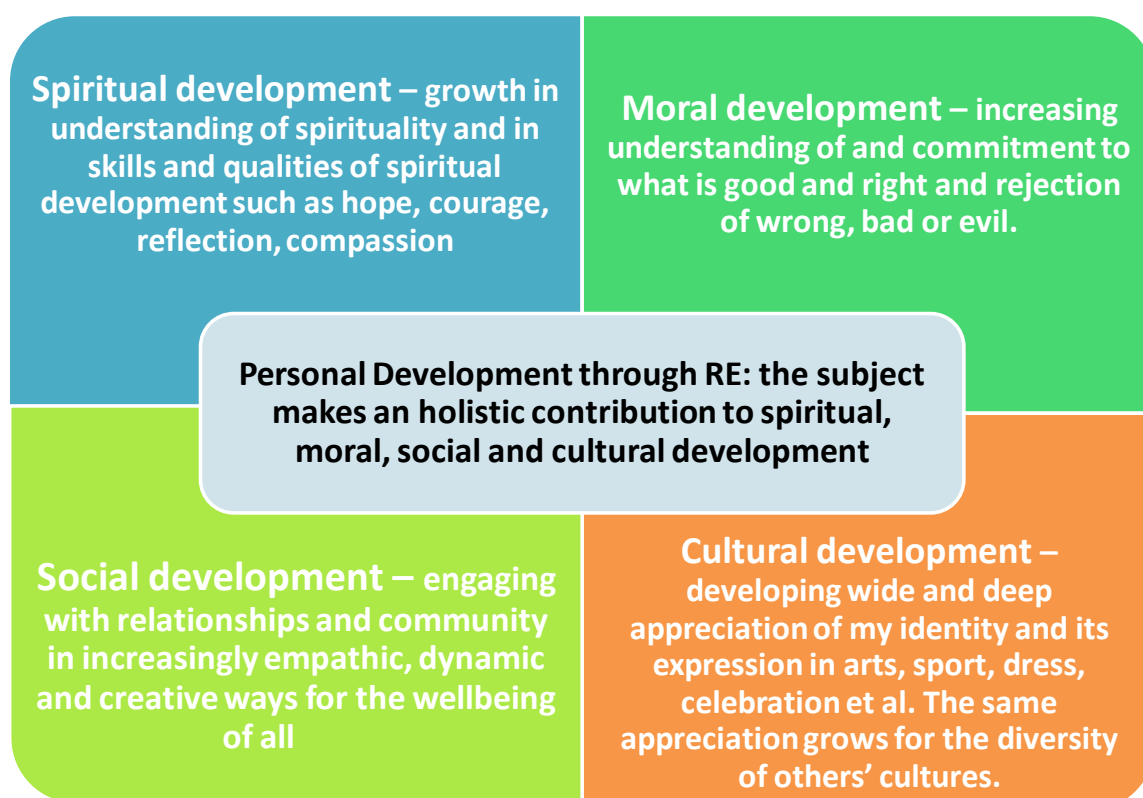
Briefing from RE Today – October 2014.

Responding to debates about British Values

- RE Today is considering how SACREs can help schools deal with new inspection requirements around British values and actively promoting tolerance and respect
- We are encouraging SACREs to build responses to these issues into development planning for the next year, by planning for guidance, supportive resources and training / professional development for teachers
- SACREs should publicise our work in this area to make sure schools know the help available, SLTs recognise RE's key contribution and local media feature 'good news' stories about, for example, school anti-racist work and 'engaging with Islam' projects.

This short paper begins by exploring the area of SMSC and RE, under which the government has placed its current interest in British values. Pages 5-7 comment on the latest guidance from DfE. Page 8 relates RE to British values and could form a basis for further work to help teachers of RE.

RE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: SMSCD



Education is for the whole child, not just the intellect.

What we now call 'SMSCD' has always been part of education. The idea of developing not just academic and practical skills in the upcoming generation but self-knowledge, moral courage, a capacity for imaginative sympathy for others and so on has long been a desired outcome of education. Over the decades in England this has been connected with values clarification, moral instruction, Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL), the 'Every Child Matters' agenda and Community Cohesion and respect for all. All these terms refer to the sort of person an education system hopes to create. The latest entrant in the keywords race is 'British Values.'

When it comes to school inspection, SMSCD is the long standing and still current expression of these aspects of education. The September 2014 Ofsted Framework, developed in the light of last summer's 'Trojan Horse' shows the government's new intent.

