

*Case studies
and frameworks*

RSA

Action and Research Centre

**Schools with
Soul: A new
approach
to Spiritual,
Moral, Social
and Cultural
Education**

*Amelia Peterson
Jen Lexmond
Joe Hallgarten
David Kerr*

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SMSC Case Studies

To support our investigation we carried out some ‘deep dives’ into a small number of schools identified by our expert group. We wanted to speak to a diverse range of schools; in addition to exemplars of ‘best practice’ for SMSC (the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils), schools which could help us understand how a focus on SMSC can have a broader impact on a school’s ethos, values and overall achievement.

In each school we tried to discover the motivations of leaders, staff, and students, conditions for success, challenges that had been overcome, and future barriers to success. We asked questions on six different key topics:

- About the school
- Vision for SMSC from school leaders
- SMSC in the curriculum
- SMSC beyond the curriculum
- Student voice and engagement
- Measuring and assessing impact
- Next steps: future plans, opportunities, and barriers

Interviews were held with school leaders, sometimes the principal or headteacher, but also associate and deputy heads, heads of department, and others on the leadership team. Alongside this, in some cases pupil focus groups were held with students from across the year groups at the school. Discussion centred on the value of education beyond exams, and the ways in which the students’ felt their school and teachers helped them to learn about life and engage with the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural.

Most of these case studies were created by the RSA team, but some were written by other members of the expert group, or by leaders within a school. Although we did have conversations with school leaders outside of England, we were unable to create comprehensive case studies for any schools outside of England. To ensure consistency in approach, method and research ethics, we created guidance, possible questions, and a template for all writers to follow. These are included at the end of this appendix, in the hope that other schools can use them to think through and write up their approaches to SMSC.

1. Arrow Vale RSA Academy, Worcestershire

www.arrowvaleacademy.co.uk

About the school

Arrow Vale RSA Academy is a 14–19 school in Redditch with 620 students. Arrow Vale is a secular school. It has the most deprived intake in Worcestershire, with over a third of students eligible for free school meals. The intake is predominantly White British.

Arrow Vale is a rapidly improving school. The number of students achieving GCSE 5A*-C grades including English and Maths has doubled during the last three years. Student progress in 2013 is in the top 1 percent of schools nationally for English and top 5 percent for Maths. 5A*-G has improved from 93.5 percent in 2012 to 99.5 percent in 2013.

The Vision for SMSC

Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural education is at the heart of Principal Guy Shears' overall strategy for school transformation and progress.

Senior and in particular middle leaders play a crucial role in holding a space open for staff to prioritise and develop their thinking around SMSC. With the pressure of a dual focus on high exam performance and closing the attainment gap, leadership has sent a clear message that high quality, integrated and well-thought-through SMSC provision is part of the answer rather than an additional bolt on to be covered on top of those commitments.

'It's lots and lots of tiny things that add up to holistic learning... [SMSC] is integrated into the value of everything we do – through role modelling with staff, how we recruit staff.'

Guy Shears, Principal

SMSC in the curriculum

SMSC is clearly embedded throughout the curriculum at Arrow Vale. Directors of Learning and Standards (Middle Leaders) shape the curriculum delivery to address each element of SMSC wherever possible.

An important part of this integrated approach is a highly comprehensive working document that highlights examples of SMSC in all subject areas. The school website makes these public to students, parents and other stakeholders. An SMSC kite marking system is used in Arrow Vale's quarterly newsletters. Each activity and news item is coded according to the strand(s) of SMSC that are relevant, for example a World Book Night (social, cultural) or a Poetry Slam event (spiritual, moral).

'For me as an arts specialist, it really lends itself to exploiting SMSC. For example, culturally we're looking at different world arts... In Year 9 we are looking at urban art: is graffiti art or vandalism? So then it becomes a moral question: having looked at these different historical accounts, and knowing the context, what do the kids think about the value of urban art? So it works on a number of levels in terms of the type of education they are getting.'

Noel Linington, Director of Learning

Beyond the curriculum

Arrow Vale's extra-curricular provision is based on their school motto: Together we Discover, Aim high, and Excel. Each goal corresponds to a different enrichment programme, two of which are particularly relevant to SMSC.

'Discover' encourages involvement in extracurricular activities from sport to dance, art to jewellery design, coding to drama, and seeks to deliver the comprehensive 'RSA Enrichment Guarantee' aimed at ensuring a comprehensive offer for all students in RSA Academies. 'Aim high' supports high quality transitions for students struggling with low self-esteem. It includes additional field trips and activities to build social skills and confidence.

'For me it's about developing the holistic child, not just the academic child. It's about doing what we can do to help them succeed in every way they can, no matter their background. Not every path suits every child, so we want to make as many pathways as possible. We're very lucky that the RSA helps us do that.'

Reena Mistry, Assistant Principal

Students

Students at Arrow Vale have a clear understanding of the value of SMSC and how it is taught and embedded into the curriculum. They spoke with ease and enthusiasm about the importance of learning going beyond subject headings and classrooms and becoming part of everyday life.

Students have many opportunities to share their voice at Arrow Vale, which deepens their SMSC development. For example, a sound system in the school yard broadcasts music and interviews from Radio Arrow Vale, with a live broadcast every break and lunchtime, as well as direct broadcasts into classrooms in some tutor sessions.

'You get educated in just general life, don't you? Like on a Saturday and Sunday you're going to learn something.'

Year 9 student

‘Education is about learning about people and being socially aware; how to talk to people; how to cope with other people’s opinions even if you don’t agree with it.’

Year 11 student

Measuring and assessing impact

Whilst primarily focused on the *provision* of SMSC, when trialling new approaches the leadership and management team at Arrow Vale have looked for and seen the following changes:

- Greater enthusiasm
- Students can see a reason for why they are doing what they are doing
- Students become more independent and are motivated by seeing the intrinsic meaning in what they are learning
- Deeper thinking alongside improvements in academic attainment
- Students’ curiosity increases
- Students are more able to draw on knowledge and learning beyond what is being taught in that lesson
- Students are more well-rounded, and more confident

‘I think SMSC is not something you should really be tested on. Like with exams they are the skills you need, and SMSC is like additional things you can get recommendations from your teachers for jobs and stuff.’

Year 11 student

Next steps: future plans, opportunities and barriers

Arrow Vale is continuing in its quest to put SMSC at the heart of school life through developing its approach to assessment and provision. The ‘Aim High’ pilot programme is currently being trialled and a recent school wide survey of SMSC provision is shortly to be reviewed, with a gap analysis helping to point to areas of future focus.

Additionally, Arrow Vale is exploring how digital tools can help them to create live CVs and to capture the personal development journey of students.

‘We have been looking at online tools for capturing visuals, video, podcasts, digital material, and we are looking at using that as a package beyond a CV that you could show an employer with an archive of what you’ve done. ...I hadn’t thought of this as part of SMSC, but now that I think about it, it feels very relevant and I think it could be very powerful.’

**Noel Linington, Director of Learning and Standards and Mat Rash,
Assistant Principal**

2. Cannon Lane Primary School, Harrow

<http://cannonlaneprimary.org>

About the school

Cannon Lane Primary School was formed through the amalgamation of a first and junior school in September 2013. The school now has 650 pupils. Two-thirds of pupils are from minority ethnic families, mostly with Asian heritage, and around half have English as an additional language. The school is a UNICEF Rights Respecting School which means that the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child is at the heart of the school's ethos.

Vision for SMSC from the Principal

Headteacher Reena Keeble has been in post at Cannon Lane for twenty three years, and sees good leadership as the absolute key to strong SMSC outcomes. But rather than dictating a particular form of provision, her vision is to set a clear expectation that SMSC is a priority, and then allow teachers to develop their own approach within a collectively-devised curriculum framework.

‘Staff will talk about how SMSC is embedded in learning. Staff are aware of how SMSC should go across the curriculum and it comes through in the personalised planning.’

