



**Office for Standards
in Education**

Promoting and evaluating pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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Foreword

This guidance is a revised edition of a booklet which was originally published in November 2001 as part of a training course in the inspection of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development. In September 2003, Ofsted made a version of this training course available to schools. Ofsted has received many requests for the guidance it contains to be made more widely available.

In consequence, we are now publishing this version on our website as a stand-alone document designed to be used by all those with an interest in pupils' SMSC development, including academics and teacher trainers, education inspectors and advisers, teachers, parents, governors, members of different faith groups, Standing Advisory Councils for Religious Education (SACREs) and others. Its purpose is to support all readers in their understanding of pupils' SMSC development. In addition, it is designed to help schools when planning their provision for pupils' SMSC development and to help schools and inspectors in evaluating its effectiveness.

This publication confirms the importance of pupils' SMSC development. It is crucial for individual pupils and it is crucial for society as a whole. Most teachers would see it as the heart of what education is all about – helping pupils grow and develop as people. This importance has repeatedly been recognised by legislators: schools are required by law to promote pupils' SMSC development and inspectors are required to inspect it. This guidance has been updated to take account of recent changes in the law and in the inspection framework introduced in 2003.

But this publication also recognises that what is meant by the terms 'spiritual', 'moral', 'social' and 'cultural' development has not always been clear. 'Spiritual', for instance, can be interpreted and expressed in different ways. There is also the added complication that any definition has to be acceptable to people of faith, people of no faith, and people of different faiths. This guidance seeks to address issues such as these by providing teachers and inspectors with working definitions. These are offered on an advisory basis only and with the clear understanding that schools will develop these definitions in ways which are appropriate to their beliefs and philosophies and those of their pupils.

Parts A and B of this guidance deal with the definitions of 'spiritual', 'moral', 'social' and 'cultural' development. Parts C and D illustrate how inspectors go about inspecting SMSC development and how they reach overall judgements on its quality in a school.

In preparing this guidance, Ofsted has considered carefully: legislative requirements; the views of legislators; recent debates and matters of local and national concern; and the views of different professional, religious and secular organisations, followers of different religions, academics, inspectors, parents and pupils. Ofsted would like to thank everyone for their help and support, which has been universally positive.

The context for the example in the second part of this guidance is that of a secondary school. However, the basic principles remain the same whatever the phase and nature of the pupils. We feel confident that users of this guidance will be able to adjust and interpret as necessary to suit the context of the foundation stage, primary schools, special schools, sixth forms, post-16 colleges and other settings.

Ofsted will be pleased to receive comments on this guidance. They may be addressed to schoolinspections@ofsted.gov.uk.

Part A: Introduction

Why we are interested in pupils' SMSC development

The statutory requirement that schools should encourage pupils' SMSC development was first included in the Education Reform Act 1988. The Act began as follows:

'The curriculum for a maintained school (must be) a balanced and broadly based curriculum which —

(a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society; and

*(b) prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'*¹

This was followed by the Education (Schools) Act 1992 which stated that:

'The Chief Inspector for England shall have the general duty of keeping the Secretary of State informed about—

(a) the quality of the education provided by schools in England;

(b) the educational standards achieved in those schools;

(c) whether the financial resources made available to those schools are managed efficiently; and

*(d) the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at those schools.'*²

The Chief Inspector's general duty to report on pupils' SMSC development was reiterated in the School Inspections Act 1996 and the duty on schools to promote pupils' SMSC development was restated in the Education Act 2002.

An idea of what legislators had in mind when legislating for the inspection of pupils' SMSC development can be gained from a debate in the House of Lords in July 1996. This emphasised the need to establish the values schools should impart to pupils. It was clearly recognised that there is more to life than achieving high standards in academic subjects. The task was described as:

'...the training of good human beings, purposeful and wise, themselves with a vision of what it is to be human and the kind of society that makes that possible'.³

Today, the belief of legislators and others in the importance of encouraging pupils' SMSC development remains strong. Whether talking about the family, teenage pregnancy, the misuse of drugs, ethics in business or politics, football hooliganism, homophobia, the promotion of good race relations, the consequences of social disadvantage, a failure to vote at elections, or the host of other issues which raise

¹ Education Reform Act 1988 (c. 40). Part I, Chapter I, Section I (2).

² Education (Schools) Act 1992 (c. 38) Part I, Section 2

³ *Hansard*. 5 Jul 1996 : Column 1691

spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues, the debate very quickly turns to schools and the role they can play.

It is, therefore, not surprising that there have been recent, significant, national initiatives in personal, social and health education (PSHE), citizenship, sex and relationship education (SRE), drug education, and careers education and guidance, all of which are linked to pupils' SMSC development. After the 2001 disturbances in Bradford, the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, commented:

'...we still have a long way to go...and...we must not become complacent...'

...The vast majority of people in our society, regardless of their ethnic background, want the same things for themselves and their children. As we share a common citizenship, we have to find a way of working and living together successfully. My aim is to create an inclusive society, local communities which meet the needs of all groups, and a dialogue which transcends differences...

