SMSC DEVELOPMENT STATEMENT

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
Leigh St. John's CE Primary School

"The Lord has told you what is good.
He has told you what he wants from you: Do what is right to other people.
Love being kind to others.
And live humbly, trusting your God."

Micah 6:8

COME CELEBRATE TOGETHER

At Leigh St. John's, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is not an addition to education: it is central to the people our children are becoming. Rooted in Micah 6:8 and the example of Jesus, our work enables every pupil and adult to grow without limits, thrive and use their God-given gifts to become their very best selves.

Our mission is beautifully simple and deliberately demanding: 'Be a decent human being.' It is lived through the quality of our relationships, the choices we make, the courage with which we challenge injustice and the care we show to one another and to God's world. SMSC development therefore reaches far beyond particular lessons. It is woven through our curriculum, collective worship, behaviour and relationships, enrichment, pupil leadership, pastoral care and the countless daily interactions that create our stunning ethos.

Our Christian vision, mission and values

Our theologically rooted Christian vision calls us to act justly, love kindness and walk humbly with God. Our motto, 'Come celebrate together', expresses the welcome and belonging at the heart of our school family. Every person is precious, every voice can contribute and every child is entitled to flourish.

Our six God-given values—justice, humility, love, kindness, responsibility and respect—make the vision tangible. Loving Leo, Humble Holly, Justice Jamal, Kind Kian, Respectful Ruby and Responsible Reg give younger pupils a memorable language for character, but the values are never reduced to slogans or rewards. They are habits to be understood, practised, reflected upon and lived.



What we mean by SMSC development

SMSC describes four closely connected dimensions of human flourishing. We develop them within the distinctive Christian character of our school while remaining open, inclusive and deeply respectful of pupils and families of all faiths and none.

- Spiritual development: growing in self-awareness, wonder, meaning, imagination and reflection; forming connections with oneself, with others, with the world and, for many, with God.
- Moral development: learning to recognise right and wrong, reason about complex questions, understand consequences, act with integrity and repair harm.
- Social development: learning to belong, collaborate, communicate, lead, serve and live well with people whose experiences and perspectives may differ from our own.
- Cultural development: understanding and valuing heritage, faith, identity, creativity and diversity, and participating confidently and respectfully in modern Britain and the wider world.

These dimensions overlap. A child who is moved by injustice may reflect spiritually, reason morally, work socially with others and draw upon cultural understanding before taking purposeful action. This is why SMSC is planned coherently and evaluated through the difference it makes, rather than recorded as a collection of disconnected activities.

Our aims

Through the curriculum and wider life of the school, we seek to enable every pupil to:

- know that they are unique, loved, valued and capable of growth;

- develop self-knowledge, confidence, curiosity, resilience and hope;
- form secure, respectful relationships and contribute positively to communities;
- make thoughtful choices, accept responsibility and restore relationships when harm occurs;
- understand Christianity as a living, global faith and engage respectfully with religious and non-religious worldviews;
- recognise prejudice, inequality and injustice, and develop the courage and wisdom to respond;
- appreciate human creativity, cultural diversity and the heritage that shapes local, national and global life; and
- be prepared for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain.

Spiritual development: noticing, wondering and making meaning

Spirituality at Leigh St. John's is the capacity to be stopped, moved and changed. Pupils describe 'wow moments': experiences that help them notice something greater than themselves and lead them to think, feel or act differently. We make space for spiritual development through beauty, silence, music, prayer, nature, story, creativity, relationships, challenge and joy.

Collective worship is the heartbeat of our Church school and the highlight of our day. Its inclusive, invitational and inspiring character enables pupils and adults to encounter God, explore the person and teachings of Jesus, ask big questions, celebrate one another and consider how they might live differently. Reflection areas, prayer and worry boxes, the Bible, candles and pupil responses allow that encounter to continue within classrooms.

Across the curriculum, teachers plan authentic opportunities for awe and wonder, imagination, enquiry, emotional response and reflection without forcing artificial religious links. Pupils are encouraged to ask profound questions, tolerate uncertainty and articulate their own developing beliefs with confidence and respect.

Spiritual growth is visible when pupils become more attentive, grateful, hopeful and compassionate; when they recognise their gifts; when they find calm and reassurance; and when a moment of wonder helps them, in their own words, to 'be kind and good'.