Reena Keeble, Headteacher

SMSC in the curriculum

SMSC is embedded into the curriculum at Cannon Lane. For example, opportunity for genuine inquiry about culture and cultures is built into curriculum planning across all subjects, as opposed to being restricted to one-off initiatives which can become tokenistic.

Moral thinking time is built into classroom activities such as ‘question of the day’, run by all class teachers to raise an ethical issue at some point in the day. Teachers take care to provide a personalised approach to difficult questions raised, taking into account the cultural and religious backgrounds of pupils.

Pupils talk confidently about how ‘question of the day’ or ‘thinking time’ should be approached, as modeled by their teachers: ‘The teacher

asks you an important question and you get one or two minutes to think but you can't say the first thing that comes out of your head.'

Beyond the curriculum

Assemblies are a key place for addressing spiritual topics and development, and they are always led by the children. Children are asked what they would like to do in their assemblies – last half term they did friendship. Two Year 2 children went off and put together a PowerPoint on friendship and linked it to needs and rights. In another example, a Year 2 pupil led an assembly with her mother about autism and her big brother.

A key part of social development in the school is becoming a resilient learner, based on the work of Guy Claxton. The four Rs of Learning Power – resilience, resourcefulness, reciprocity and reflection – run throughout the Lower School and the children use the language. Teachers believe using the social language of learning creates a self-awareness that also has a spiritual dimension.

PSHE (personal, social, health and economic education) leaders in both the Lower and Uppers school felt social development is provided for in 'the way teachers talk to each other, how staff talk to pupils and how pupils talk to each other'. The Headteacher agreed it is achieved through modelling and shared expectations.

'This comes back to those hidden messages – what I call the hidden curriculum. How you approach staff, how you approach each other. How you talk to parents and how you involve parents and the community and how you plan for it in your classroom, and that is to do with teaching strategies.'

Reena Keeble, Headteacher

Students

As a Rights Respecting School there is a focus on fairness in relation to social justice, which involves asking pupils if they think something is fair or unfair. Fairness and inclusion are important principles of the school: currently the school is implementing structured conversations for all its parents, based on the Achievement for All model; the programme is intended for a number of targeted pupils but the Headteacher and her staff were keen to apply this principle to all pupils and parents.

In the focus group Lower School pupils confidently used the word resilient when talking about working on their own. Upper School children talked about resilience as being independent, both for an individual and a group in approaching a problem.

'Pupil engagement' is an important part of the school. For the annual 'School Plan', students imagine they've taken a rocket ship into the future and describe their perfect school. Additionally, the Head asks pupils what she should do to become a better Headteacher – their suggestions are converted into smart targets linked to the Teaching Standards.

'Voice is different from engagement. Everyone speaks, everyone has a voice, it is whether to listen to it and act upon it. We have school policies which they have helped to write in pupil-speak which include teaching and learning and caring for adults.'

Reena Keeble, Headteacher

Measuring and assessing impact

Measuring and assessing impact at Cannon Lane is done through a combination of an explicit SMSC strategy, encouraging student voice and engagement, and being observant about staff and pupil interactions, parent engagement, behaviour, and attendance. Feedback from students also forms a key part of assessing impact.

‘SMSC to me is our bread and butter – if you haven’t got this in place then you haven’t got your children or your staff in the right place for learning. It is not easily measured, it is a feeling which you can’t put numbers on and requires observation, such as looking at how children interact, the quality of learning in terms of how confident learners are, how they relate to people, how teachers and pupils talk to each other – it is about all those things which make up a school.’

Reena Keeble, Headteacher

Next steps: future plans, opportunities, and barriers

Cannon Lane is currently planning and implementing a new primary curriculum and set of assessment tools.

3. The Cherwell School, Oxford

www.cherwell.oxon.sch.uk

About the school

The Cherwell School is a large academy with approximately 1,800 students based on two sites in central North Oxford. It is a secular, non-uniform school and has an ethnically and socio-economically diverse student population. It is over-subscribed and draws from about 12 feeder primaries, some of which are church schools.

Vision for SMSC from the Principal

SMSC is embedded in the culture and ethos of the school but the leadership felt a need to find time to talk about and reflect on provision in this area.

The individual strands are sometimes addressed separately (for example in the audit process) but often other words have a greater significance within the school; ‘culture’ and ‘community’ have a particular status with staff, students and the wider community. Of the 4 words the term used ‘openly’ least frequently is Spiritual, possibly because of ‘the pretty overtly secular nature of the school’.

‘It is very important to focus on the collective messages that are given to staff, students and families – about the importance of every individual, about all of us being human beings and about the wider value of education... SMSC cannot be seen as a ‘bolt-on’ to the rest of what we do, it has to be embedded in all that we do.’

Paul James, Headteacher

SMSC in the curriculum

There is a formal curriculum audit every 2 years and as part of this process faculty and pastoral leaders are encouraged to review and consider their SMSC provision. Religious studies, Citizenship and Philosophy and Ethics all have a strong status within the school and this faculty addresses all 4 strands at each Key Stage, but all subjects are keen to see SMSC as part of their role. Individual teachers may not always be able to articulate the specifics of the Ofsted descriptors for each strand but the consensus among the senior leadership is that this is not a problem.

‘One deputy head has responsibility for the curriculum in its entirety, the other has a broad ‘student experience’ focus and SMSC fits into both those roles, as well as at middle leader levels.’

Paul James, Headteacher

Beyond the curriculum

Assemblies, tutor time and the pastoral support system (including tutor time) all have a key part to play. Consistent messages are considered vital and all members of staff are expected to be able to explain rules and policies: ‘It isn’t simply ‘behave well and engage because we say so’, but rather ‘behave well because you are part of a respectful community’.

There is a broad range of extra-curricular activities offered as well as trips and visits in school time. These are not promoted to ‘fulfil’ the SMSC requirements but it is recognised that cultivating skills and talents as well as engaging with new challenges is vital for personal growth and self-awareness. Pupil premium funding is sometimes used for these kinds of activities.

‘We have one-off, high profile events that overtly address all 4 of the strands, like our Experiencing Religion day every year when we take all 270 year 7 students to different places of worship across the city, but alongside that there is a strong awareness that good teaching on a day-in, day-out basis is about educating, engaging and cultivating the whole person.’

Patrick Garton, Assistant Headteacher and Director of Teaching School

Students

The students in the focus groups were aware that the school had a responsibility for these areas even if the specific language was unfamiliar to them. The vast majority of students spoke positively about being able to discuss these areas and learn about different cultures and religions. All the students were very positive about the mixed character of the student body and appreciated that they could interact so easily with students from a range of backgrounds, especially different religious communities.

‘I like the openness of the teachers here compared to my primary school. You can ask them about lots of things and they take you seriously. They sometimes ask hard questions and I think this means you sort of do the same.’

Year 8 student

‘Young people can be arrogant and quick to judge and these things help us to be more understanding, it makes us better people to be challenged.’

Year 12 student

There were some significant interactions and exchanges about whether schools should ‘plan’ for these areas or rather just allow interactions to take place: ‘First-hand encounters with different people is the most important way of learning about these things’. ... ‘but schools can structure the curriculum in order to allow good learning from and interaction with peers – for example the way English, Citizenship, RS and History

are taught here is good because it creates those opportunities' Year 12 students.

Measuring and assessing impact

This school is of the opinion that while SMSC is integral to a successful and well-functioning school community, focusing solely on SMSC is not an appropriate way to view education. Outcome measures including public exam performance, further education, and behaviour data all paint part of the picture of a successful and cohesive school community.

'SMSC fits into the school's holistic view of education and so rather than focus on measuring or assessing individual areas it is better to 'take the temperature' of the school in broad terms and see how the school feels. If students are attending, achieving, engaging and responding to opportunities then those are good indicators.'

Paul James, Headteacher

Next steps: future plans, opportunities, and barriers

As a teaching school it is important to consider how SMSC is addressed both in Initial Teacher Training programmes and also in leadership training. There is a sense that SMSC can sometimes be lost in the raising attainment and closing the gap agenda, but it was felt that it is short-sighted leadership which loses sight of the breadth of educational agendas. If a school is successful then all outcomes are good.