*...Teaching young people the value of diversity and a proper sense of society and their place in it potentially offers great benefits in tackling racism and promoting race equality.'*⁴

Recent legislation on race equality, special educational needs, disability, sexual orientation, religion and age has significant links to pupils' SMSC development. Schools have a statutory duty to ensure that pupils are not discriminated against and to promote good race relations. Schools must have regard to guidance set out in codes of practice issued by the Commission for Racial Equality, the Department for Education and Skills and the Disability Rights Commission.⁵ Ofsted's training for inspectors on evaluating educational inclusion, which is now available as a course for staff in schools, says a great deal about SMSC. It provides a coherent rationale for testing out a school's effectiveness in meeting diverse needs effectively.⁶

⁴ Blunkett D. 'Respect for All'. *Connections*. Commission for Racial Equality (CRE). 2001.

⁵ *Code of Practice on the Duty to Promote Race Equality*. London, CRE, 2002 and the *Guide for Schools*. London, CRE, 2002. See also *Framework for A Race Equality Policy for Schools*. London, CRE, 2002. *Inclusive Schooling: Children with Special Educational Needs*. London, DfES, 2001. *Special Educational Needs Code of Practice*. London, DfES, 2001. *Code of Practice for Schools*. London, Disability Rights Commission, 2002. On legislation linked to the outlawing of discrimination in employment and vocational training linked to sexual orientation, religion, disability and age, see the Department of Trade and Industry website and 'Council Directive 2000/78/EC'. *Official Journal of the European Communities*. L303/16. 2.12.2000.

⁶ On Ofsted's training, see *Evaluating Educational Inclusion: Guidance for Inspectors and Schools*, Ofsted, 2000.

Part B: Definitions

This section of the guidance discusses working definitions of ‘spiritual’, ‘moral’, ‘social’ and ‘cultural’ development.

The spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements of pupils’ development are inter-related. Attempting to disaggregate them is helpful for the purpose of analysis and also inspection and school self-improvement. But it should not be forgotten that there is much overlap between them, not least in respect of spirituality and its links to pupils’ attitudes, morals, behaviour in society and cultural understanding.

Spiritual development

Spiritual development is difficult to define. In a recent book, Best recognises this when he says:

*‘... of all experiences, it is the spiritual which, it seems, is most resistant to operational definition. At its worst, attempts to pin it down lead only to a greater awareness of its intangibility and pervasiveness’.*⁷

Ofsted’s view of spiritual development

The 1994 inspection handbook attempted a definition of spiritual development:

*‘Spiritual development relates to that aspect of inner life through which pupils acquire insights into their personal experience which are of enduring worth. It is characterised by reflection, the attribution of meaning to experience, valuing a non-material dimension to life and intimations of an enduring reality. ‘Spiritual’ is not synonymous with ‘religious’; all areas of the curriculum may contribute to pupils’ spiritual development.’*⁸

This definition was then explored further in an Ofsted discussion paper in 1994 which added that spiritual development is about how individuals acquire personal beliefs and values, determine whether life has a purpose, and behave as a result. It is about how pupils address ‘questions which are at the heart and root of existence’. It identified ‘the idea of the spiritual quest, of asking who you are and where you are going.’

It also said that spiritual development is about how a school helps:

*‘... individuals to make sense of these questions, and about what it does to help form pupils’ response to life and various forms of experience, or even to questions about the universe’.*⁹

⁷ Best, R. ‘Introduction: Where are we going with SMSC?’ in *Education for Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development*. London, Continuum, 2000. Page 10.

⁸ *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools. Part 4. Inspection Schedule Guidance. Consolidated Edition, 1994.* HMSO, 1994. Page 86.

⁹ *Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: An Ofsted Discussion Paper.* Ofsted, 1994. Page 8.

The paper recognised that many people will express their spiritual awareness in religious terms: 'For those with a strong religious faith, the spiritual is very much at the heart of life'. However, it also recognised that non-believers also need to develop spiritually and added:

'The inspection framework must apply to both sets of individuals, and to those at all points on the spectrum. It is vital to press towards a common currency of shared understandings'.

The 1999 handbooks for inspecting schools talked about the likely contribution of knowledge and insights from real-life experiences and the curriculum, and about 'opportunities to reflect on life's fundamental questions' and 'special moments' in pupils' lives. While the handbooks commented that spiritual development 'does not need to have a religious connection', it nevertheless said that 'in many schools...religious education will make a significant contribution...' ¹⁰

These themes and others have been carried through into the 2003 inspection Framework and handbooks. For instance, in respect of spiritual development, the secondary handbook states:

'Where schools foster successfully pupils' self-awareness and understanding of the world around them and spiritual questions and issues, they will be developing a set of values, principles and beliefs – which may or may not be religious – to inform their perspective on life and their behaviour. They will defend their beliefs, challenge unfairness and all that would constrain their personal growth, for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision and all forms of discrimination.' ¹¹

Other views

Ofsted's 1994 comments complemented views which were set out in a document from the National Curriculum Council (NCC) – 'Spiritual and Moral Development – A Discussion Paper'.¹² This usefully defined different aspects of spiritual development:

'Beliefs – the development of personal beliefs including religious beliefs; an appreciation that people have individual and shared beliefs on which they base their lives; a developing understanding of how beliefs contribute to personal identity;

A sense of awe, wonder and mystery – being inspired by the natural world, mystery or human achievement;

Experiencing feelings of transcendence – feelings which may give rise to belief in the existence of a divine being or the belief that one's inner resources provide the ability to rise above everyday experiences;

¹⁰ *Handbook for Inspecting Primary and Nursery Schools*. HMSO, 1999. Page 71. Similar statements appear in other handbooks.

