

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Policy

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Reviewed by: D.Speakman



The London Acorn School is a family school. All pupils are expected to behave as members of a large family school, and support one another, as well as the school's ethos. The intention is to engender harmonious, warm & trusting relationships throughout the school community so that children may experience high levels of self-esteem and confidence.

The Acorn System was created to enable the children to grow naturally. It is a school that recognises the great and significant contribution that each child makes to it.

An excellent standard of behaviour is expected at all times, which includes politeness and respect for all, both within the school and the greater community beyond the school gates. All pupils of the school are expected, on a day-to-day basis, to behave in an acceptable manner towards one another, their teachers, their parents and other members of society.

The school handbook, good behaviour policy and anti-bullying policies present a clear set of boundaries to be upheld by all families choosing the school. The intention of these is to create an atmosphere of peace and happiness, together with an enthusiasm for learning. In this way the children may enjoy a true childhood and this space provides a golden opportunity for self-development and learning.

We are committed to promoting the spiritual, moral and social well-being of our pupils, which will be intertwined with cultural awareness resulting in a deep appreciation of the value of humankind as a whole

Spiritual Development

Spiritual development is seen as the set of beliefs, values, attitudes, experiences and reflections by which each person gives direction, shape and meaning to their lives. The teachers impart to the children a sense of wonder, awe and reverence for natural phenomena and for other people, and this forms a basis in the young child for interest and respect, and the desire for knowledge in the adolescent. With such a foundation, young people can cultivate their own inner voice of conscience and sense of justice and responsibility.

The purpose of the school environment and curriculum is to nurture each child's potential and remove any obstacles to this goal so that they may be true to themselves and respect both their own and other's inner values.

School life contributes to their spiritual development through:

- Deep appreciation of music, art and literature which are intertwined throughout their school day.
- An appreciation of the beauty and rhythm of life through the seasonal festivals celebrated by the whole school.
- A developing sense of awe and wonder.
- Willingness to explore 'ultimate questions'.

Such spiritual growth presents a means with which to cope with the times of suffering that will arise in the natural course of life, thereby increasing their capacity for happiness.

An example of a school festival and its role in the acknowledgement of the value of each child:
The celebration of Whitsun in the Kindergarten



The children, parents and staff wear white clothing. An atmosphere of calm has been established in the Kindergarten and the children are quietly sitting in a circle around a large candle. From the candle long, slender, white ribbons radiate and at the end of each ribbon, in front of each child, is a small white candle in a clear glass holder. The parents quietly enter the class and sit on the floor behind their child. All sit within this beautiful environment, arms crossed at their hearts, hands on opposite shoulders. In silence the teacher lights the wick from the central candle, lights her candle and blows out the wick, she then recites a verse. She passes the wick clockwise to the first child who now lights the wick from the central candle and recites the verse, all quietly join with the child in their recitation. The child's parent(s) then recite the verse after which the child passes the wick to their neighbour.

Shine little candle, shine so bright. Shine little candle with all thy might. Make me brave and make me bold, Turn my words to living gold.

Once all have taken their turn the candle snuffer is passed round, all candles are extinguished and the children serve a piece of white iced cake to all. Finally the celebration is completed with the children's daily closing verse. Afterwards the parent's remark upon the significance of the occasion and their renewed appreciation of the value of speech, and have no doubt about the beneficial impact upon their children's lives.

Moral Development

Moral development is concerned with our knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Pupils are expected to care for one another in the school, particularly the younger children that they come into contact with. The expectation is that pupils should take an interest in everyone in the school, so that they will receive the same in return.

In their contacts with the pupils the enthusiasm of the teachers is a moral force which arises out of their own personal development and growth. Teachers are to be effective and influential not only in what they know but equally in who they are and what they stand for. Children are taught to form judgements on the basis of sound observation and to transfer these skills to the personal social & moral domain.

