



Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

‘To educate young people to meet the challenges of life courageously, to use their talents to the full and to live the values of Christ’s Gospel’

The SMSC aspects of education concentrate on the development of the student as an individual and as a whole person, aiming to enrich and extend the human existence of each child in relation to the values, attitudes, beliefs and consequent behaviour acquired during school years.

Our Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development programme is concerned with the girls’ self-knowledge, esteem, confidence, awareness and understanding of spiritual and moral issues in relation to themselves and to the wider world. Our school Mission Statement lies at the heart of all that is involved in this and is the essence of what we are as a Jesus and Mary School.

As the girls develop as individuals and gain an enhanced understanding of themselves within their families, within the community of the school, within society and, as global citizens, in the world at large, we intend that by the time they leave us at eighteen they will be able to ‘meet the challenges of life courageously, use their talents to the full and live the values of Christ’s Gospel’

Spiritual Development:

Students' Spiritual Development involves the growth of their sense of self, their unique potential, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their will to achieve. As their curiosity about themselves and their place in the world increases, they try to answer for themselves some of life's fundamental questions. (Ultimate Questions) They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to foster their own inner lives and non-material wellbeing. As a Catholic school, we place special emphasis on the specific teaching and beliefs of the Catholic faith, both within the daily life of the school and through the curriculum.

Aims and Objectives for Spiritual Development:

- the ability to listen and be still
- the ability to transcend the mundane
- the ability to sense the sacred, the holy, the Divine
- the ability to reflect
- the ability to sense wonder and mystery in the world
- the ability to sense the special nature of human relationships

The Spiritual Development of students is shown by their:

- ability to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life and their interest in and respect for different people's faiths, feelings and values.
- sense of enjoyment and fascination in learning about themselves, others and the world around them.
- use of imagination and creativity in their learning willingness to reflect on their experiences.

In Thornton:

- Students are encouraged to express their feelings from the youngest age during RE and PHSEE lessons. They become aware of how their faith affects their daily living.
- The Catholic mission of the school is a priority and central to the life of the school. The leadership regularly monitors and evaluates the provision of Catholic education to ensure that the Mission Statement and Gospel values are the foundation in all that it does.
- The RE Curriculum allows for the teaching of other faiths. We also visit places of worship which belong to other faiths.
- The whole community is proud of our school and justifiably consider that all students who attend Thornton College are developed and nurtured in an ethos of working, living and believing in their daily lives.
- Parents are supportive of school and they appreciate that their views are sought and acted upon and that they are encouraged to play an active part in developing their child spiritually and morally. We hold regular Parent Prayer to which all are invited and parents also attend special Assemblies and other worship events.
- Teaching and collective worship provide daily opportunities for reflection.
- The curriculum motivates students, and encourages them to imagine and enquire.
- We ensure that all students at the school have a voice that is respected and valued. We encourage debate and sharing of views and experiences in a culture of respect.

Moral Development:

Students' Moral Development involves them in acquiring an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of moral conflict, a concern for others and the will to do what is right. They are able and willing to reflect on the consequences of their actions and learn how to forgive themselves and others. They develop the knowledge, skills and understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to make responsible moral decisions and act on them. The system of rules and codes of behaviour established in our school is an important early introduction to issues of fairness for all and to the consequences of operating outside the accepted rule system. Students are encouraged to understand the need for a common code and to follow it from conviction rather than because of consequences or sanctions. Moral Development, based on Christian principles, should enable students to become increasingly responsible for their own actions and behaviour.

Aims and Objectives for Moral Development:

- to understand the principles lying behind decisions and actions
- to be able to take moral decisions for themselves
- to assume moral responsibility through belief and conviction
- to be able to distinguish between right and wrong to tell the truth
- to respect the rights and property of others
- to keep a promise
- to take responsibility for one's own actions
- to exercise self-discipline
- to develop high expectations
- to develop positive attitudes
- to conform to rules and regulations for the good of all

The Moral Development of students is shown by their:

- ability to recognise the difference between right and wrong and to readily apply this understanding in their own lives, recognise legal boundaries and, in so doing, respect the civil and criminal law of England.
- understanding of the consequences of their behaviour and actions.
- interest in investigating and offering reasoned views about moral and ethical issues and ability to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others on these issues.

In Thornton:

- The students show tremendous respect for each other and respond to the high standard of care shown to them by adults by responding in a similar way to each other.
- Students are encouraged to work for the good of all around them – with the understanding that their conduct and decision making has an impact on people far beyond them. This is in line with our Catholic mission of The Common Good. They see their acts of charity and service as part of their responsibility to the rest of the school family, the Jesus and Mary family and the wider human family.
- Relationships in the school are outstanding with the older students genuinely knowing and supporting the younger ones. They assist with reading and several volunteer in the Prep. School.
- Behaviour for learning is consistently good.
- Students adhere to the school's behaviour expectations e.g., silence in Assemblies.
- Students can behave well without adult supervision, for example, in the library and in the Chapel at lunchtimes.
- Staff consistently follow agreed behaviour policy and procedures and use rewards/sanctions consistently.
- Students show a well-developed understanding of values such as tolerance and respect. This is evident in class discussion and debate, particularly in subjects like RE and PHSEE.

Social Development:

Students' Social Development involves them in acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national, and global), and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities, and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities. The school, but the classroom, provides a suitable environment for promoting Social Development within a Christian context. Students learn to lead, to use their initiative and work towards common goals. The ability to lead, to be led, to support others and to recognise the different skills of other members can be developed when students work co-operatively.