'School leaders must ensure that SMSC is never presented as 'just one more thing' – this will inevitably lead to conflict, frustration and demotivation.'

Paul James, Headteacher

4. Eardisley CE Primary School, Herefordshire

www.eardisleyschool.co.uk

About the school

Eardisley Church of England Primary School serves a mixed socio-economic area comprising a number of relatively isolated villages and hamlets. The number of pupils has doubled since 2011 to 90. The last Ofsted inspection (2009) judged the school to be good overall. The school received the International Values Education Trust Award in January 2013.

The Vision for SMSC

Values-based Education underpins all of the school's operation and this is being further developed through their philosophy of giving children 'roots and wings' – security and the opportunity for growth and greatness.

Children's SMSC and PSHE development is addressed through a new commitment to regular class-based provision as well as whole school assemblies. This work is shared with parents through the weekly newsletter and attendance at parents' evenings and plays. The daily assembly provides a planned opportunity for the development of spirituality through personal stillness and reflection time. The focus starts with the personal and moves out towards more abstract concepts. Children have become very skilled at sitting peacefully and taking part in private reflection. The field and playground have spaces for reflection, designed by the children.

'SMSC is the heartbeat of our school. We give regular thought as to how virtues and values can be used to support the development of the child as a reflective and spiritual learner and promote teaching and learning that is of the highest quality. ...Our values give a framework for the more nebulous areas of SMSC – they enable SMSC to become a vibrant, visual and ever-present element to everything we do.'

Bridget Knight, Headteacher

'We love this school's caring ethos – it values each child – and the "community family" atmosphere. All are encouraged to reach their potential and develop and discover personal strengths and interests.'

Parent

SMSC in the curriculum

SMSC permeates the school's curriculum. Each subject planning document has a section for recording the development for each aspect of SMSC. Collective Worship is planned in a similar way.

The school endeavours to create opportunities for experiencing awe and wonder at the natural and human world. Impact can be witnessed in the quality of responses pupils make, their relationships and behaviour. Children can talk cogently about the importance of their values in their lives.

Particular emphasis is placed on encouraging and facilitating children to be reflective about social and personal issues relating to Christian teaching through RE, PSHE and Philosophy for Children lessons.

'We build together a values-based language for pupils to use to understand their own and each other's motivations, feelings and responses. It promotes an intellectually enquiring and a spiritually reflective response in children and adults alike and we hope it is borne out in every single exchange and action that takes place in a school.'

Bridget Knight, Headteacher

Beyond the curriculum

Given the school's size and location, the breadth of extra-curricular opportunities is particularly remarkable with, on average, two extra-curricular clubs operating each day of the week. The clubs are led by staff, parents and members of the community and take-up is high.

Students

Pupils spoke cogently about their beliefs. 'Your heart helps your mind... you have to feel it to learn... if you don't feel it your mind shuts down'. They spoke animatedly about the need in life to embrace difference ('if it's different, don't just reject it') and the need to reach out beyond themselves ('it's a good thing to have – it makes us friendlier and more helpful'). They also acknowledged that the framework of SMSC helps them to feel safe ('It feels like someone is looking after you so that they are there if you don't feel safe').

They spoke with considerable thoughtfulness about the place of religion in society. They felt very strongly that for them experience of other places and people and ideas was what they needed more of most: their recent visit to London had given them a taste of a different cultures and possibilities.

'Here, it's about teaching the heart to believe... to believe in yourself. You can do it.'

Pupil, age 10

'You learn lots of different things at school, not just facts, but also how to deal with problems you have.'

Pupil, age 10

Younger students argued for a greater emphasis on values education 'because they help us to learn to be good and to be stronger people'.

‘If you went to school and learned lots of things but didn’t learn about values and friendships you wouldn’t be a nice person and you would have to live on your own.’

Pupil, age 9

Measuring and assessing impact

Visitors, parents and children invariably comment on the striking ethos of the school. Regular audit of provision and impact of SMSC gives an impetus to continue delving deeper. The school carries out a regular, annual SEF for the SIAMS’ inspection, which helps keep this area under focus. Additionally, the Ethos Committee undertakes regular Learning Walks and discussions with children to examine the impact of SMSC across the school and consider next steps. SMSC efforts have had a profound impact on the quality of relationships, wellbeing and behaviour – with children describing how they regulate their own responses.

‘I think reflection is a time to have peace and to think how wonderful God is and a chance to be still and relax our souls and our hearts.’

Pupil, age 9

‘Reflection helps you in life. It helps you go far.’

Pupil, age 7

Next steps: future plans, opportunities and barriers

Eardisley CE Primary School has instigated a ‘revival’ of a values-based group of headteachers in Herefordshire. This group meets each term to plan joint SMSC projects and to give mutual support.

The school is finding ways to give voice to the place of values in their school: a new values sculpture, designed by the children, is about to be officially unveiled in the school playground, and a ‘log book’ of SMSC holds photos, pupils’ work and observations.

5. Kings Langley Secondary School, Hertfordshire

www.kingslangley.herts.sch.uk

About the school

Kings Langley is a comprehensive secondary school and sixth form in Hertfordshire, with academy status. It has 1,100 pupils aged 11–18 and has an ability profile similar to the national average. It has seen continuous improvement in academic standards over the past 5 years, although there was a drop in higher GCSE passes in 2013. Kings Langley is an Arts Specialist school.

The Vision for SMSC

Headteacher Gary Lewis is committed to an ethos-led, holistic approach to providing SMSC at Kings Langley. The school's vision is for 'each student to be happy and fulfilled...determined by the quality of relationships in the school'. He describes the school as taking an 'uncompromising stance on morality, personal self-control and discipline coupled with a sensitive, generous understanding that we all make mistakes'. With these important pillars in place, Gary sees academic progress as an inevitable outcome and states that, 'confident, articulate students who take responsibility for their own learning are rarely bullied or left behind in school'.

'Without a doubt students [at Kings Langley] learn about spiritual, moral, social and cultural education through the quality of the discussion and relationships they have. I would absolutely, categorically say that is what it is.'

'What really matters, and should matter to Ofsted, are the factors that shape young people's success. And those are character traits.'

SMSC in the curriculum

Kings Langley provides a wide spectrum for SMSC learning primarily through cross-curricular and interdisciplinary arts programmes. For example, in a programme connecting Science to Arts and community outreach, students have created art works based on cell structures, learning from artists who have used science as inspiration. The pieces are shortly to be presented to the local NHS trust. Kings Langley's Arts specialism

compliments other learning areas such as Religious Studies, Psychology, Philosophy, PHSE & Wellbeing, Performing Arts, and Art & Design, all of which make up wider SMSC provision.

‘I think PHSE and resilience is relevant – we’re learning about how to approach issues...we take situations and moral dilemmas and think and act through ways that we would go about responding and try to determine the best way.’

Year 8 student, Kings Langley School

‘You learn a lot of spiritual and moral and cultural issues in ethics and philosophy.’

Year 12 student

Beyond the curriculum

With a particular focus on additional arts and outdoor learning opportunities, Kings Langley is a school focused on role modelling, starting at the top through the leadership team and extending through all teaching staff. Staff model consistency in behaviour, respecting others’ opinions, and state a commitment to working with parents and guardians to set clear expectations for students and support their wider development.

‘How do you teach [SMSC]? It shouldn’t have to be taught...it should be modelled. Morals should be instilled, you know, from parents. It should just be normal. The way people treat each other at school shows it...I’ve never seen anyone bullied at school. I just think everyone here is quite happy.’

Year 10 student

Students

Students at Kings Langley feel their school is a place with a strong ethos of fairness, respecting other people’s opinions, and supporting healthy debate. Notably, students felt most of the content relevant to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development came from out of school sources – social media, parents and family, current events and news – and saw school as an important mediator and ‘sense-maker’ for this content (although they sometimes felt school was too cautious and guarding to students, who were being exposed to the wider world regardless).