The school community as a whole reflects these principles, not as a belief system, but as a recognition of the inherent idealism in all people. The involvement, commitment and not least the work and sacrifice made by the parents, have an exemplary and motivating influence on the pupils. The children see how their whole family supports the school, which in turn supports them. They also see and participate in the activities of the whole school community as it interacts with and serves the greater community through charitable acts.

Moral development is encouraged through:

- A developing sense of self-discipline and responsibility for our own actions, as well as a growing appreciation of our responsibility to others.
- A developing awareness of the unique gifts of self and others, through encouragement of seeking the positive qualities of all in the classroom environment.
- An appreciation of the positive qualities of honesty, truth, kindness and generosity.
- Developing a healthy feeling of self-worth that naturally moves the individual away from arrogance and prejudice.



Social Development

Social development is essentially concerned with acquiring the skills and personal qualities necessary to both live within and contribute effectively to the well-being of the community. Such development may be established within the safe family atmosphere of the school community and then taken out into the greater community through school events, outings and charitable acts.

As the children develop, they become aware of their own feelings and wishes, but also are given opportunities to consider the feelings and wishes of others. They come to see others as being just like themselves, and to consider them in the same way that they would consider themselves.

In a non-competitive environment the children are encouraged to take pride in their work and achieve their highest standards. Pupils are also encouraged to evaluate their own and fellow pupils' achievements in an objective, though positive and constructive way. Seeking the positive qualities in others makes a valuable contribution to social harmony.

The benefits of team work as a part of problem solving are discovered throughout the curriculum, including outdoor activities, artistic, musical and practical projects. Through such activities we learn to empathise with others and to recognise the necessity for mutual support in all realms of life. Thereby creating the good habit of respect for others, which is one of the few, but very important, school rules.

Social harmony will further benefit from our integrated, mixed ability, educational environment where every child receives the same opportunities. Teachers differentiate in class to meet the needs of all so that children need not be streamed for ability, but instead feel valued and supported by the whole school for simply being themselves.

The Role of PSHE

All children in the lower school experience a discrete taught lesson of PSHE and the Kindergarten experience PSHE themes embedded within the curriculum.

Children have an opportunity to use role play, drama, written tasks and discursive tasks which explore moral, spiritual and cultural themes.

The Role of Woodland Craft

All children at TLAS experience time learning in nature. We believe that developing reverence, respect and wonder in nature is important in developing a spirituality which also has an affinity with nature and the environment.

Cultural Development

Cultural development refers to the children's increasing understanding and appreciation of the beliefs, values, customs, knowledge and skills which together define the collective identity of societies. The school will encourage children's interest in the world's cultures.

The London Acorn School benefits from the cultural diversity in London. Our school will draw valuable energy from the surrounding community, with its wealth of culture and history. In turn we hope to reflect this amazing mix of peoples within our school community so that all the children may gain an appreciation of the greater qualities of mankind as a whole.

The school aims to:

- Provide pupils with the knowledge of the nature and roots of their own cultural



traditions and practices, including historical, social, religious, aesthetic, ethnic or political and also those of other major cultural groups.

- Encourage a personal response to the cultures of the world through study of their literature, music, art and scientific contributions, and an appreciation of the contribution these have made to the world as it appears today.

The curriculum is rich in the teachings of the many great religious and cultural traditions. Through their experiences in class and in the celebration of seasonal festivals throughout the year, pupils develop understanding and respect for the diverse cultures of the world. Whilst the festival year draws primarily, though not exclusively, from the Christian traditions, the festivals endeavour to celebrate the common humanity. Our festival year and curriculum is growing and evolving in response to our growing community as we learn about festivals and traditions important to our multicultural families and staff.

The Role of Assemblies

- Weekly assemblies are times when the lower school come together to celebrate universal messages of cultural, spiritual and moral importance. They are also a time to celebrate the diverse religious and global cultural traditions. At the end of each assembly all children are provided with a time to share in a communal reflection