¹¹ *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools*. Ofsted, 2003. Page 67. Similar statements appear in other handbooks.

¹² *Spiritual and Moral Development - A Discussion Paper*. York, National Curriculum Council, 1993.

Search for meaning and purpose – asking ‘why me?’ at times of hardship and suffering; reflecting on the origins and purpose of life; responding to challenging experiences of life such as beauty, suffering and death;

Self-knowledge – an awareness of oneself in terms of thoughts, feelings, emotions, responsibilities and experiences; a growing understanding and acceptance of individual identity; an ability to build up relationships with others;

Relationships – recognising and valuing the worth of each individual; developing a sense of community; the ability to build up relationships with others;

Creativity – expressing innermost thoughts and feelings through, for example, art, music, literature and crafts; exercising the imagination, inspiration, intuition and insight; and

Feelings and emotions – the sense of being moved by beauty or kindness; hurt by injustice or aggression; a growing awareness of when it is important to control emotions and feelings, and how to learn to use such feelings as a source of growth.’

It also added that:

‘Spiritual development is an important element of a child’s education and fundamental to other areas of learning. Without curiosity, without the inclination to question, and without the exercise of imagination, insight and intuition, young people would lack the motivation to learn, and their intellectual development would be impaired. Deprived of self-understanding and potentially the ability to understand others, they may experience difficulty in co-existing with neighbours and colleagues to the detriment of their social development. Were they not able to be moved by feelings of awe and wonder at the beauty of the world we live in, or the power of artists, musicians and writers to manipulate space, sound and language, they would live in an inner spiritual and cultural desert.’

Three years later, the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA) produced a report which defined spirituality as some or all of:

- *‘the essence of being human, involving the ability to surpass the boundaries of the physical and material*
- *an inner life, insight and vision*
- *an inclination to believe in ideals and possibilities that transcend our experience of the world*
- *a response to God, the ‘other’ or the ‘ultimate’*
- *a propensity to foster human attributes such as love, faithfulness and goodness, that could not be classed as physical*
- *the inner world of creativity and imagination*
- *the quest for meaning in life, for truth and ultimate values*
- *the sense of identity and self-worth which enables us to value others.’*

The paper also recognised the important link between spiritual development and learning:

*'A spiritual sense can be seen as a prerequisite for learning since it is the human spirit that motivates us to reach beyond ourselves and existing knowledge to search for explanations of existence. The human spirit engaged in a search for truth could be a definition of education, challenging young people to explore and develop their own spirituality and helping them in their own search for truth.'*¹³

Sensitivities

These discussions are not easy to turn into practical teaching strategies with clear, educational outcomes. Precisely what is it that schools and teachers are seeking to achieve? What are their objectives, what education should they provide and what are the intended outcomes? Crucially, for inspectors and for teachers evaluating their school's success, how and what should they judge?

We also need a definition that is inclusive. By this, we mean that it has to be meaningful in all types of school and acceptable to people of all faiths as well as those of no faith. It has to be a common denominator with which most of us can agree. Therefore, while some schools, pupils, teachers and others may regard our definition as something that fully sums up their own views, others may see it only as a shared root with links to definitions based on their own faith, beliefs and philosophies.

Our definition is not offered in arrogance. While respecting this shared view, inspectors and other evaluators must also respect the definitions they find in different schools. However, this does not preclude them from being sensitive, critical friends when evaluating such definitions.

An inclusive working definition

First, we identify three principal elements in a definition. They respect pupils' different religious and other backgrounds.

Spiritual development involves:

- the development of insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values which guide and motivate us. For many pupils, these will have a significant religious basis
- a developing understanding of feelings and emotions which causes us to reflect and to learn
- for all pupils, a developing recognition that their insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values should influence, inspire or guide them in life.

¹³ *Education for Adult Life: The Spiritual and Moral Development of Young People*. London, SCAA, 1996.

Then, we put these three elements together and come to this definition:

Spiritual development is the development of the non-material element of a human being which animates and sustains us and, depending on our point of view, either ends or continues in some form when we die. It is about the development of a sense of identity, self-worth, personal insight, meaning and purpose. It is about the development of a pupil's 'spirit'. Some people may call it the development of a pupil's 'soul'; others as the development of 'personality' or 'character'.

The task faced by schools is, then, to find effective ways of developing pupils' drive, sense of identity and self-worth; developing their principles, beliefs and values including those that have a religious basis. For inspectors and other evaluators, the basic issue is to judge how well schools do this and how well pupils develop as a result.