‘Education is about not just learning the subject, but actually learning about life. How you’re going to go out in the working world and not be completely terrified.’

Year 11 student

‘I think teachers set an example in the classroom...but I do think the wider world will make you think about [SMSC development], more than school will make you think about it.’

Year 10 student

Measuring and assessing impact

Kings Langley uses a variety of evidence to assess their provision of SMSC and understand its relationship to attainment. A key data set comes from 'Parent View', an annual survey aggregating parents' views on how well the school is dealing with poor behaviour, teaching quality, and anti-bullying strategies. This survey is triangulated with evidence on test performance and academic progress, as well as feedback on the ground related to student wellbeing: bullying, attendance, and behaviour data. Comparing the different data sources allows the management team to identify trends, gaps, and places that require more attention and response.

'I think the measurement is so difficult. A lot of it is in the eye of the beholder – what [the inspector] thinks is valuable themselves. I think most teachers would trust a well-trained Ofsted inspector to measure SMSC provision by observing how children interact, but at the moment none of it matters if it is completely superseded by Maths and English scores... [What] if they could flip it round and say: 'well you're doing really well in your examinations and academic performance, but you can't get a 2 or a 1 unless we're secure with your SMSC education, and at the moment we don't feel students are developing as responsible adults.'

Gary Lewis, Principal

Next steps: future plans, opportunities, and barriers

Kings Langley will continue its commitment to holistic learning, although they are feeling the added pressure from Ofsted to narrow their focus on exams and the strain on teachers is starting to show, with additional time pressure making it difficult to stick with existing commitments.

'I'm really concerned that no matter how strong I am – ultimately, everyone responds to how you're assessed and measured. From my impression it is out of control and missing the point.'

'...as Ofsted pressure has increased over the past year, I've seen a real impact on teachers. They are starting to come up to me and say 'I don't know if I can keep running these extra-curriculars' because we've moved to performance management by results, teachers are starting to grind it out like a salesman does.'

Gary Lewis, Principal

6. St Michael's CE VA Junior School, Bowthorpe, Norwich

www.stmichaelsjuniorschool.co.uk

About the school

St. Michael's is a slightly larger than average junior school situated in an area of Norwich with social and economic disadvantages. The majority of pupils are White British, however a significant minority are from minority ethnic backgrounds and speak English as an additional language. The numbers of pupils who have special educational needs, and those who are entitled to free school meals is above average. The school is in a federation with Cloverhill Infant School.

Vision for SMSC from the Principal

SMSC is embedded into the vision and values that drive the school and woven into everything the school does – its curriculum, ethos and pastoral support. The headteacher, Helen Newell, has a holistic view of education and the staff team have a 'can do' culture. SMSC lies at the heart of the school's journey of transformation. The approach taken is a personalised one, based on the children's needs.

After a difficult Ofsted in 2008, the school decided to 'release themselves from the standards agenda', and place values at the heart of the school. In particular, they focused on looking at the context of the school, and identifying the needs of the children such as raising aspirations and self-esteem, promoting restorative justice. In 2012, the school had a successful Ofsted inspection. SMSC was particularly praised in the report.

'[SMSC] is who we are, it is our vision and our values.'

Christine Stokes, RE Co-ordinator

'There is a high level of deprivation in some areas of Bowthorpe, so I feel the school should be like an oasis, something beautiful and special that the children can't wait to jump out of bed and come to every morning.'

Helen Newell, Headteacher

SMSC in the curriculum

Using a publication produced by the Diocese of Norwich, the school audited their provision of SMSC across the school, which includes SEAL

(Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) and Values for Life, and new art forms and visits to places of worship embedded into the curriculum plans. The audit enabled them to evidence each aspect clearly, and identify any areas where provision was weaker.

The enquiry-based learning approach, enabled by training in active questioning, supports all aspects of SMSC development. Time is given for creative thinking and reflection, and the focus on being an enterprise school has placed skills which promote SMSC development into the heart of the curriculum. The curriculum is frequently set in 'real life' situations using the 'Mantle of the Expert' approach. Initiatives such as Pledge Awards indicate that achievement is regarded as more than attainment and progress.

'We are able to share and that is what I like about this school... in our school it's like a Free School because you are able to ask questions no matter how silly or good they are.'

Year 6 pupil

Beyond the curriculum

Collective worship plays an extremely important part in the life of this Church of England school. Currently the value of perseverance was being explored, evident not just in worship times but around the school through displays.

The school actively seeks to provide opportunities which would not normally be open to many of the pupils in this area of Norwich: visits, visitors and extra-curricular activities such as Forest Schools play an important role in promoting SMSC development. Children had opportunities to contribute to an art display at the Norfolk Show last year, and every child learns a musical instrument.

Students

Although the language of SMSC development was unfamiliar to the children, it is clear that for many of the children SMSC is so fundamental to the life of the school that they accept it as the norm. Children clearly understood that being in school was more than just learning facts, but was about 'learning for life'. The children love the diversity within their school and celebrate this: 'If there was a perfect world then everyone would be the same and they wouldn't have their unique personality...it's just nice to have a world where we are all unique and all have our different ways'.

The pupils we spoke to valued the contribution of RE to SMSC, but also saw the importance of assemblies, clubs, the prayer corner and quiet areas, and the library as valuable places for spiritual development to occur. They had a particularly comprehensive understanding of moral development including peer mediation, the important of reconciliation and rooting their morality in biblical teachings.

'You get to use your initiative and do the right thing on your own, because later on in life you won't always have someone else to rely on so you need to be independent.'

Year 6 pupil

Measuring and assessing impact

Monitoring takes place regularly, mainly through conversation with pupils, staff, parents and governors, but the headteacher finds it hard to evidence outcomes in terms of hard data. Case studies were sometimes used, and an important measure of impact is the extent to which staff talk about SMSC related matters in the staff room, and openly shared ideas. They state that since the whole transformative journey has placed values at the heart of the school, it is difficult to see how standards and improvement in the school could have taken place without SMSC.

Next steps: future plans, opportunities, and barriers

The Diocese is planning to support the school to share its best SMSC practices in INSET sessions. The school is building on its current practice and keeping its audit document under review. The headteacher felt that perhaps previous Ofsted frameworks had not helped SMSC as it was almost seen as an ‘add on’, but that if used well, the current framework supports a thorough, whole-school exploration of SMSC.

‘We enlarged the self-evaluation tool from the Diocese and put it on display and asked people to add examples on post it notes over a period of time. Groups of us then discussed it and thought about how we can develop different aspects in the future ... We need to give people space and support in allowing them to see the evidence for SMSC development in their own school.’

Helen Newell, Headteacher

7. Topcliffe Primary School, Birmingham

www.topcliffe.bham.sch.uk

About the school

Topcliffe is a ‘committed and caring’ community primary school with one form entry and a considerable special needs resource base in Castle Vale, Birmingham. The school has 250 pupils, with around 80 having a statement of educational needs, and functions somewhat like a special needs school within a standard primary school. Topcliffe is located in a deprived area with 50 percent of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Overall, the trend at Topcliffe is for children to arrive well below the national average in EYFS (Early Years Foundation stage) learning goals, with less than 10 percent in line with the national average on entry. Children leave with children attainment of 90+ percent at Level 4 in English and Maths, this includes the children with special needs.

The Vision for SMSC

Because of Topcliffe’s relatively high proportion of special needs students to other learners, Executive Headteacher Ian Lowe places high priority on inclusivity and respecting difference at school, and sees this as both a core part of Topcliffe’s SMSC approach and as underpinning academic achievement: ‘children need to be emotionally stable to be able to learn, and emotional stability comes from good environments’.

On joining Topcliffe in 2008, central to Ian’s approach was leading a school-wide engagement process to develop a set of key principles that would guide conduct, behaviour, and the approach to learning. These were called The 5 Keys to Improvement. Ian brought together senior managers, governors, and parents to co-design these principles based on consideration of the types of skills and character that are needed in today’s economy and society, and the evidence around raising attainment and achievement. The 5 Keys are: Aspiration and Success, Making a Difference, Moral Compass, Access and Apply, and Curiosity and Wonder.

