AKELEY WOOD JUNIOR SCHOOL:
SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL EDUCATION

The school philosophy believes in the education of the whole child. It is our job to discover and nurture each pupil's abilities, wherever they may lie. It is for this reason that in contrast to many educational establishments, there is no prejudicial hierarchy of subjects here, no hierarchy of value, since the value is the value to the child – the individual.

We expect Akeley Wood to be an unpretentious, civilized school, where good behaviour and good manners are paramount. It is the security afforded by such an environment which makes the school a place where children should enjoy being. We encourage pupils of any faith or none to understand and believe in the values that really matter, to treat others as they would wish to be treated themselves, and to develop their own self-discipline to stand up for what they know to be right.

The education provided is not only about the gaining of knowledge and the acquiring of essential skills – important though they are – it is also about the personal development of each pupil in its fullest sense. The fullest sense, in terms of the 1992 Schools Act, is one which includes the 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' of each boy and girl. At Akeley Wood, the education offered closely interweaves the following:

- A Christian world view serving as an ever present backcloth to the ongoing life of the school.

- Integrity and commitment where adults and young people are encouraged to value and be true to the highest ideals.

- Personal relationships. This concerns adults and young people alike aiming to set, and being entitled to expect from others, good, caring standards of behaviour, marked by respect, responsibility, openness and honesty.

- Discipline concerned with critical openness through which all members of the community are encouraged to develop self-discipline. Discipline is not unthinking obedience, but rather the development of positive attitudes to oneself and others resulting in self-induced responsible behaviour.

- Developing all pupils to their fullest potential. This means encouraging and challenging the very able to develop to their fullest degree, and supporting and enabling low-achieving and average pupils to value themselves and even surprise themselves through what they are able to achieve.

It is the task of the school to ensure that an adequate foundation of experience and knowledge, with opportunities for discussion, reflection and evaluation, is provided, so that pupils can be given maximum scope to develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions.

Partnership

The role of Akeley Wood School in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is one of stimulus and nourishment. The School, however, realises that it does not do this by itself. It recognizes that the education of boys and girls has been entrusted to it by parents. The contribution of the wider family and, in some cases the involvement in a particular faith community and in all cases the involvement with society at large will also contribute in various ways to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Rate of Development

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural dimensions of humankind are ones in which it is impossible to prescribe a rigid and bureaucratic set of aims, objectives and standards to be met. It is, however, possible to establish clear signposts to show the general direction of the desired development. We encourage individual autonomy and responsibility; respect for individual difference, rather than mere conformity; and also a willingness to appreciate and celebrate diversity. What follows is an attempt to clarify the ways in which the School can encourage its pupils to develop as whole human beings.

Pupils' spiritual development

The spiritual development, which is encouraged, rests upon an encouragement to think, explore and discuss. It is concerned with how personal beliefs and values are acquired, especially on questions of religion; whether life has purpose, and the basis for personal and social behaviour. It is not another name for religious education, although there are close connections.

The potential for spiritual development is open to all pupils. It is concerned with specifically religious concerns, but by no means confined to the development of religious beliefs. The spiritual dimension of life at Akeley is seen as the set of beliefs, values, attitudes, experiences, and reflections by which individuals give direction and shape and meaning to their lives.

Spiritual development is also concerned with the promotion of the development of feelings and emotions, as well as identifying the importance of intellectual curiosity. It is concerned with deepening appreciation of music, art and literature. These areas, as well as those traditionally understood as religious, seek to explain what life is about, and pupils are invited and encouraged to explore them. They are urged to approach these areas with serious intent and take on increasing responsibility for themselves in them. The methodology adopted is that of discussion, exploration and reflection through what is taught in the curriculum, participation in music, drama and artistic activity, through collective worship and through the school's ethos.

Spiritual Aims
- A recognition of the right of others to hold their own views and respect for those who have different beliefs and customs.
- A willingness to seriously explore the religious faith which has shaped the particular culture from which the pupil has come.
- A willingness to look beyond materialism.
- A willingness to reflect on and think critically about their experiences, responses and choices.
- A developing sense of awe and wonder in the face of the universe.
- A willingness to reflect on and appreciate works of literary, artistic or musical merit.
- A willingness to ask and explore 'ultimate questions'.
- A growing ability to cope with the times of suffering which human life naturally presents: anxiety, stress, unhappiness, illness, divorce and death.