Aims and Objectives for Social Development:

- to relate positively to others
- to participate fully and take responsibility in the classroom and in the school
- to use appropriate behaviour, according to situations (including when online)
- to engage successfully in partnership with others
- to exercise personal responsibility and initiative
- to understand that, as individuals, we depend on family, school and society
- to share such emotions as love, joy, hope, anguish, fear and reverence
- to show sensitivity to the needs and feelings of others
- to work as part of a group
- to interact positively with others through contacts outside school, e.g. sporting activities, visits, church services, music festivals etc.
- to develop an understanding of citizenship and to experience being part of a whole caring community
- to show care and consideration for others by sharing and taking turns
- to realise there are things each person can do well

The Social Development of students is shown by their:

- use of a range of social skills in different contexts, for example working and socialising with other students, including those from different religious, ethnic, and socio-economic backgrounds.
- willingness to participate in a variety of communities and social settings, including by volunteering, cooperating well with others and being able to resolve conflicts effectively.

In Thornton:

- Students have very many opportunities to develop personal responsibility and engage in action to support those in need locally and in the wider world. (see charity and fundraising information)
- Individual students act as buddies for new students and ensure that they are included in class activities.
- Students hold positions of responsibility across the school including roles of student chaplains in our Chaplaincy/Ethos team, , buddies, Prefects, sports leaders, Eco Committee members, Equality and Diversity representatives, the School Council, Form and Vice Captains, library monitors and House Captains. As a result, students feel valued and included in the life of the school
- We are proud of the way students collaborate in their learning and play.
- Students' SMSC development equips them to be thoughtful, caring, and active citizens in school and in wider society. This is evidenced in their responses in RE, in their verbal responses in lessons and assemblies and in their proactive involvement in the many worthwhile activities and causes supported in school. (see Charity information)
- Within their Houses students initiate fund raising of their own choice and are encouraged to organise this themselves.
- Acceptance and engagement with the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs; they develop and demonstrate skills and attitudes that will allow them to participate fully in and contribute positively to life in modern Britain.

The government has set out its definition of British values in the Prevent Strategy. At Thornton College, these values are reinforced regularly and in the following ways:

Democracy:

- We listen to student and parent voice. Students are given opportunities to make decisions such as voting for school councillors and House Captains. They are also given a voice in School Council and have implemented new initiatives and strategies within the school. In this way, students can make choices over various areas of school life.

The Rule of Law: - See British Values Policy:

- We consistently reinforce our high expectations of students. Through our Mission Statement, Behaviour Policy, and regular verbal communication, they are taught the value and reasons behind our expectations (rules) that they are there to protect us, that everyone has a responsibility and that there are consequences when rules are broken.

Individual Liberty:

Within school, students are actively encouraged to make choices, knowing that they are in a safe and supportive environment. As a school we educate and provide boundaries for them to make choices safely, through our provision of a safe enabling environment and effective teaching. Students are encouraged to know, understand, and exercise their rights and personal freedoms. They can comment on their learning and respond to the teacher comments.

Mutual Respect:

- As a Catholic School, our school ethos and behaviour policy is based on the key attributes of Respect and Forgiveness, following the example of St Claudine, our foundress. Our Mission Statement is focused on respect and what it means to live that out on a daily basis.

Tolerance of those of Different Faiths and Beliefs:

- We aim to enhance students' understanding of different faiths and beliefs by participating in a range of assemblies throughout the year and incorporating other faiths as a central part of our RE curriculum and wider school events, this was evidenced recently by the 'This is Me Day' which enabled students the opportunity to share their religious and cultural backgrounds with one another.

Cultural Development

Students' cultural development involves them in acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. They acquire a respect for their own culture and that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and curiosity about differences. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture. In order to make provision for cultural development existing knowledge, interests and experiences are strengthened and then built upon further. In this way students gain a deeper understanding of their own culture and the factors which influence it and gain a broader understanding of other cultures and cultural influences. All areas of the curriculum can be used to promote and develop cultural awareness, although the arts, music, dance, drama and art are those used the more frequently.

Aims and Objectives for Cultural Development:

The aims and objectives of Cultural Development relate to differing aspects of the word 'culture.'

- to develop a sense of belonging to students' own culture and being proud of their cultural background
- to respond to cultural events
- to share diverse cultural experiences

- to respect diverse cultural traditions
- to understand codes of behaviour, fitting to cultural traditions
- to develop an awareness and recognition of what a 'cultured person' appreciates in terms of music, art, drama, literature etc
- to develop a love of learning

The Cultural Development of students is shown by their:

- understanding and appreciation of the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and those of others
- understanding and appreciation of the range of diverse cultures within school and further afield as an essential element of their preparation for life in modern Britain
- knowledge of Britain's democratic parliamentary system and its significant role in shaping our history and values, and in continuing to develop Britain
- willingness to participate in and respond positively to artistic, musical, religious, sporting and cultural opportunities
- interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept, respect and celebrate diversity, as shown by their tolerance and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities.

In Thornton:

- Within the curriculum in particular year groups, opportunities are provided for students to learn about democracy. Historically, year 9 students have visited the Houses of Parliament as part of a cultural trip to London
- Our local MP is invited into school and has previously participated in a debate with staff and students; this has been both in house and via zoom.
- Students can talk about their learning in various subjects. This is evidenced during lesson observations.
- Adults and students show values such as respect and tolerance in their day-to-day life at the school, both in classrooms and around the school. Our school Mission statement is based around key values such as respect. This is part of what it means to 'live the values of Christ's Gospel'
- At Thornton College we offer a rich curriculum for art, music, PE and drama provided by specialist trained teachers and instructors. Student engagement and enjoyment in these subjects is high.
- We offer a wide range of additional activities outside the classroom to enhance the student curriculum experience (see Co-curricular Activities information)