Quotations:

7: Inspectors are required to report on the quality of education provided in the school and must, in particular, cover:

- *the achievement of pupils at the school*
- *the quality of teaching in the school*
- *the behaviour and safety of pupils at the school*
- *the quality of leadership in, and management of, the school.*

8: When reporting, inspectors must also consider:

- *the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school*
- *the extent to which the education provided by the school meets the needs of the range of pupils at the school, and in particular the needs of disabled pupils and those who have special educational needs.*

(Ofsted, the Framework for School Inspection, September 2014, p. 5)

Inspectors must consider a schools' SMSC provision when making an overall judgment. The 2014 framework gives SMSC a higher priority than previous inspection regimes. For example, inspectors must take into account how well SMSC is developed in children by teachers, subject departments, school leaders and in the school's whole ethos when making their overall judgment.

Religious Education: a key contributor, but not the sole vehicle for SMSCD

In terms of RE, there are two specific points to note. Firstly, although RE does make an enormous contribution to SMSC development it is a *whole school* responsibility. RE lessons should support the school's overall ethos, they may offer more in the way of cultural or moral education than other subjects and RE teachers may enjoy working on SMSC-related projects with other colleagues, but every subject and every teacher including assemblies and whole school events have a duty to promote children's SMSC development. Secondly the increased priority of SMSC should not mean more work for the average RE teacher. RE lesson content, skills and resources are already rich in SMSC. You may conduct a quick audit to gain an overview of your SMSC provision, or when creating a new display you may decide to give it an SMSC focus, but you should not have to produce more than the high quality RE you already produce.

In practice: suggestions for ways for ward

The next two pages contain suggestions and ideas for each category of SMSC. Use them as a checklist for an audit, to start a discussion in a staff meeting, or when selling a new RE project to your SLT. Many activities in your classroom will meet more than one of these criteria. You should not be re-inventing the wheel, but realising how much SMSC you already provide.

Activities for Spiritual Development in RE

The 'spiritual' should not be confused with 'religious'. Spiritual development refers to the aspects of the child's spirit which are enhanced by school life and learning, and may describe the 'spirit' of determination, sharing or open-mindedness. Spiritual development describes the ideal spirit of the school. RE can support this by;

- **Self-awareness:** offering opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own views and how they have been formed, as well as the views of others;
- **Curiosity:** encouraging pupils' capacity for critical questioning, such as by keeping big questions in a 'question box' or as part of a wall display, and allowing time and space where these questions can be addressed to show that they are important;
- **Collaboration:** utilising lesson techniques which engender group collaboration and communication such as Community of Enquiry/ P4C, circle time, debates, Socratic Circles or group investigations;
- **Reflection:** providing a space to reflect on pupils' own values and views, as well as those of others, and to consider the impact of these values;
- **Resilience:** promoting a spirit of open enquiry into emotive or complicated questions, in order to learn how to cope with difficult ideas when they arise in the future;
- **Response:** exploring ways in which pupils can express their responses to demanding or controversial issues;
- **Values:** promoting an ethos of fairness and mutual respect in the classroom and compassion and generosity in pupils.

Activities for Moral Development in RE

Moral development is about learning to navigate the fact of moral diversity in the world as much as exploring and strengthening pupil's own moral outlook. RE is extremely well-suited to explore social and personal morality in three main ways;

- 1) **Moral diversity:** activities in RE lessons should help pupils feel confident when taking part in debates about moral issues. Debates and discussions should prepare pupils for the fact that there will always be disagreement on matters of morality and their right of expression is balanced by a responsibility to listen to the views of others;

In the classroom: choose age-appropriate topics which allow exploration of different moral outlooks such as religious stories about right and wrong, codes for living, treatment of animals and the environment, gender roles in religion, religious views of homosexuality, and so on.
- 2) **Value of others:** in exploring the views of others, young people are well-prepared in RE to appreciate the uniqueness of all humans and their moral value, and to act in the world and towards others accordingly.

In the classroom: offer activities which enable team-work and trust and require empathy. Welcome speakers or visit places of worship to learn from people of different backgrounds, explore case studies centring on forgiveness, generosity and other beneficial social moral values, use puppets, toys or persona dolls with younger children to develop their sense of moral connection with others.
- 3) **Moral character development:** RE offers a safe space where pupils can learn from their mistakes, continue to strive after setbacks, take the initiative, act responsibly and demonstrate resilience.

In the classroom: encourage your pupils to take part in whole-school endeavours to enlarge their characters. Suggest participation on the school council or the school play, in sport, music and debates, to contribute to charity events or take part in mentoring or 'buddy' schemes.