As the example of the school later in this guidance shows, this is neither difficult nor obscure. Helping pupils develop as people has always been a key feature of education. Consider, for example, the timid four year old who becomes the confident seven year old and the reasons for this. Consider also the Year 11 athlete who is encouraged to reflect, draw inspiration from her belief in God, and so work to improve her performance; or the Year 13 design and technology student who decides, after many setbacks, to persevere in the design and manufacture of a desk. And what about the school phobic who is sensitively guided and supported so that he learns to understand himself better and becomes, in time, a school prefect?

Table 1, on the next page, draws on the working definition to list some characteristics inspectors and other evaluators should look for in pupils when judging spiritual development. Readers will need to use their professional judgement about how these characteristics relate to pupils of different ages and qualities. Not all the characteristics need to be present and there will be others we have not listed.

There are suggestions in table 2 about what schools can provide to encourage spiritual development.

This format of characteristics of development in the first table and what schools can do to encourage development in the second table is repeated in other sections of this guidance.

Pupils who are developing spiritually are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

Table 1

- a set of values, principles and beliefs, which may or may not be religious, which inform their perspective on life and their patterns of behaviour
- an awareness and understanding of their own and others' beliefs
- a respect for themselves and for others
- a sense of empathy with others, concern and compassion
- an increasing ability to reflect and learn from this reflection
- an ability to show courage and persistence in defence of their aims, values, principles and beliefs
- a readiness to challenge all that would constrain the human spirit: for example, poverty of aspiration, lack of self-confidence and belief, moral neutrality or indifference, force, fanaticism, aggression, greed, injustice, narrowness of vision, self-interest, sexism, racism and other forms of discrimination
- an appreciation of the intangible – for example, beauty, truth, love, goodness, order – as well as for mystery, paradox and ambiguity
- a respect for insight as well as for knowledge and reason
- an expressive and/or creative impulse
- an ability to think in terms of the 'whole' – for example, concepts such as harmony, interdependence, scale, perspective
- an understanding of feelings and emotions, and their likely impact.

Schools that are encouraging pupils' spiritual development are, therefore, likely to be:

Table 2

- giving pupils the opportunity to explore values and beliefs, including religious beliefs, and the way in which they affect peoples' lives
- where pupils already have religious beliefs, supporting and developing these beliefs in ways which are personal and relevant to them
- encouraging pupils to explore and develop what animates themselves and others
- encouraging pupils to reflect and learn from reflection
- giving pupils the opportunity to understand human feelings and emotions, the way they affect people and how an understanding of them can be helpful
- developing a climate or ethos within which all pupils can grow and flourish, respect others and be respected
- accommodating difference and respecting the integrity of individuals
- promoting teaching styles which:
 - value pupils' questions and give them space for their own thoughts, ideas and concerns
 - enable pupils to make connections between aspects of their learning
 - encourage pupils to relate their learning to a wider frame of reference – for example, asking 'why?', 'how?' and 'where?' as well as 'what?'
- monitoring, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Moral development

Moral development is about the building, by pupils, of a framework of moral values which regulates their personal behaviour. It is also about the development of pupils' understanding of society's shared and agreed values. It is about understanding that there are issues where there is disagreement and it is also about understanding that society's values change. Moral development is about gaining an understanding of the range of views and the reasons for the range. It is also about developing an opinion about the different views.

Evidence from inspections suggests that pupils' moral development is generally good. Most schools encourage it successfully, adopting a co-ordinated and consistent approach. Most have well-defined standards of acceptable behaviour, supported by codes of conduct and systems of rewards and sanctions. The curriculum and extra-curricular activities often focus on a variety of moral themes, raise ethical issues and provide opportunities for discussion and debate.

On a more personal level, teachers have a significant responsibility for moral education. They inevitably define, for their pupils, standards of behaviour in the classroom and around the school. They engage pupils in thinking about their responsibilities when issues arise, such as keeping promises, telling the truth, or dealing with unfairness and injustice. They provide for pupils, whether consciously or unconsciously, a moral framework of values which guide their relationships with others. Teachers face moral dilemmas and demonstrate to pupils how they can be addressed. Teachers' attitudes and interactions provide powerful role models.

There is actually much agreement on moral values. This was the conclusion of the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community. An extract from the Statement of Values it produced was later incorporated into the current National Curriculum handbooks published in 1999:

'Schools and teachers can have confidence that there is general agreement in society upon these values. They can therefore expect the support and encouragement of society if they base their teaching and school ethos on these values.'

The Statement then goes on to define these values:

'The self. We value ourselves as unique human beings capable of spiritual, moral, intellectual and physical growth and development.'

'Relationships. We value others for themselves, not only for what they have or what they can do for us. We value relationships as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and for the good of the community.'

‘Society. We value truth, freedom, justice, human rights, the rule of law and collective effort for the common good. In particular, we value families as sources of love and support for all their members, and as the basis of a society in which people care for others.’