Pupils' moral development

Moral development is concerned with a pupil's knowledge, understanding, intentions, attitudes and behaviour in relation to what is 'right' and 'wrong'. Moral development is concerned with fundamental judgements and precepts about how people should behave and act and reasons for such behaviour. The intention at Akeley Wood is that pupils, as they develop a sense of morality, will be invited to explore the place of reason in ethical matters and acquire value systems which are their own, together with an understanding that their behaviour and actions should be derived from a moral set of beliefs and values. The school expects high moral standards from all members of its community. It is important for all pupils to understand that any social grouping depends for its continued existence on the broad acceptance of rules and laws.

In the classroom situation, in consistency with the purpose of developing pupil autonomy and personal responsibility, moral education focuses on values clarification. It is important, however, to be clear and consistent when dealings with matters of morality, especially where there is a high degree of consensus in society.

Moral Aims

- A developing sense of self-discipline and responsibility not only for their own actions, but for their responsibilities to others.

- A developing awareness of and pride in their own unique gifts, talents and privileges, and a parallel rejection of all forms of prejudiced perception of others on the basis of class, race, sex, religion or nationality.

- An appreciation of the importance of honesty, truthfulness and the development of personal integrity.

- A sensitivity to the feelings, needs and rights of others.

- A growing disposition towards generosity, rather than selfishness, by helping those less fortunate or weaker than ourselves.

- An appreciation of the importance of being kind to others and a clear rejection of unkindness, cruelty or bullying.

- A developing of a mature sense of self-confidence and self-worth and a consequent willingness to lay aside arrogance.

Pupils' social development

Social development refers to the progressive acquisition of the competences and qualities needed to play a full part in society. It is primarily concerned with the skills and personal qualities necessary for individuals to live and function effectively in society by being a member of the community. The school can only complement and extend what the home and society in general can achieve in helping to prepare pupils to participate constructively in society.

From the start a pupil will be required to learn the obligations and constraints, but also the satisfaction, that go with being a member of the Akeley Wood community. As they develop, pupils will also become aware of their own identity as individuals, as well as the importance of taking into account the feelings and wishes of others; they will be given opportunities to experience a variety of social roles. Social development is seen to be closely related to the development of moral principles.

Social Aims
- To provide opportunities for pupils to work in groups and in pairs to experience a variety of social roles.

- To provide opportunities for boys and girls to experience working co-operatively in partnership.

- To provide opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility.

- To provide opportunities for pupils to learn to respond to the initiatives of others, and what it means to share a common purpose.

- To provide opportunities for pupils to understand about the 'political' aspects of living in society.

Pupils' cultural development
Cultural development refers to pupils' increasing understanding and command of those beliefs, values, customs, knowledge and skills which, taken together, form the basis of identity and cohesion in societies and groups. This area of development is principally concerned with the pupils' understanding and appreciation of the music, art, drama, poetry, science and technology of the society in which they live.

The purpose of education is both to develop and strengthen the cultural interests which the pupils already possess and expose them to a breadth of stimuli which will allow them to develop new interests. It is important to realise that cultures change, consequently pupils will be taught about those past features which have influenced and shaped the present, as well as about how the present generations, themselves included, are maintaining, interpreting and reshaping their cultural traditions.

It is also acknowledged that the school will not be the only means whereby a pupil is influenced culturally and that it may not be the strongest factor. The school can have an immediate impact upon its pupils and does have a contribution to make. Such contributions may include an introduction to the values and customs held within a nation's culture, and to those of other significant cultures, including those represented in the school. At Akeley Wood, with the presence of a significant minority of pupils from other cultures it is important that they feel that their values and customs are respected.

Cultural Aims
To provide pupils with the knowledge of the nature and roots of their own cultural traditions and practices, including historical, social, religious, aesthetic, ethnic or political and also of the key features of other major cultural groups within their own society.