Activities for Social Development in RE

Social development refers to the ways young people are shaped in schools with an eye on the sort of society we wish to create in the future. Developing children and young people socially means giving them the opportunities to explore and understand social situations and contexts they may encounter in school or outside. In the RE classroom, such social situations may include;

- **Shared values:** opportunities to consider values which are or should be part of society, such as those associated with right and wrong, treatment of others or diversity;
- **Idealised concepts:** topics which require reflection on the abstract concepts our society is built on, and specific examples of how they affect our common life, such as justice, fairness, honesty and truth;
- **Moral sources;** a chance to reflect on *where* ideas about how we should behave come from, whether religious or non-religious, in order to more fully understand social and behavioural norms;
- **Influences;** opportunities to explore and reflect on the great influence on individuals of family, friends and the media, in order to understand how our behaviour is affected;
- **Social insight:** a chance to acquire insight into significant social and political issues which affect individuals, groups and the nation;
- **Role models:** teachers should model the sort of behaviour we expect of our children and young people;
- **Experiential learning:** pupils should have opportunities to embody for themselves expected behavioural and social norms, whether through class discussions, group work and ongoing behaviour expectations, or through special events such as school visits or drama workshops.

Activities for Cultural Development in RE

There are two meanings associated with 'cultural' development and RE embodies both of them. Firstly the term refers to the pupils' own home culture and background, whether religious or not, and secondly the term describes our national culture. Schooling should prepare all young people to participate in Britain's wider cultural life, whatever their own background. Cultural development could be evident in RE in two major ways;

- 1) **Own culture:** RE is the perfect subject in which to explore Britain's rich diversity of religious, ethnic and geographical cultures. Although all children share Britain's common life, cultural diversity is part of that life and no child should feel their cultural background is a barrier to participation. Some common RE activities which promote children's understanding of communities and cultural groups, including their own:
 - In the classroom:** explore food, festivals, music, art, architecture and other forms of cultural expression. Visit areas with a strong cultural flavour to observe shops, cafes, people and houses. Some parents may be willing to come and talk about their home culture, or send personal artefacts to school with their children such as books, photos or clothes. Students who belong to a particular cultural group should be encouraged to share their experiences in class discussion, give a talk or even an assembly.
- 2) **Wider culture:** schooling is a preparation for adult life in terms of behaviour and expectations as well as in achieving qualifications. This wider cultural education prepares children for adulthood.
 - In the classroom:** cultural education is found whenever children make sense of the world around them and explore why we act the way we do. Provide opportunities for participation in classroom and whole-school events, in working with others and encountering difficulties and be open about the sorts of behaviours which are expected.

From the DfE:

The Department for Education's consultation on actively promoting British values (June-August 2014) noted that schools, including academies and free schools, are already required to encourage pupils to respect British values through the Independent School Standards. The DfE wanted to strengthen this standard further, and provide a stronger basis for swift intervention in schools which are not actively promoting British values. The September OFSTED criteria do this for all schools.

A Department for Education spokesperson said:

"Keeping our children safe and ensuring schools prepare them for life in modern Britain could not be more important. This change is an important step towards ensuring we have a strong legal basis for intervening in those schools where this is an issue.

The vast majority of schools already promote British values. This is about making sure we have the tools we need to intervene if children are being let down.

The government set out its definition of British values in the 2011 Prevent Strategy - values of:

- Democracy
- the rule of law
- individual liberty
- tolerance
- mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs

This definition remains the same in the new standards.

These strengthened regulations take effect in September 2014, and will sit alongside the requirements of the Equalities Act, which also apply to all types of school.

Schools will be expected to focus on, and be able to show how their work with pupils is effective in, embedding fundamental British values. 'Actively promoting' also means challenging pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British values.

Action will also be taken against schools where, for example, girls are disadvantaged on the grounds of their gender - or where prejudice against those of other faiths is encouraged or not adequately challenged."

The consultation and new regulations has these intentions:

- extremism should not form part of the curriculum or teaching and that students are encouraged to respect other people and no student is discriminated against contrary to the Equality Act 2010
- the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) standard will be strengthened so that proprietors must actively promote the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs, and encourage students to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010
- the welfare, health and safety standard will be strengthened by requiring schools to not only draw up relevant policies but to also implement them effectively, and to have effective risk assessments in place to safeguard and promote students' welfare.

The Department for Education's governors' handbook (11.9.14) reflects the new advice and highlights governors' role in setting and securing an appropriate ethos, and monitoring practice in the school.

Summary of changes – September 2014 edition		
Reference Number		
Section of Handbook	Details of change	
Section 1 - The role of governing bodies		
1	<u>1.3</u>	A more detailed explanation of what it means for governors to set and safeguard an appropriate ethos for the school in keeping with fundamental British values.
6	<u>1.7.1</u>	Updated information on Ofsted’s inspection criteria for effective governance.
Section 3 – Education and Inspection		
17	<u>3.1</u>	Updated text on National Curriculum.
18	<u>3.1.2</u>	Updated text on Religious Education.
19	<u>3.1.3</u>	Updated text on Collective worship.