‘The environment. We value the environment, both natural and shaped by humanity, as the basis for life and a source of wonder and inspiration.’¹⁴

However, there clearly are areas where there is a broad range of opinion and there will always be debate about moral values, about their relativity to certain historical eras or cultural contexts and about the possibility of universal moral standards. Such debate is at the heart of moral education. Schools, teachers, pupils and parents will differ as well as agree on some values but they generally help pupils understand the reasons for this. In consequence, the 1999 inspection handbook did not define a set of morals. Instead, it defined the ‘essence of moral development’ as the building of:

‘a framework of moral values which regulate personal behaviour... through teaching and promoting principles rather than through reward or fear of punishment.’¹⁵

This theme of pupils developing their own perspectives has continued into the 2003 inspection handbook.¹⁶ The handbook refers to pupils developing an understanding of the moral codes of their own and other cultures, acting on the basis of their own principles, thinking through the consequences of their own and others’ actions, expressing views on ethical issues, and making reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas. This approach involves teachers helping pupils in this developmental process by:

- extending pupils’ knowledge and understanding of the range of accepted values in society
- developing pupils’ skills and attitudes, such as decision-making, self-control, consideration of others, having the confidence to act in accordance with one’s principles and thinking through the consequences of actions
- promoting, at an appropriate level, pupils’ understanding of basic moral philosophy and the skills of analysis, debate, judgement and application to contemporary issues.

¹⁴ ‘Statement of Values by the National Forum for Values in Education and the Community’ in *The National Curriculum: Handbook for Primary Teachers in England*. DfEE and QCA, 1999. Pages 147–149. An identical statement appears in other handbooks.

¹⁵ *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools*. Ofsted, 1999. Page 68. A similar statement appears in other handbooks.

¹⁶ *Handbook for Inspecting Secondary Schools*. Ofsted, 2003. Pages 67–8. Similar statements appear in other handbooks.

Pupils who are becoming morally aware are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

Table 3

- an ability to distinguish right from wrong, based on a knowledge of the moral codes of their own and other cultures
- a confidence to act consistently in accordance with their own principles
- an ability to think through the consequences of their own and others' actions
- a willingness to express their views on ethical issues and personal values
- an ability to make responsible and reasoned judgements on moral dilemmas
- a commitment to personal values in areas which are considered right by some and wrong by others
- a considerate style of life
- a respect for others' needs, interests and feelings, as well as their own
- a desire to explore their own and others' views
- an understanding of the need to review and reassess their values, codes and principles in the light of experience.

Schools that are encouraging pupils' moral development are, therefore, likely to be:

Table 4

- providing a clear moral code as a basis for behaviour which is promoted consistently through all aspects of the school
- promoting measures to prevent discrimination on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria
- giving pupils opportunities across the curriculum to explore and develop moral concepts and values – for example, personal rights and responsibilities, truth, justice, equality of opportunity, right and wrong
- developing an open and safe learning environment in which pupils can express their views and practise moral decision-making
- rewarding expressions of moral insights and good behaviour
- making an issue of breaches of agreed moral codes where they arise – for example, in the press, on television and the internet as well as in school
- modelling, through the quality of relationships and interactions, the principles which they wish to promote – for example, fairness, integrity, respect for people, pupils' welfare, respect for minority interests, resolution of conflict, keeping promises and contracts
- recognising and respecting the codes and morals of the different cultures represented in the school and wider community
- encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions; for example, respect for property, care of the environment, and developing codes of behaviour
- providing models of moral virtue through literature, humanities, sciences, arts, assemblies and acts of worship
- reinforcing the school's values through images, posters, classroom displays, screensavers, exhibitions
- monitoring, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Social development

Social development is about young people working effectively with each other and participating successfully in the community as a whole. It is about the development of the skills and personal qualities necessary for living and working together. It is about functioning effectively in a multi-racial, multi-cultural society. It involves growth in knowledge and understanding of society in all its aspects. This includes understanding people as well as understanding society's institutions, structures and characteristics, economic and political principles and organisations, roles and responsibilities and life as a citizen, parent or worker in a community. It also involves the development of the inter-personal skills necessary for successful relationships.

The quality of our relationships defines the kind of people we are and, ultimately, the kind of world we live in. Our capacity to participate effectively in social life is crucial to our well-being and that of the communities we belong to. These communities are defined not only by the spaces we live in but also by the prevailing ideals and values and by the codes and structures for living together.

This was stressed in the 1999 inspection handbook with its emphasis on how well schools:

*'encourage pupils to take responsibility, show initiative and develop an understanding of living in a community.'*¹⁷

These ideas are also repeated in the 2003 inspection handbook, which states that:

*'pupils who are socially aware adjust appropriately and sensitively to a range of social contexts. They relate well to others and work successfully as a member of a team. Older pupils share their views and opinions and work towards trying to reach a sensible solution to problems. They show respect for people, living things, property and the environment.'*¹⁸

Pupils experience community at different levels. These start with the families or other units in which they live, work and play and go on to embrace local, national and global societies which are accessible to them through their own mobility, or through the media and Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

Schools have a vital role to play in developing pupils' contacts with society at these different levels. This is very well recognised in guidance to schools. For example, in the non-statutory guidelines for PSHE published with the latest version of the National Curriculum, one of the three elements is headed: 'Developing good

¹⁷ *Handbook for Inspecting Primary and Nursery Schools*. Ofsted, 1999. Page 73. An identical statement appears in other handbooks.