‘Our priority is not examination grades but the development of curiosity and wonder in learning which will inspire aspiration and success. ... What we’re trying to do is give each child a clear, positive, and aspirational vision of what kind of person they would like to be in society.’

Ian Lowe, Executive Headteacher

SMSC in the curriculum

The Five Keys to Improvement make up the mission statement of Topcliffe Primary, and are used in the everyday running of the school, both by children and staff. Different principles within the 5 keys – such as ‘I will share the things I’m good at to help other people’, ‘every action has a reaction’ and ‘to be successful I need to challenge myself’ – are invoked in each year group and are explicitly referred to in the curriculum design for each quarter. The school website links to word documents for each year group’s curriculum and shows a clear link to the relevant principles from the 5 keys.

‘The 5 keys provide a framework that inspires and enhances both mental and physical wellbeing whilst enriching our children’s learning experience.’

Ian Lowe, Executive Headteacher

Beyond the curriculum

Topcliffe’s lively extra-curricular programme has a strong emphasis on music and collaboration (and the largest primary school brass band in Birmingham). They have partnerships with a number of universities including the University of Birmingham’s Jubilee Centre on Character and Values. They promote a values-led curriculum that challenges and supports the school in trialling new initiatives and further developing values as a key aspect of raising children’s standards.

The 5 keys framework is also embedded outside of the classroom in extra-curricular contexts. The playground features a large visual display of the keys, and the messaging is used by dinner supervisors, teachers, and after school club leaders alike. Assemblies are also organised according to the 5 keys and involve an award system to reward progress and exemplary behaviour in students.

The framework is also used in the performance management system for staff, so staff and students are being held to the same standards and the ethos of the school.

‘For me it has always been important to be led not by the curriculum, but by ethos. Some people think SMSC is a wishy-washy, soft option...that’s not what I mean: holding people to account, strong values, high expectations, high social and moral code, with high academic results flowing from that. That is what I mean.’

Ian Lowe, Executive Headteacher

Measuring and assessing impact

The approach for measuring the impact of the 5 keys system at Topcliffe combines student self-assessment with comparative analysis of student development in SMSC and academic attainment. Topcliffe employs a part time educational psychologist who monitors and supports the emotional stability of the children. She conducts comparative analyses of student learning journals with academic progress to identify areas of good progress as well as of concern.

‘We have a 5 keys learning diary so children are assessing themselves to know what they need to do to improve themselves, both academically but also around the 5 keys and how ready they are for learning.’

Ian Lowe, Executive Headteacher

Next steps: future plans, opportunities and barriers

Topcliffe has two priorities for 2014 related to SMSC. The first is to complete ongoing work to fully incorporate the 5 keys framework into the curriculum, with specific examples and references to the different principles not only across subjects, but also differentiated between year groups, to enable progression.

The second area is to create a new outdoor education curriculum in conjunction with the new national curriculum, and Topcliffe has employed an outdoor learning education teacher to lead this work. The focus is to provide outdoor experiences that support SMSC development and that students can bring back into the classroom in a way that is relevant to specific curriculum subjects.

‘The 5 keys is going to be the core element in developing not only the curriculum shaped to meet children’s needs, but also fundamental in supporting an assessment tool that is assessed and moderated by the children themselves.’

Ian Lowe, Executive Headteacher

From Great Aspirations to Effective Practice: Towards a strategy for supporting student development and wellbeing in schools

Tony Breslin

As the Citizenship Education specialist Ted Huddleston, a member of the expert group leading this review has remarked, the history of what is now termed SMSC has had various iterations. At different points the initials and emphases have changed and in different periods the nuances and meanings ascribed to terms such as ‘spiritual’, ‘moral’, ‘social’ and ‘cultural’ have meant different things. In addition, particular themes have periodically emerged that might either be seen as a legitimate part of the wider terrain that SMSC occupies, or which have significant implications for those working on this terrain. For example, in recent years initiatives focused on Citizenship Education, Employability, Values Education, Resilience and Character Education have all come to the fore, and all have a contribution to make to the broader and evolving SMSC agenda. Whatever its precise articulation, though, SMSC has been viewed as a *good* thing. The challenge for policymakers, school leaders and practitioners – and all who work with them – has not been its ‘worthiness’; it has been the fact that its meaning has rarely been scrutinised or ‘nailed down’, either by schools or those charged with supporting or inspecting them.

Frameworks such as those provided by the ‘Citizenship-Rich’, ‘Values-Based’ or ‘Rights-Respecting’ models that have emerged in recent years from organisations such as the Citizenship Foundation, the International Values Education Trust and UNESCO UK have begun to outline what schools driven by SMSC-friendly approaches might look like, but there is still work to be done if we are to effectively operationalise SMSC, in all its aspects, at school level.

Lessons from the introduction of Citizenship to the National Curriculum in England

When Citizenship became a subject of the National Curriculum in secondary schools in England in 2002, it faced similar difficulties. Aside from the hotly contested arguments about meaning, there was much debate about whether Citizenship could or should be conceived of as a *subject* in the conventional manner of other subjects on the school timetable. In particular, there was a debate about whether Citizenship should be ‘taught’ or ‘caught’ and whether delivery ought to be *discrete* and expertly delivered (as is the norm for school ‘subjects’), or ‘cross-curricular’ and delivered by ‘any decent teacher’.

The answer to these and related questions is, of course, ‘both’. The need is to reject the false choices between subject and cross-curricular delivery and between specialist and generalist teaching. This discussion

amongst citizenship educators (and their critics) is instructive for this Review and for SMSC itself. Too often, platitudes about ethos and cross-curricular or whole school practice result in an outcome where, as this author has oft-stated, meaningful student experience is disconnected and “everywhere but *nowhere*”.

However, to constrain Citizenship (or PSHE or SMSC) to the tramlines of the timetable, especially in secondary schools, and the shape imposed on curricular design by, for instance, GCSEs and so forth, is equally inadequate.

Challenges for SMSC: identification, evidence and the assessment of impact

As with Citizenship, the various aspects of SMSC delivery might be delivered through distinct subjects or programmes, for instance Religious Studies, English, Modern Foreign Languages, PSHE and Citizenship itself, but they *also* need to be delivered and *experienced* in other subjects’ programmes of study, across other aspects of school life and through that range of vital activities that will never succumb to the 45 minute lesson, or the public examination. In practical terms, three questions are pertinent:

1. How might this be achieved?
2. How might getting SMSC and related areas ‘right’ in this regard serve the school’s other and wider educational goals, notably those concerned with inclusion and achievement?
3. What other areas of school life might benefit from a similar analysis?

First, it is worth attempting to break down and conceptualise SMSC. Figure 1 adds to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural two related categories: ‘Personal’ and ‘Physical’. This enables us to use a single coherent approach not just to those areas traditionally seen as being *within* the SMSC domain but also to areas around pastoral support and careers guidance, employability, health and personal wellbeing. These areas face the same challenges as the conventional strands in SMSC. That is to say, they are typically portrayed as being ‘outside’ the mainstream of the subject timetable and the subject specialist structures that do much to define school hierarchies, at least in the secondary phase. Thus, schools and school leaders – and those who work with them as advisers or inspectors – struggle to specifically *identify* them, *evidence* them and *assess* their impact.

Too often, as a result, in spite of frequent ‘warm words’, these areas of school life are seen as an adjunct to the apparently core purpose of schooling: raising achievement (or, more narrowly, attainment) such that every student reaches their potential. However, if students are to achieve their full potential (academically and in any, and every, other respect), their personal, social, physical, spiritual, moral and cultural development and wellbeing must be prioritised. One hallmark of an ‘Outstanding’ school ought to be the quality of their SMSC provision – their concern for the physical and mental wellbeing and the personal, social, cultural, spiritual and moral development of every young person in their care.

