



SAINT NORBERT'S CATHOLIC VOLUNTARY ACADEMY

Mission Statement: To live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus.

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT POLICY

UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

As a Gold Rights Respecting School, we recognise our responsibility as 'duty bearers' to promote and protect the rights of every child. In particular, Article 14 affirms every child's right to freedom of thought, belief and religion.



As a Catholic school, we fulfil our distinctive mission by providing opportunities for all pupils to encounter Christ and to grow spiritually, while respecting the dignity, conscience and individual journey of every child. Pupils of all faiths and none are welcomed, valued and enabled to participate meaningfully in the spiritual life of our school.

Philosophy of Catholic Education

At Saint Norbert's, spiritual development is rooted in our Catholic understanding of the human person. Each person is created by God, made in His image and likeness, possesses an inherent and unique dignity, and is called to fullness of life in Christ.

Catholic education is therefore concerned with the formation of the whole person. Academic achievement is important, but education encompasses much more than the acquisition of knowledge and skills. We seek to nurture each child intellectually, morally, socially, emotionally and spiritually, helping them to recognise their gifts, develop their conscience, form loving relationships and discover their place and purpose within God's world.

Christ is at the heart of this educational mission. Our curriculum and the wider life of the school seek to enable pupils to encounter truth, beauty and goodness; to experience awe and wonder; to ask profound questions; and to recognise the presence and action of God within their lives and the world around them.

This understanding is expressed through our mission, "To live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus." Spiritual development is therefore not confined to Religious Education or Prayer and Liturgy. It permeates our curriculum, relationships, environment, decision-making and service to others, so that pupils are increasingly able to live out the Gospel and contribute to the Common Good.

Key References:

"Gravissimum Educationis"- Document of the second Vatican Council on Education. 1965

"The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School." The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, Rome. 1998

"The Future for Catholic Schools." Address by Cardinal Hume to Catholic Headteachers at London Colney, 19th of September 1988.

"Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School." Bishops' Conference of England and Wales, 1999.

Our Understanding of Spiritual Development

At Saint Norbert's, we recognise each child as a unique person created and loved by God. Our purpose is the integral development of the whole child: physical, intellectual, moral, social, emotional and spiritual.

Spiritual development gives meaning and coherence to these different dimensions of human flourishing. It enables pupils increasingly to understand who they are, why they are here, how they relate to others and the world around them, and their relationship with God.

We understand spiritual development particularly through four relationships:

- God – enabling pupils to encounter God, deepen their understanding of faith, experience prayer and liturgy, respond to Scripture and recognise God's presence within their lives.
- Self – helping pupils to recognise their unique dignity, gifts and talents; develop conscience and self-knowledge; reflect upon their experiences; ask profound questions; and begin to discern their vocation and purpose.
- Others – enabling pupils to recognise the dignity of every human person and develop relationships characterised by love, compassion, forgiveness, justice and service, increasingly recognising their responsibility to contribute to the Common Good.
- Creation – developing awe, wonder and gratitude for the beauty of God's creation and an understanding of our responsibility to care for our common home.

Our Lord Jesus Christ is our perfect model of what it means to live a fully human life. Through our mission, "To live, love and learn in the footprints of Jesus," we seek to enable every pupil to encounter Christ, grow in discipleship and increasingly become a missionary disciple through the way they live and serve others.

This spiritual formation is inclusive of every member of our community. While firmly rooted in the beliefs and teachings of the Catholic Church, we respect and value pupils and adults of other faiths and those of no faith.

How We Promote Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is the responsibility of the whole school community and is not confined to Religious Education or Prayer and Liturgy. We deliberately create opportunities for pupils to encounter, reflect, respond and act, enabling spirituality to become increasingly personal and meaningful.

We promote spiritual development through:

- high-quality Religious Education, rooted in the Religious Education Directory;
- a rich and progressive experience of Prayer and Liturgy, including Scripture, silence, contemplation, traditional and spontaneous prayer, music and reflection;
- opportunities for pupils progressively to plan, lead and evaluate prayer and liturgy;
- regular celebration of Mass, the sacraments and the Church's liturgical year;
- the witness and example of staff, clergy, our Leading Lights and other members of the school community;

- a curriculum which provides opportunities for awe, wonder, beauty, creativity, imagination, reflection and profound questioning;
- Catholic Social Teaching, through which pupils consider human dignity, justice, solidarity, stewardship and the Common Good;
- opportunities to put faith into action through service, charity, advocacy and care for others;
- our work as a Rights Respecting School, helping pupils to understand the dignity, rights and responsibilities of themselves and others;
- opportunities to encounter and respectfully understand other religions, cultures and worldviews;
- reflection upon pupils' own experiences, choices, relationships, gifts and aspirations;
- care for God's creation and opportunities to recognise their responsibility for our common home.