¹⁸ *Handbook for Inspecting Nursery and Primary Schools*. Ofsted, 2003. Page 57. An identical statement appears in other handbooks.

relationships and respecting the differences between people'. The guidelines go on to say that pupils should be taught a range of things linked to different levels of society including the family, work and friendship groups, and society as a whole.¹⁹

The important role of schools was also recognised by the work of the Forum on Values in Education and the Community. Its statement of values, which is reproduced in National Curriculum documentation, sets out very helpful guidance for teachers. Under the four headings 'The self', 'Relationships', 'Society' and 'The environment' it states the qualities to be developed. For example, under 'Relationships', from a longer list, it says we should respect others, care for others and earn loyalty, trust and confidence. Under 'Society', it says we should support families of different kinds, refuse to support values or actions that may be harmful to individuals or communities, respect religious and cultural diversity, and support those who cannot, by themselves, sustain a dignified lifestyle.²⁰

Finally, it is worth noting that schools, themselves, are social communities that offer a model for living and working together. It is here that pupils learn and experiment with the challenges and opportunities of belonging to a larger group. It is also where they will experience the tensions between their own aspirations and those of the wider community. Clearly, the quality of relationships in schools is significant in forming pupils' attitudes to acceptable social behaviour and self-discipline. It is also essential that they be given opportunities to exercise responsibility and to face the consequences of their choices and actions. Decisions about how pupils are grouped, for instance, have an important bearing on their opportunities to work co-operatively and responsibly, and to develop leadership qualities, as well as affecting their educational progress.

¹⁹ *The National Curriculum: Handbook for Primary Teachers in England*. DfEE and QCA, 1999. Page 140. A similar statement appears in other handbooks.

²⁰ *The National Curriculum: Handbook for Primary Teachers in England*. DfEE and QCA, 1999. Page 148. An identical statement appears in other handbooks.

Pupils who are becoming socially aware are likely to be developing the ability to:

Table 5

- adjust to a range of social contexts by appropriate and sensitive behaviour
- relate well to other people's social skills and personal qualities
- work, successfully, as a member of a group or team
- challenge, when necessary and in appropriate ways, the values of a group or wider community
- share views and opinions with others, and work towards consensus
- resolve conflicts and counter forces which militate against inclusion and unity
- reflect on their own contribution to society and to the world of work
- show respect for people, living things, property and the environment
- benefit from advice offered by those in authority or counselling roles
- exercise responsibility
- appreciate the rights and responsibilities of individuals within the wider social setting
- understand how societies function and are organised in structures such as the family, the school and local and wider communities
- participate in activities relevant to the community
- understand the notion of interdependence in an increasingly complex society.

Schools that are encouraging pupils' social development are, therefore, likely to be:

Table 6

- identifying key values and principles on which school and community life is based
- fostering a sense of community, with common, inclusive values which ensure that everyone, irrespective of ethnic origin, nationality, gender, ability, sexual orientation and religion can flourish
- encouraging pupils to work co-operatively
- encouraging pupils to recognise and respect social differences and similarities
- providing positive corporate experiences – for example, through assemblies, team activities, residential experiences, school productions
- helping pupils develop personal qualities which are valued in a civilised society, for example, thoughtfulness, honesty, respect for difference, moral principles, independence, inter-dependence, self-respect
- helping pupils to challenge, when necessary and in appropriate ways, the values of a group or wider community
- helping pupils resolve tensions between their own aspirations and those of the group or wider society
- providing a conceptual and linguistic framework within which to understand and debate social issues
- providing opportunities for engaging in the democratic process and participating in community life
- providing opportunities for pupils to exercise leadership and responsibility
- providing positive and effective links with the world of work and the wider community
- monitoring, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Cultural development

Cultural development is about pupils' understanding their own culture and other cultures in their town, region and in the country as a whole. It is about understanding cultures represented in Europe and elsewhere in the world. It is about understanding and feeling comfortable in a variety of cultures and being able to operate in the emerging world culture of shared experiences provided by television, travel and the internet. It is about understanding that cultures are always changing and coping with change. Promoting pupils' cultural development is intimately linked with schools' attempts to value cultural diversity and prevent racism.

This definition echoes the report of the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education, *All our Futures*. According to this report, the four central roles for education in the cultural development of young people are:

- *'to enable young people to recognise, explore and understand their own cultural assumptions and values*
- *to enable young people to embrace and understand cultural diversity by bringing them into contact with attitudes, values and traditions of other cultures*
- *to encourage an historical perspective by relating contemporary values to the processes and events that have shaped them*
- *to enable young people to understand the evolutionary nature of culture and the processes and potential for change.'*²¹

Ofsted's definition recognises that pupils need to understand their own culture. This gives them a sense of identity and a language with which to communicate, receive and modify the shared values of the culture. Their culture embraces customs, history, geography, icons and images, artefacts, music, painting, sculpture, dance and technology as well as the spoken word and written literature. There will be agreed norms of behaviour. There will also be opportunities to participate in celebrations which mark key ideals or events.

But the definition also recognises that within any culture there will be sub-cultures and the dominant culture of any one group of people is only one among many in the world. Moreover, people increasingly need to understand and feel comfortable with a world culture that is developing alongside improvements in communications, including transport, television and ICT.