Moral development: choosing well, taking responsibility and repairing harm

Our moral life is shaped by Micah 6:8 and the teachings of Jesus. Pupils learn that being decent is not passive niceness: it requires justice, honesty, courage, humility, responsibility and love. Through stories, scripture, current events, history, literature, RE, PSHE and everyday dilemmas, they learn to distinguish right from wrong, examine motives and consequences, give reasons for their views and listen thoughtfully to others.

Our current Relationships and Behaviour approach expresses this moral purpose through three clear expectations: Be Ready, Be Respectful and Be Safe. Consistency rests first in calm, predictable adult behaviour and dignifying relationships. Adults model emotional regulation, use specific and sincere recognition, maintain high expectations and address unsafe or disrespectful choices without shaming the child.

When harm occurs, our response is restorative. Pupils are supported to explain what happened, name thoughts and feelings, understand who has been affected, identify what is needed and agree how relationships can be repaired. Behaviour reviews and reflection time are opportunities for accountability, co-regulation and learning—not labels attached to children. Reasonable

adjustments, bespoke plans and trauma-informed approaches ensure that pupils with SEND or social, emotional and mental health needs receive equitable support while safety and ambition remain uncompromised.

Social development: belonging, relationships and service

Positive relationships are the bedrock of our school. Every child is greeted, known and noticed. Adults deliberately teach and model the social skills needed to listen, cooperate, disagree well, resolve conflict and show empathy. Predictable routines help pupils feel safe; restorative dialogue helps them rebuild trust; shared celebration reminds them that the gifts and achievements of others enrich us all.

Pupils learn to participate rather than simply comply. Through JAM Squad, School Council, house leadership, sports teams, peer support, class responsibilities and contribution to worship, they develop voice, initiative, teamwork and service. Leadership is inclusive and developmental: pupils are helped to recognise that influence carries responsibility and that quieter acts of care matter.

Our partnership with St. Mary the Virgin Parish Church, families, community organisations and Manchester Diocese widens pupils' experience of fellowship and common purpose. Residentials, visits, visitors, performances, competitions and enrichment clubs enable children to form relationships beyond their immediate circles and to contribute with growing confidence.

Cultural development: identity, diversity and participation

We want pupils to understand where they come from, encounter lives beyond their own and approach difference with curiosity rather than fear. Curriculum choices deliberately broaden horizons, challenge stereotypes and give access to literature, music, art, drama, sport, heritage, places and people that some children might not otherwise encounter.

RE makes a distinctive contribution through the Manchester Diocesan Board of Education syllabus and associated RE Today materials. Pupils explore Christianity as a diverse, living and global faith alongside other religious and non-religious worldviews, asking what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live. Collective worship, the Christian year and church partnership deepen understanding of the school's Anglican identity without presenting one Christian experience as the only one.

Pupils learn to value their own identity and cultural inheritance while respecting those of others. They encounter the local story of Leigh, the varied heritage of Britain and an interconnected world. London and Lake District residentials, museums, galleries, theatres, places of worship, outdoor learning and creative and sporting experiences turn cultural entitlement into lived experience. Participation is actively enabled so that disadvantage or additional need does not limit belonging.

Fundamental British values and protected characteristics

We actively promote democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. These are taught through the curriculum and experienced through pupil voice, elections, shared decision-making, clear expectations, respectful debate, responsible freedom and participation in community life.

Pupils learn that rights sit alongside responsibilities. They are taught to respect the civil and criminal law of England, understand how democratic institutions work at an age-appropriate level and recognise that freedom of belief is protected. Teaching pays due regard to the protected characteristics within the Equality Act 2010. Prejudice, discriminatory language and harmful

stereotypes are challenged consistently. Political issues are presented in a balanced and age-appropriate manner; partisan political views are not promoted.

SMSC through the curriculum and wider life of school

Every adult contributes to SMSC and every subject can deepen it, but opportunities must be purposeful rather than tokenistic. Leaders map and evaluate provision through several connected strands:

- Collective worship: shared biblical teaching, prayer, stillness, song, celebration, values, reflection and challenge that lead towards response and change.
- Religious Education: disciplined enquiry into Christianity, other religions and non-religious worldviews, enabling pupils to interpret, compare, reason and reflect.
- PSHE and Relationships Education: explicit knowledge and language for healthy relationships, wellbeing, safety, identity, self-regulation and responsible decision-making.
- English, humanities and the arts: encounters with diverse voices, ethical questions, human creativity, heritage, injustice, conflict, beauty and belonging.
- Science, computing, mathematics and design: wonder, truth-seeking, responsible innovation, environmental stewardship, ethical use of technology and evaluation of evidence.
- PE, outdoor learning and enrichment: perseverance, teamwork, humility, fair play, managed risk, physical confidence, creativity and joy.
- Pastoral care and behaviour: co-regulation, Zones of Regulation, nurture, restorative practice, safety, accountability and repair.
- Visits, visitors, clubs and residentials: rich first-hand experiences that fill gaps, raise aspirations and open pupils' hearts and minds to what is available to them.