Extracts:

3.1.2 Religious education

All state-funded schools must teach religious education. Maintained schools without a religious character should follow the syllabus agreed by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE).

Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.

Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.

Religious education is also compulsory in faith and non-faith academies and free schools as set out in their funding agreements.

1.3 British Values

Every effort should be made to ensure the school's ethos promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs; and encourage students to respect other people, with particular regard to the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010. The governing body should ensure that this ethos is reflected and implemented effectively in school policy and practice and that there are effective risk assessments in place to safeguard and promote students' welfare. The Department has produced advice for maintained schools on the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, which includes references to promoting British Values.

While it is essential to build a strong and cohesive non-executive team, the most robust governing bodies welcome and thrive on a having sufficiently diverse range of viewpoints such that open debate leads to good decisions in the interests of the whole school community. Notwithstanding the role of foundation governors in a faith-designated school, governing bodies should be alert to the risk of becoming dominated by one particular mind-set or strand of opinion, whether related to faith or otherwise.

Governing bodies are able to suspend a governor for acting in a way that is contrary to the ethos of the school. This would include undermining fundamental British values or acting with extremist intent.

Governing bodies, and other appointing bodies, should move to suspend and potentially remove from office any governor acting in this manner.

From the DfE Consultation: (final results not yet available)

3.2.2 PART 2 - Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of students

The proposed changes to Part 2 are aimed at making it clear to independent schools that the proprietor must actively promote the fundamental British values that are set out in section 1.1(c) above and that schools must actively promote the specified principles, including furthering tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions and encouraging respect for democracy. A minimum approach, for example putting up posters on a notice board and organising an occasional visit to places of worship would fall short of 'actively promoting'.

Schools will be expected to focus on, and be able to show how their work with pupils is effective in embedding fundamental British values. 'Actively promote' also means challenging pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British values.

The new requirement for schools to actively promote principles which encourage respect for persons with protected characteristics (as set out in the Equality Act 2010) is intended to allow the Secretary of State to take regulatory action in various situations: for example where girls are disadvantaged on the grounds of their gender; failure to address homophobia; or where prejudice against those of other faiths is encouraged or not adequately challenged by the school.

We intend to update and reissue the current guidance on this standard to reflect these changes.

Draft Ideas: What it might all mean for practice?

British values

School inspection, from September 2014, explores and judges the contribution schools make to actively promoting British values.

RE makes a key educational contribution to pupils' explorations of British values

Excellent Teaching of Religious Education will enable pupils to learn to think for themselves about British values.

Questions about whether social and moral values are best described as 'British values' or seen as more universal human values will continue to be debated, but for the purposes of teachers of RE, the subject offers opportunities to build an accurate knowledge base about religions and beliefs in relation to values. This in turn supports children and young people so that they are able to move beyond attitudes of tolerance towards increasing respect, so that they can celebrate diversity.

Values education and moral development are a part of a school's holistic mission to contribute to the wellbeing of each pupil and of all people within our communities. The RE curriculum focuses learning in some of these areas, but pupils' moral development is a whole school issue.

- **Mutual Tolerance.** Schools do not accept intolerant attitudes to members of the community: attitudes which reject other people on the basis of race, faith, gender, sexual orientation or age are rightly challenged. A baseline for a fair community is that each person's right to 'be themselves' is to be accepted by all. Tolerance may not be enough: RE can challenge children and young people to be increasingly respectful and to celebrate diversity, but tolerance is a starting point. It is much better than intolerance.
- **Respectful attitudes.** In the RE curriculum attention focuses on developing mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs, promoting an understanding of what a society gains from diversity. Pupils will learn about diversity in religions and worldviews, and will be challenged to respect other persons who see the world differently to themselves. Recognition and celebration of human diversity in many forms can flourish where pupils understand different faiths and beliefs, and are challenged to be broad minded and open hearted.
- **Democracy.** In RE pupils learn the significance of each person's ideas and experiences through methods of discussion. In debating the fundamental questions of life, pupils learn to respect a range of perspectives. This contributes to learning about democracy, examining the idea that we all share a responsibility to use our voice and influence for the wellbeing of others.
- **The Rule of Law:** In RE pupils examine different examples of codes for human life, including commandments, rules or precepts offered by different religious communities. They learn to appreciate how individuals choose between good and evil, right and wrong, and they learn to apply these ideas to their own communities. They learn that fairness requires that the law apply equally to all, irrespective – for example - of a person's status or wealth.
- **Individual liberty.** In RE, pupils consider questions about identity, belonging and diversity, learning what it means to live a life free from constraints. They study examples of pioneers of human freedom, including those from within different religions, so that they can examine tensions between the value of a stable society and the value of change for human development.