Ofsted's definition recognises that cultures are always changing and growing; they are never static. Therefore, cultural development must go beyond just learning the norms and skills of a group of people; it also involves understanding the processes

²¹ *All Our Futures: Creativity, Culture and Education*, National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education. DfEE and DCMS, 1999. Page 48.

of cultural development and change and an appreciation of the inter-dependence of different cultures. It means facing the prejudices (however unwitting) which lead to dismissing or marginalising unfamiliar traditions. This was recognised in the 1999 handbook when it spoke of the need to:

*'look for evidence of how the school promotes the cultural traditions of its own area and the ethnic and cultural diversity of British society.'*²²

It is also recognised in the 2003 handbook when it speaks of pupils:

*'...appreciating cultural diversity and according dignity to other people's values and beliefs. They challenge racism and value race equality...'*²³

Ofsted's definition therefore embraces the challenge to improve pupils' understanding of change and diversity made in Recommendation 67 of the MacPherson Report after the murder of Stephen Lawrence. This suggests that schools need to do more to value cultural diversity and prevent racism to better 'reflect the needs of a diverse society'.²⁴

²² *Handbook for Inspecting Primary and Nursery Schools*. Ofsted, 1999. Page 73. A similar statement appears in other handbooks.

²³ *Handbook for Inspecting Nursery and Primary Schools*. Ofsted, 2003. Page 58. An identical statement appears in other handbooks.

²⁴ *The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry: CM 4262 - I*. HMSO, 1999

Pupils who are becoming culturally aware are likely to be developing some or all of the following characteristics:

Table 7

- an ability to recognise and understand their own cultural assumptions and values
- an understanding of the influences which have shaped their own cultural heritage
- an understanding of the dynamic, evolutionary nature of cultures
- an ability to appreciate cultural diversity and accord dignity and respect to other people's values and beliefs, thereby challenging racism and valuing race equality
- an openness to new ideas and a willingness to modify cultural values in the light of experience
- an ability to use language and understand images/icons – for example, in music, art, literature – which have significance and meaning in a culture
- a willingness to participate in, and respond to, artistic and cultural enterprises
- a sense of personal enrichment through encounter with cultural media and traditions from a range of cultures
- a regard for the heights of human achievement in all cultures and societies
- an appreciation of the diversity and interdependence of cultures.

Schools that are encouraging pupils' cultural development are, therefore, likely to be:

Table 8:

- providing opportunities for pupils to explore their own cultural assumptions and values
- presenting authentic accounts of the attitudes, values and traditions of diverse cultures
- addressing discrimination on the grounds of race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age and other criteria and promoting racial and other forms of equality
- extending pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language
- recognising and nurturing particular gifts and talents
- providing opportunities for pupils to participate in literature, drama, music, art, crafts and other cultural events and encouraging pupils to reflect on their significance
- developing partnerships with outside agencies and individuals to extend pupils' cultural awareness, for example, theatre, museum, concert and gallery visits, resident artists, foreign exchanges
- reinforcing the school's cultural values through displays, posters, exhibitions, etc
- auditing the quality and nature of opportunities for pupils to extend their cultural development across the curriculum
- monitoring, in simple, pragmatic ways, the success of what is provided.

Part C: Gathering evidence and making judgements on pupils' development – an example inspection

In this section, we discuss and demonstrate how inspectors go about the business of inspecting pupils' SMSC development. The intention is that schools undertaking self-evaluation will mirror much of this process.

Pupils' SMSC development will be influenced by what the school stands for and almost everything the school does. Inspectors' judgements on pupils' development will be based on evidence from right across the school.

The starting point is how well the school provides an environment in which pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development can flourish. The climate and values of a school may be evident from the moment one enters it: whether it is welcoming, keen to help the visitor, and proud of the achievement of those who work and learn there. Is there a drive for learning and respect for reflective responses? Other pointers include:

- the values projected by staff, governors and pupils
- the relationships it encourages between pupils and staff and between pupils
- the way staff address pupils and vice versa
- the way pupils address and care for each other
- the way disputes and dissent are addressed
- the quality of the physical environment
- the range of opportunities provided by the school outside the formal curriculum
- the relationships developed by the school with the wider community
- the tone and content of material published by the school.

In addition, some activities will be consciously planned to contribute to pupils' SMSC development; for example, activities such as assemblies, acts of collective worship, extra-curricular programmes and lessons in PSHE, citizenship, careers education and guidance, sex and relationship education, and drug education. There will also be important contributions from National Curriculum and other subjects.

Inspectors and other evaluators will draw on all these sources and more when reaching judgements about the quality of pupils' SMSC development and what the school does to promote it. Here, the inspection process is illustrated using the hypothetical **Owlsmoor Community High School**. Self-evaluating schools will go through a broadly similar process.

Owlsmoor is an 11–18 outer-urban school serving pupils from very varied socio-economic backgrounds. The majority come from lower-income, owner-occupier families, although a significant proportion live in rented accommodation. A higher than average percentage of pupils qualify for free school meals. Just under 60% of

pupils are white. About 15% are of Indian origin, 15% Pakistani and 5% African and Caribbean. There are small numbers of pupils of Sri Lankan and Chinese origin and some recent arrivals from the Horn of Africa. The latter speak and understand little English. The percentages of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language are above average. There is a small unit for pupils with severe physical disabilities attached to the school. After the last General Certificate of Secondary Examination (GCSE) examinations, overall standards were graded C compared to national averages and A in comparison to schools in similar circumstances.