Through these experiences, pupils are supported to move increasingly from encounter to reflection, from reflection to response, and from response to action, so that spiritual development has a tangible impact upon the way they live.

Spiritual Development Across the Curriculum

Spiritual development is deliberately woven through the wider curriculum at Saint Norbert's. It is not treated as an additional subject or isolated activity; rather, teachers recognise and make purposeful use of the distinctive opportunities for spiritual development offered by different curriculum disciplines.

Across the curriculum, pupils are encouraged to encounter truth, beauty and goodness; experience awe and wonder; develop curiosity, creativity and imagination; ask profound questions; reflect upon human experience; consider ethical and moral issues; and explore their relationship with God, themselves, others and creation.

These opportunities will look different according to the distinctive nature of each subject. Spiritual development may arise through wonder at the natural world in science; appreciation of beauty and creativity in art and music; consideration of human experience and moral choices through literature and history; exploration of people, places and stewardship in geography; or perseverance, teamwork and recognition of human potential through physical education.

Teachers are expected to recognise and facilitate authentic opportunities for spiritual development without creating artificial or superficial links. Pupils are enabled to connect their learning with the bigger questions of meaning, purpose, dignity, responsibility and human flourishing.

Spiritual Development within the Wider Community

Spiritual development is strengthened through the partnership between school, home and parish. Families are warmly invited to participate in the prayer and liturgical life of the school, including Masses, class-led Celebrations of the Word and celebrations throughout the liturgical year.

Strong links with St Norbert's Church, Canon Matthew, the Trust Chaplain and the Diocese of Nottingham provide pupils with opportunities to experience the wider life and mission of the Church.

Pupils are encouraged to recognise that spiritual development leads to action. Through Catholic Social Teaching, charitable activity, care for creation, Rights Respecting work and engagement with local, national and global communities, pupils learn that following Christ calls them to love their neighbour, seek justice, serve others and contribute to the Common Good.

Parents and carers are supported in understanding and sharing in the spiritual formation of their children through regular communication, opportunities for prayer and worship, and participation in the Catholic life and mission of the school.

Leadership, Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher, responsible for Catholic Life and Mission, Religious Education and Prayer and Liturgy, provides strategic leadership for spiritual development. However, responsibility for nurturing pupils' spiritual development is shared by all members of the school community.

Spiritual development is evaluated as part of the school's wider monitoring of the quality and impact of its Catholic life, curriculum and provision for the whole child. It is not monitored as an isolated activity or through the collection of superficial evidence.

Monitoring may include:

- pupil voice and case sampling;
- observations of Prayer and Liturgy;
- curriculum and work scrutiny;
- learning walks and classroom visits;
- consideration of pupils' engagement, reflection and response;
- evidence of pupil leadership, service and action;
- evaluation of the impact of Catholic Social Teaching and Rights Respecting work;
- engagement with families, parish and the wider community;
- staff reflection and professional development;
- governor monitoring and challenge.

Spiritual development is considered through the school's five-thread whole-school monitoring model, enabling leaders to evaluate its quality and impact across the curriculum and wider life of the school:

- Curriculum Coherence and Progression – considering how deliberately and progressively opportunities for spiritual development are woven through the curriculum, while recognising the distinctive nature of individual subjects.
- Inclusion and Adaptive Teaching – considering whether all pupils, including those with SEND and those who are disadvantaged, are able to participate fully in and benefit from opportunities for spiritual development.
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment – considering how effectively teaching creates opportunities for reflection, questioning, awe and wonder, and enables pupils to make meaningful connections between their learning, faith and wider human experience.
- Pupil Experience, Voice and Personal Development – considering pupils' own understanding and experience of spiritual development, including their relationships with God, themselves, others and creation, and the extent to which this is reflected in their prayer, choices, relationships, leadership and actions.
- Strategic Leadership and Impact – drawing together evidence from across the other threads to evaluate how effectively the school's Catholic life, Whole-Child Curriculum and wider provision contribute to pupils' spiritual formation and to identify priorities for further development.

Evidence is gathered proportionately through pupil voice, case sampling, lesson visits, work scrutiny, observation and evaluation of Prayer and Liturgy, curriculum review and consideration of pupils' leadership, service and action. Findings are triangulated and used to inform school and Catholic School Inspection self-evaluation, staff formation, governor oversight and school improvement priorities.

