



Dame Alice Owen's School MORAL and SPIRITUAL POLICY

- Agreed by the Governing Body Curriculum Committee
- To be reviewed
(reviewed every 2 years)

October 2015
Autumn 2017

To be monitored by Hannah Nemko, Deputy Head/Teaching and Learning, and John Johnstone, Head of Religious Studies

'In God is all our Trust'

The aim of this policy is to reflect the current good practice and demonstrate that Moral and Spiritual development permeates the whole curriculum of the school and ensure the school achieves one of its core aims to:

Promote respect for and understanding of religious, moral, ethical and British values. We interpret British values as including individual liberty; belief in personal and social responsibility; the rule of law and its observance; toleration and respect for diversity (including different faiths), beliefs and lifestyles. We seek to instil in students a sense of belonging, not just to the school community, but to the wider community and to the UK.

The aims of moral development

The aim of moral development at Dame Alice Owen's School is to allow students to:

- Distinguish right from wrong;
- Respect truth, others and property;
- Be aware of the needs of others;
- Behave independently in a socially responsible manner;
- Take responsibility for their own moral decisions;
- Explore the moral dimension to social issues;
- Be able to think for themselves and to arrive at conclusions rationally;
- Develop their own moral code/values;
- Be tolerant of diversity of belief.

How the aims of moral development are being achieved

Responsibility for moral development of students at Dame Alice Owen's School runs across the whole school with Religious Studies taking a leading role. For example, in Key Stages 3 & 4 lessons emphasise the Christian moral perspective whilst also offering models of morality and ethics from other faiths e.g. the 'Golden Rule', Five Pillars of Faith etc. The Department (as do many departments within the school) also organise many trips (both local and international) that promote an awareness of others and a need to be respectful for diversity of belief.

Additionally, a key feature for all students at Dame Alice Owen's School is to understand how (morality) and why (ethics) we (and others) behave. The school embraces behaviour and learning that reflect British, moral, ethical and spiritual values e.g. through curriculum, EFT, assembly programme (see below) etc. Equally important is the opportunity for all students to identify national and global problems and consider potential solutions. It is therefore acknowledged that students are provided with many opportunities for freedom of expression on a variety of issues including the current refugee crisis, problems in the Middle East and global examples of injustice etc. The school encourages students to be proactive and that their views can make a positive difference.

It should also be noted that Dame Alice Owen's School students are also encouraged to move gradually from a 'taught morality' to taking responsibility for their own moral decisions. Assessment of moral development is primarily through subject SOW, observation of student behaviour and the views students express.

Within the School Curriculum at Owen's there is a clear emphasis upon developing responsibility in learning and setting personal targets. Beyond the formal curriculum Dame Alice Owen's School sets high expectations which leads to a clear awareness of high moral standards both inside and outside the classroom. There is equally a great sense of shared ownership and belonging.

When appropriate, students are taken off timetable for a session of PSHE, where the individual student's moral development can be addressed within the context of a difficult topic, for example sex and relationships or drugs in year 10, and puberty in year 7. Through Effective Form Time, there is a well-planned and mapped out programme of study for students to address with their teachers, linked to the SEAL principles and developing skills for students as 21st century learners.

The aims of spiritual development

The aim of spiritual development at Dame Alice Owen's School is to allow students to:

- Explore the possibility of the existence of God;
- Examine systems of belief and how different people make sense of the world;
- Question and search for a meaning and purpose to life;

- Increase an awareness of self;
- Experience a sense of awe and wonder;
- Express feelings and reactions to the world;
- Be creative.

How the aims of spiritual development are being achieved

As with moral development the responsibility for spiritual development of students at Dame Alice Owen's School runs across the whole school. Again, the Religious Studies Department makes an important contribution to spiritual development throughout the school whether it is through philosophical reasoning about the existence of God or an experience of awe and wonder through creation stories etc.

However, all Departments are encouraged to provide opportunities to allow students to express their creativity and imagination; reflect upon their own beliefs and values and create an atmosphere that allows students to speak freely about their beliefs.

A key area within the school that encourages students to examine and reflect upon different ways of making sense of the world is through assemblies. Assemblies are an important feature of the 'hidden curriculum' where the whole school benefits e.g. cultural appreciation and diversity themed assemblies including black history month, Eid and Yom Kippur etc. Assemblies are also designed to be more inclusive of British values. For example, from spring 2016 assemblies will have a clear British link e.g. St George's Day, St Andrews, St David's etc.

The Lower and Upper School assemblies are frequently led by a member from a religious community, charity organisation or a member of staff. The school has introduced themes when it comes to staff assemblies e.g. growth mindset. The school is also encouraging more student ownership over assemblies. Examples include assemblies led by the Head Boy and Head Girl or assemblies led by other students especially when sharing experiences from an international school visit.

Students are encouraged to take a more proactive role through form assemblies that are shared with the rest of the Year group. In doing so, creativity and an opportunity to express 'feelings about the world' are encouraged. In form time, the form tutor (often with the help of Sixth Form students) has the opportunity to meet with the tutor group and to undertake an effective form time programme and pastoral work. Whatever the format of an upper or lower school assembly, a variety of beliefs are clearly offered for our students to consider and reflect upon.

John Johnstone
October 2015