Figure 1: The different elements of an extended conceptualisation of ‘SMSC’

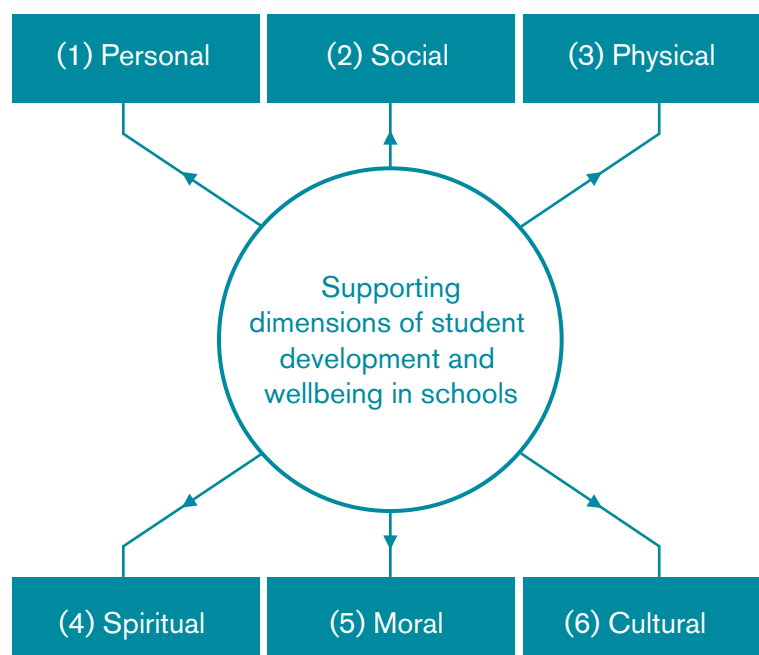


Figure 2 gives an indication of the sorts of activities, experiences, structures and curricular or pastoral inputs that schools *already* use to support students’ development and wellbeing in each of these areas. Our suggestion is that individual schools or groups of schools should go through this kind of deliberate (and deliberative) process – first in separating out the components of SMSC, however they define it, and, secondly, in identifying specific activities within each area.

In so doing, schools will rapidly uncover a plethora of channels and conduits in which different aspects of SMSC might, or already do, reside, and through which activity can be evidenced and impact assessed. Figures 3–8 give an idea of the number of activities, experiences, aspects of the school’s structure and ethos and curricular channels that might be identified for each of the six areas. For each school, these diagrams will look different. However, the suggestion is that each school identifies from this plethora of possibilities a relatively limited number of channels – perhaps three or four – around which each specific component of SMSC is delivered. These possibilities might be drawn from:

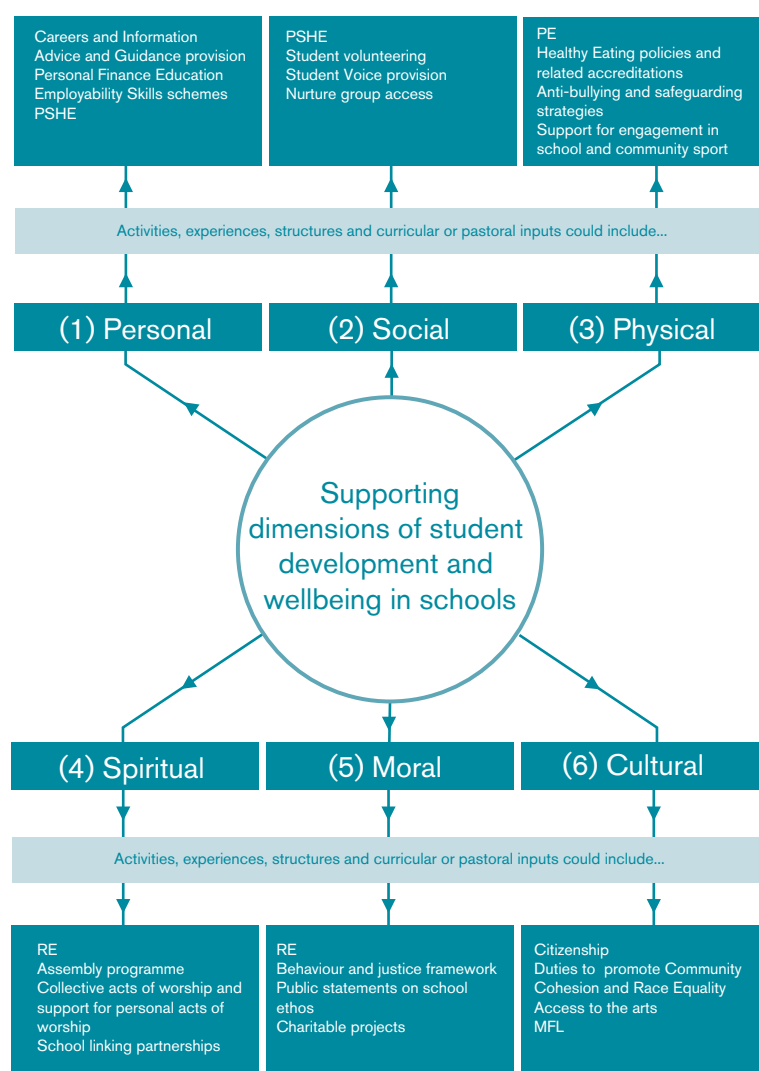
1. Subjects of the National Curriculum in England and the statutory or widely-accepted curriculum elsewhere in the UK, for instance Citizenship, English and Religious Studies;
2. Programmes, or aspects of programmes, around which schools have some form of statutory responsibility, for instance PSHE;
3. The Assembly programme;
4. Extra-curricular and curriculum enrichment opportunities offered by schools, for instance enhanced sporting provision or projects to widen access to the arts;
5. Whole school strategies, for instance policies focused on

- challenging racism, sexism and homophobia and initiatives concerned with issues like Healthy Eating and Child Mental Health;
6. Mechanisms through which schools discharge their statutory duties, for instance those relating to Community Cohesion and Race Equality;
 7. Engagement channels that have been opened up in schools to enable the expression of clearer and more effective Student Voice and Student Leadership;
 8. Community engagement projects, including those focused around volunteering and fundraising;
 9. Programmes and experiences designed to enhance students' personal effectiveness and their employability skills;
 10. The pastoral support framework, including work around transition and with respect to Careers Education and information, advice and guidance (IAG).

This 'narrowing down' provides focus, enables manageability and profiling, and locates responsibility. Thus, a specific school might ascribe its PSHE programme and its pastoral framework particular roles in supporting students' personal development, its RE curriculum responsibility for addressing aspects of students' spiritual development, its work around building community cohesion – a statutory duty on all schools – as key to developing students' cultural awareness, and its Citizenship curriculum as central to the development of their personal effectiveness skills, especially with regard to speaking up and speaking out.

The 'we do it everywhere' mantra that is often associated with SMSC may still apply but there are now particular spaces that students, parents, teachers, school leaders and inspectors can point to when seeking to gather evidence and assess impact in any particular school setting, primary, secondary or special.

Figure 2: Bringing SMSC to life: identifying a range of delivery channels at school level



Outstanding SMSC provision: the need for *precise* but *multi-modal* delivery

Good SMSC practice promotes wellbeing and supports development, as does a range of activity concerned more specifically with students’ individual and personal development and their physical wellbeing. These more personally focused activities and experiences are both vital to the SMSC project and as noted, experience similar challenges in ‘getting heard’ above the dominance of the timetable, the examination cycle and the general din of school life. They sit on the same Venn diagram as SMSC, alongside initiatives in areas such as work related learning, student guidance and student voice. In particular, they play into current agendas around physical wellbeing and child mental health.

Moreover, as with the more established components of SMSC, they require *multimodal* but *precise* delivery that schools need to be able to evidence and that students need to actively identify, engage with and experience.