Teachers retain professional responsiveness. A powerful unplanned question, national event, local concern or moment of wonder may become a significant opportunity, provided it is handled sensitively, accurately and impartially.

Justice, courageous advocacy and change

Justice Jamal's memorable invitation to 'notice, speak and repair' captures the movement we want to see: pupils learn to notice when people or creation are harmed, speak with wisdom and courage, and participate in repair. They encounter individuals and communities whose faith, conviction and service have transformed lives and are encouraged to see themselves as agents of hope.

Courageous advocacy grows from learning and genuine need rather than isolated fundraising. Pupils investigate an issue, listen to those affected, consider different responses and act purposefully through advocacy, service, charity, environmental stewardship, prayer or practical change. They then evaluate impact. This ensures that justice, love and responsibility become lived commitments rather than abstract words.

Inclusion, wellbeing and safeguarding

SMSC flourishes where children feel safe, known and able to belong. Our curriculum and wider provision are adapted so that pupils with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and those facing vulnerability can participate meaningfully and encounter ambitious experiences. Pastoral support,

nurture, trusted adults and explicit teaching of emotional vocabulary help pupils understand themselves and seek help.

Safeguarding education, online safety and age-appropriate discussion help pupils recognise risk, coercion, harmful influence, discrimination and extremism. We create safe spaces for questions while making clear that respect for a person does not require uncritical acceptance of every idea. Pupils learn to test claims, consider evidence and respond without demeaning others.

The role of adults and the formation of new staff

SMSC is carried as much by culture as by curriculum. Adults therefore model the values in their language, relationships, decisions and use of authority. They demonstrate how to hold high expectations with compassion, apologise with humility, challenge injustice, listen attentively and restore relationships. The consistency children experience should be consistency of dignity and purpose, not mechanical sameness.

All new staff, including Early Career Teachers, receive explicit formation in the school's Church foundation, Micah 6:8, mission, values, spirituality, collective worship, RE, relational practice and courageous advocacy. Coaching, observation and modelling help them translate the vision into classroom routines, curriculum decisions and daily interactions. Christian distinctiveness is therefore understood theologically and embodied professionally rather than absorbed by chance.

Leadership, monitoring and evaluation

The Headteacher and governors maintain strategic oversight of SMSC as part of the quality of education, personal development and the school's Christian vision. Subject and phase leaders, the RE and worship leader, PSHE leader, SENDCO, pastoral team, clergy and pupil leaders contribute to implementation and evaluation.

We evaluate impact rather than count activities. Evidence is drawn from curriculum plans and work, lesson and worship visits, pupil and adult voice, behaviour and safeguarding patterns, participation, case studies, leadership records and examples of values translated into action. Leaders ask:

- Can pupils explain how experiences have shaped what they think, feel, believe or do?
- Do pupils feel known, safe, included and confident that their voice matters?
- Can they reason about moral questions, listen to difference and challenge injustice respectfully?
- Do all groups participate in rich cultural, spiritual and leadership opportunities?
- Are relationships characterised by dignity, responsibility, restoration and hope?
- Where is experience inconsistent, what is causing the variation and what action will follow?

Findings inform curriculum development, staff training, pastoral provision, enrichment and the school's ongoing self-evaluation for SIAMS. Governors provide support and challenge so that strong intent is tested against the lived experience of pupils and adults.

The difference SMSC makes

The success of SMSC is ultimately visible in the people we become. It is seen when a child pauses in wonder; finds words for a difficult feeling; welcomes someone who feels different; listens before judging; challenges unfairness; admits a mistake; repairs a friendship; serves without seeking praise; creates something beautiful; takes responsibility; or chooses hope when life is hard.

At Leigh St. John's, SMSC holds together academic ambition and human flourishing. It opens hearts and minds, builds character, widens horizons and prepares pupils to participate wisely and compassionately in modern Britain and the wider world. Through it, our Christian vision becomes lived reality and our children grow increasingly ready to fulfil our mission: 'Be a decent human being.'



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