- To develop an understanding of the diversity of religious, social, aesthetic, ethnic and political traditions and practices within their society.

- To encourage a personal response and accomplishment in a range of cultural fields which might include, as a minimum: literature (both prose and verse); music; technology (including information technology); art and design; and physical movement, particularly in the realms of sport.

- To enlarge pupils' capacity to relate what they learn, in school generally and in particular areas of the curriculum, to their appreciation of wider cultural aspects of society, and to evaluate the quality and worth of cultural achievements.

British Values

- Within the SMSC provision, Akeley Wood Junior School and Nursery promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We aim for all pupils to develop:

- an understanding of how citizens can influence decision-making through the democratic process;

- an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety;

- an understanding that there is a separation of power between the executive and the judiciary, and that while some public bodies such as the police and the army can be held to account through Parliament, others such as the courts maintain independence;

- an understanding that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;

- an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;

- an understanding of the importance of identifying and combatting discrimination.

Achieving the aims

The moral, spiritual, social and cultural (personal) aspects of a pupil's development do not form part of any separate curriculum area's scheme of work. The formation of character, beliefs, values and a spiritual centre, is really the development of character and is not something which can be attained by formula, curriculum, organisation or prescription. Personal meanings, beliefs and values which constitute a person's spirituality, and the qualities of character and value from which morally good and socially responsible action proceed, are built up steadily, slowly, continuously and cumulatively in the on-going process of how we relate to each other as human beings.

No single system or institutional structure within the school, no single department or procedure is responsible for the moral, spiritual, cultural or social developments of the pupils. The school, however, can endeavour to provide an ethos where such development can take place through the general day to day quality of relationships. The so-called hidden curriculum is also of great importance and can aid development. Some areas of the school's life may have a greater part to play in the process of these characteristics than others.

In an attempt to achieve its aims, the school does have a number of more formal structures which are intended to contribute to the general process of moral, spiritual, social and cultural development. It is not intended that these structures obviously and clearly deliver moral, spiritual, social, or cultural development, but that collectively they underpin the more important aspects of the general social relationships which exist within a school. They also provide some of the contexts within which creative personal interaction and development may take place.

The Form System

Each pupil is a member of a Form whose form teacher is responsible for their academic, social and personal welfare. As part of their role, form teachers conduct form periods which will at times, both explicitly and implicitly, deal with the promotion of personal values.

Assemblies

Assemblies, by what they applaud, celebrate, encourage and disallow, make a highly significant contribution to the articulation and demonstration of the values which the school wishes to promote and develop. Assemblies are of a broadly Christian character, which provide the opportunity for worship and reflection.

The Classroom

Religious Education and PSHCE have an important and specific, but by no means exclusive role in the promotion of moral and spiritual development. It is in these lessons that a number of explicit moral and spiritual issues will be examined, explored and clarified. Every area of the curriculum, however – even if not by specific content, but rather through the very nature of the interaction between staff and pupils – will be a forum for moral, spiritual, social and cultural development.

Extra-curricular Activities

The opportunity for the promotion of social, cultural, spiritual as well as moral values is apparent on the Games field, through visits and trips to sites and institutions of educational interest, as well as attendance at concerts, plays and art galleries.

Responsibility and Leadership

The House system, School Council and Library, as well as numerous extra activities, provide both formal and informal opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership, service and responsibility.

Models and Examples

Spiritual, moral, cultural and social values could be said to be caught rather than taught. At Akeley Wood, pupils will encounter a wide variety of different people, through teachers, non-academic staff and older pupils, as well as visitors to the school. All these will provide material for reflection and evaluation in the development of their own character.

The School Ethos and Rules

There is more to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development than just conforming to a set of rules. It is important to have a well regulated and disciplined environment for any educational achievement. The school has policy documents on the School codes of behaviour, and these together with the general ethos of the school are expressions of the values which Akeley Wood seeks to encourage. They are considered to be a vital ingredient in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils.

Updated: September 2016
Next Review Date: September 2017

Signed _____

Mrs C G Page
Headteacher