SMSC and the route from inclusion to achievement

While there is a need for more empirical work on the connections between attending to students' SMSC needs – and their personal development and physical wellbeing – and educational engagement and academic achievement, each of the six components of the deliberately broad conception of SMSC identified here is concerned with an aspect of educational provision that is facilitative of a young person's broader maturation and educational success. *At the heart of the analysis offered is a belief that the student who has their personal, social, physical, spiritual, moral and cultural needs addressed is likely to achieve better on the 'harder' metrics against which student and school success is measured: academic success, attendance, exclusion, subsequent progression to employment or further or higher education.*

Beyond the subject curriculum: applications beyond SMSC?

The hope is that the kind of model illustrated here might encourage and enable individual schools and curriculum planners to use a similar approach when developing provision in a number of areas, on which schools are obliged to deliver but for which the conventional timetable is insufficient or, potentially, a barrier.

Such a strategy might have particular value when dealing with those packages of provision that have, too often, been lost in an undefined cross-curricular wilderness: careers education and guidance, PSHE, sex and relationship education, various aspects of work related learning and professional and vocational education, some of which is captured in the extended conceptualisation of SMSC offered here.

The approach illustrated enables the mapping of gaps, duplications and complementarities and allows senior and middle leaders to consider how the broader jigsaw of the wider social, developmental and wellbeing curriculum fits together. Moreover, such a strategy can offer a 'picture', distinctly developed in each school but mindful of statutory requirements and entitlements, that curricular planners can construct, work from, and keep under continual renewal.

Tony Breslin

Expert Panel Member

Tony Breslin is Director of the consultancy Breslin Public Policy Limited, Chair of the awarding body Industry Qualifications and a Trustee of the charity Adoption UK. A teacher by profession, he works at the interface between educational practice and public policy, and was formerly Chief Executive at the education charity the Citizenship Foundation and a local authority adviser on 14–19 education.

tony.breslin@breslinpublicpolicy.com

www.breslinpublicpolicy.com

Figure 3: Personal effectiveness, confidence and employability



Figure 4: Social awareness, empathy and interpersonal skills



Figure 5: Physical wellbeing, sporting participation and healthy living

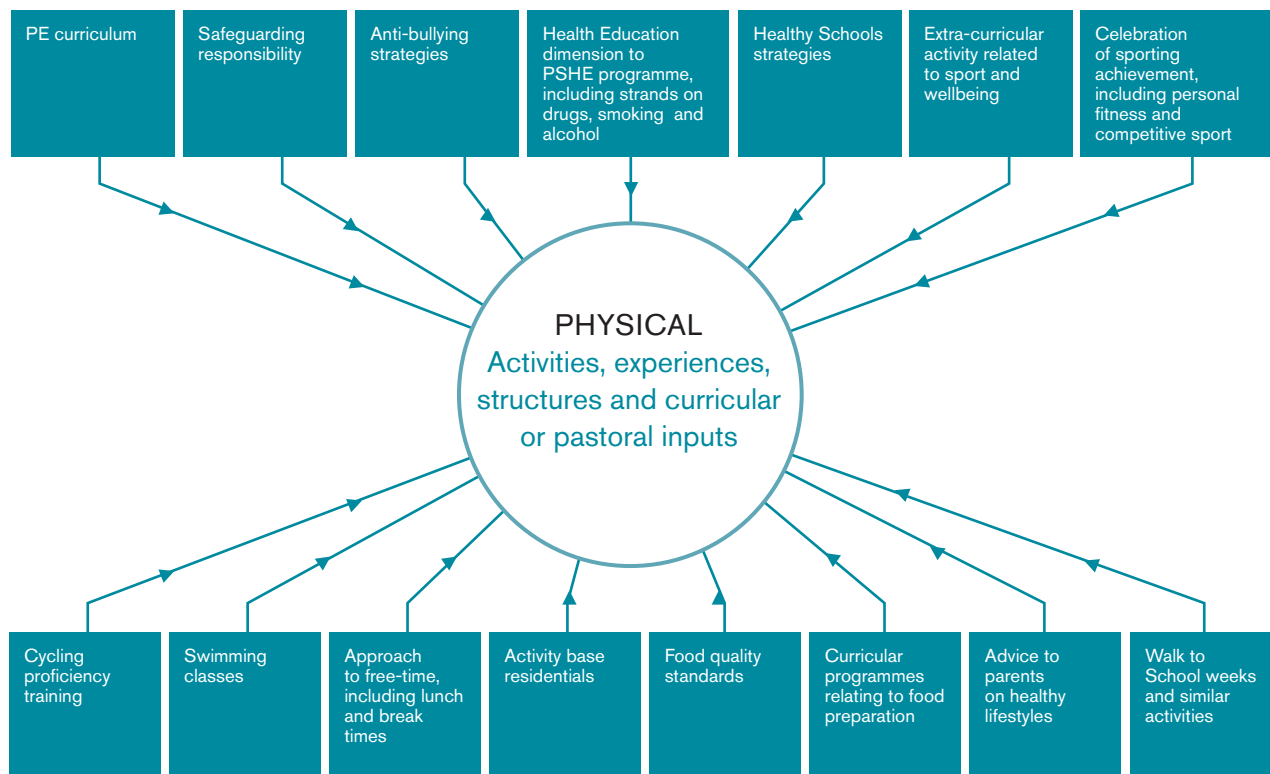


Figure 6: Spiritual awareness and belief



Figure 7: Moral literacy and values

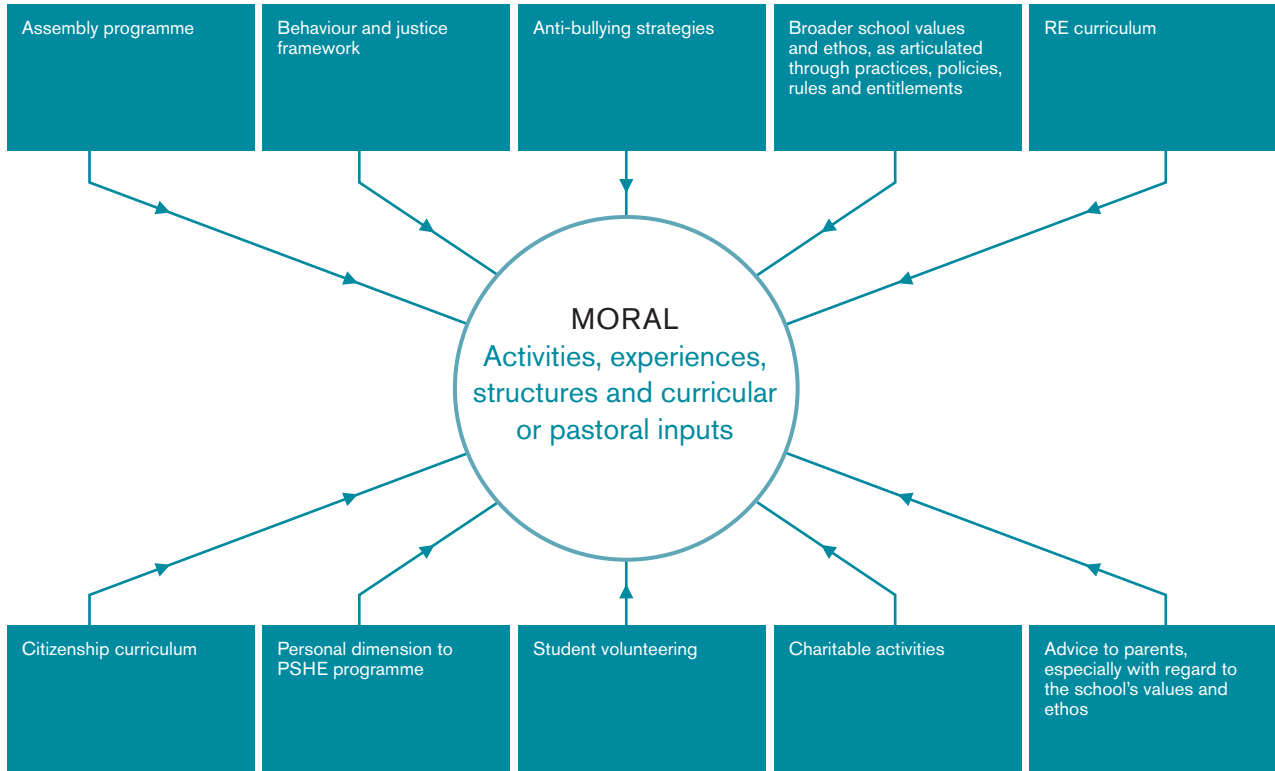


Figure 8: Cultural awareness



Facilitator's notes for leadership interviews and pupil focus groups

Thanks for your interest in creating a short SMSC school case study and/or conducting a pupil focus group for the RSA's project. You'll be gathering information that will hopefully be included in the final report, and inform our recommendations.

If you are writing up a case study, all we'll ultimately need is up to 1,500 words, and if possible some photos, using the standard template.

If you are doing a pupil focus group, we'd like a similar write up.

If you are doing both, ideally we'd like a single report that synthesises the views of leaders, teachers and pupils. You should use the Case Study Template if you are doing both.

Please review the relevant template before conducting your field work, as it will help to give you a sense of what information we'd like to capture, and should help to guide your conversations.

Leadership interviews (prompt questions for Case Studies):

Recording:

If possible record interviews, even with your phone's voice memo app which should be suitable for this. Ensure that you check with your interviewee that they are comfortable with you recording the interview first, and let them know how you intend to use the recording and how long you plan to keep it for (deleting as soon as possible after write-up).

Language:

It's best to introduce SMSC by saying the abbreviation out in full, possibly in a different order to the way it's written; you want to encourage thinking about the real meaning of the words, rather than the label we've started to assign to them. Try to encourage the interviewee to think about each aspect of SMSC individually as well, rather than as an amalgamation.

Prompts and style:

The suggested interview questions below are best used in a semi-structured way. They are intended to help open up a conversation with the interviewee, rather than to narrow it down too much. If the conversation develops into a new area, feel free to let the discussion develop naturally (keeping an eye on timing and overall relevance).

The questions below in parenthesis are designed as additional prompts that can be used if necessary to help draw out responses. It may be that your interviewee is forthcoming and has already broadly answered these questions earlier in the interview, in which case these questions can be passed over.

Writing up your findings:

Whilst listening back to your recording, it would be great if you could note down key themes and quotes from the interview into the template word document.

Suggested questions:

1. How do you provide Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development at your school?
2. Do you have different approaches to the four different elements of SMSC?
3. Can you explain the journey that you and your school have taken to get to this point?
4. To what extent do you use curricular channels (for instance, the RE curriculum, PSHE, the Citizenship curriculum, the English curriculum) to support the delivery of your SMSC responsibilities?
5. How do you know when a new strategy or approach is working? What indicates progress/what do you take as promising signs? Do students' opinions get taken into account?
6. When and how did SMSC education become a priority to you and your school? *The following questions can be used as prompt questions if necessary...*
7. (What do you think would help you and your school to do more or to do better?)
8. (What do you think are the key barriers for you and your school going forward?)
9. What do you think would help other schools that are currently struggling with their SMSC provision?
10. Apart from money and time, what do you think the wider educational and regulatory system needs to improve SMSC provision as a whole?
11. And finally, would you be interested to join the RSA Investigates Summit on 20 January 2014 to share more of your experience and ideas with our expert group?

Pupil focus groups:

The same approach to recording, language, and prompts and style are relevant to running a pupil focus group.

Additionally (and with apologies to those of you with heaps of experience at this) try to give consideration to the following when facilitating:

- Whilst doing introductions, try to note down each pupil's name on your note pad so that you can refer to everyone by name throughout the session
- There are usually more forthright and more reserved people in focus groups; try to identify the more and less confident/talkative pupils early on
- Use eye contact and body language to encourage quieter pupils to speak up and to discourage louder pupils from dominating the conversation (ie make eye contact, or turn towards those students who you would like to invite to speak; avoid eye contact and turn slightly away from those you would like to discourage to speak)
- Invite a learning mentor, teacher, or teaching assistant to sit in on the focus group with you, especially if the size of the group is larger (more than 8 pupils)

For the Introductory Activity you'll need to have printed out the quotes listed below on separate sheets of paper so that you can hand them out.

Writing up your findings:

Whilst listening back to your recording, it would be great if you could note down key themes and quotes from the interview into the template word document.

Additionally, it would be great if you could note down your impressions on the following aspects of your group:

- What kind of vocabulary are the students using to describe SMSC?
- What is the tone and energy level of the group (are they enthusiastic, bored, focused, distracted, etc)
- What kind of body language do the students have whilst discussing these issues?

Suggested questions and activity:

Introductory Activity:

Break up into pairs; each pair gets one of the following quotes to discuss for a couple of minutes. Each pair reads out their quote and feeds back on what it meant to them:

“Educating the mind without educating the heart is no education at all.”

Aristotle

“Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.”

Robert Frost

“Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education.”

Martin Luther King Jr.

“Education without values, as useful as it is, seems rather to make man a more clever devil.”

C.S. Lewis

“I have never let my schooling interfere with my education.”

Mark Twain

Followed by plenary discussion:

For primary school pupils:

1. Have you heard of ‘spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education’ before?
2. What does it mean to you?
3. Can you give me some examples of how you learn about other cultures at school?
4. Can you give me some examples of how you learn about right and wrong at school?

5. What have you learned about religion?
6. Why do you think we go to school? Is school just about learning facts?

For secondary school pupils:

1. Have you heard of 'spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education' before?
2. What does it mean to you?
3. Has your school helped you think about your culture and other cultures? How has learning at school helped you think about other cultures?
4. Can you give some examples of how experiences at school have helped to test or develop your values or sense of morality?
5. Are you happy with the way in which your school approaches the teaching of religion and the way in which it supports, explains or promotes different faiths?
6. Why do you think going to school is important? Do you think there is more to going to school than learning English and Maths?

RSA Investigation into SMSC		Case Study template
About the school		School:
Location		Website:
Demographics		
Feeder schools?		
Academy/Free School status?		
<hr/>		
Vision for SMSC from the Principal		
How does leadership talk about SMSC?		(quotes)
How do they describe their approach?		
How do they address each strand?		
What is the relationship to wider academic learning/attainment?		
<hr/>		
SMSC in the curriculum		
Examples of how SMSC is addressed through curriculum		(quotes)
<hr/>		
Beyond the curriculum		
What does the extra-curricular landscape look like at the school?		(quotes)
What types of additional provision exist at the school/is it well attended/are students enthusiastic about it?		
<hr/>		
Students		
Findings from pupil focus group, if conducted		(quotes)
General reflections on student voice, behaviour		
Their comprehension of SMSC, ability to give examples; speak articulately about 'whole education'/learning beyond subject areas/classroom		
<hr/>		
Measuring and assessing impact		
How do they know when an approach is working?		(quotes)
What is their stance on measuring/assessing SMSC provision/outcomes?		
<hr/>		
Next steps: future plans, opportunities, and barriers		
What are the new activities and opportunities on the horizon?		(quotes)
What are the key challenges to be overcome going forward?		
Views from leadership on SMSC policy		

RSA Investigation into SMSC		Pupil focus group template
About the school		School:
Location		Website:
Demographics		
Feeder schools?		
Academy/Free School status?		
<hr/>		
SMSC in the curriculum		
Any examples from students of how SMSC is addressed through the curriculum		(quotes)
<hr/>		
Beyond the curriculum		
What does the extra-curricular landscape look like at the school?		(quotes)
What types of additional provision exist at the school/is it well attended/are students enthusiastic about it?		
<hr/>		
Students		
General reflections on student voice, behaviour		(quotes)
Their comprehension of SMSC, ability to give examples; speak articulately about 'whole education'/learning beyond subject areas/classroom		

The RSA: an enlightenment organisation committed to finding innovative practical solutions to today's social challenges. Through its ideas, research and 27,000-strong Fellowship it seeks to understand and enhance human capability so we can close the gap between today's reality and people's hopes for a better world.



8 John Adam Street
London WC2N 6EZ
+44 (0)20 7930 5115

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