Examples of evidence and evaluations about the school are italicised and presented in boxes. Sometimes, there is a commentary to give evaluation and judgement. These examples show a range of ways in which evidence and findings can be recorded and reported. They are not meant to endorse any particular method or approach.

The examples illustrate both pupils' development and what the school provides through its teaching and other provision to support this development.

These examples form only a part of the full picture that an inspection team would get on an inspection. However, they are indicative of some of the evidence inspectors may come across and which will be used and combined to reach overall judgements. The examples illustrate the complex nature of the interrelationship between the spiritual, moral, social and cultural, and the difficulty, very often, of separating them. They also show how both the formal curriculum as well as other seemingly tiny and insignificant incidents can have a significant impact on pupils' development.

Example 1: extract from an inspector's pre-inspection visit notes

- *Approach to school is attractive via tarmac drive lined with shrubs. Large rose bed in front of original building which houses the administration and some classes. No obvious litter or graffiti; shrubs etc well maintained. Path to side of drive has recently been resurfaced and widened. Playground and playing fields to rear and side of school buildings look, from a distance, neat and tidy.*
- *Sign on main building in different community languages indicates direction of reception.*
- *Pleasant reception area – recently refurbished after structural changes. Two pupils (boy and girl, one white, one Asian, Year 9?) on duty in reception. They welcomed me and then girl disappeared into office to report my arrival. Boy talked to me politely and confidently while I waited.*
- *Three boys (white/Asian/African or Caribbean, Year 10 or 11) also waiting. They talked and laughed together sensibly and naturally.*

Example 2: further extract from pre-inspection visit notes

- *Headteacher walked with me round the school. Much recent (last 1–5 years) refurbishment. Redecoration of corridors – headteacher said that old paint was dull and clinical; selective (sensible) use of carpet.*
- *Headteacher very proud of new labs, computer suites, hall and refurbished toilets. The toilets are clean, pleasantly decorated and not smelly.*
- *Good use of display of pupils' work and other material including pictures of community activities and visitors to the school (nb: good racial mix in pictures serving as role models, for example visit of Caribbean leader of the council).*
- *Calm, purposeful atmosphere; heard no shouting. Pupils move about the school calmly. Saw no running in corridors and little jostling.*

This initial evidence suggests a school that is demonstrating high standards and expectations by creating a positive environment and tone. Pupils exhibit good manners and friendly relationships. They are given responsibility and accept it well. Equal opportunities flourish. There is respect for each other and for other cultures.

Example 3: extract from notes on documentation provided by the school during the inspection

- *School has good documentation overall. Mission statement emphasises helping children do their best, both academically and socially. It also emphasises 'share, care and respect' as key features for governing relations between everybody in the school.*
- *Interestingly, the school has policy documents relating directly to SMSC development with school's own definitions of what each means and how they can be encouraged. Each department has to build SMSC-related aims into its planning and documents, mirroring the approach in the National Curriculum documentation. This is consistently well done. Also built in well into planning in PSHE and citizenship.*
- *Documentation suggests active pupil participation in decision-making via school council and activities in tutor groups and year assemblies.*

- *Headteacher comments in his statement that extra-curricular activities are carefully chosen because of the contribution they make to pupils' personal development – for example sport (including 'sport for all' activities), Duke of Edinburgh's Award, and community involvement (with three local nurseries, a retirement home, and a local community project based at a family centre).*

Encouraging pupils' SMSC development is an important aim of the school. However, it remains an open question, to be verified by other evidence, as to how well the aims are actually translated into practice.

Example 4: note from the media studies/English inspector to the inspector collating evidence of the inspection of SMSC development. Year 10 media studies lesson on understanding prejudice.

Teacher used newspaper photographs to explore prejudices/stereotyping. Useful images used of a black youth, Sikh gentleman, Afghan lady, white football supporters and gay man.

Interesting that the pupils did not readily express negative views but could list many positive, possibly reflecting the fact that they are used to living in a multi-cultural society. Teacher skilfully questioned them, encouraging them to understand negative connotations but the lesson was well balanced. Pupils' spoken, and then written, responses showed that they had well understood the subtleties of the lesson.

Overall, this was good encouragement for pupils' SMSC development. The pupils learnt more about themselves and others; what motivates individuals; and moral perspectives behind attitudes. They also developed a better understanding of different cultures.

In the above example, the media studies inspector has explained in the last paragraph what she sees as the significance of the lesson for pupils' SMSC development.

Example 5: evidence on pupils' SMSC development, teaching and learning from an upper school assembly.

The assembly was introduced by a deputy head who explained, clearly, that the assembly was to be led by three Year 11 pupils who had just completed work experience, working with the homeless. Then followed a small group of pupils playing/singing (well) 'Streets of London' and short, well-recounted accounts by each of the work experience pupils about their experiences. One showed some powerful pictures that she had taken of young homeless people. After this, the deputy asked all pupils to reflect quietly on, or pray about, the needs of the homeless and what should be done to help them. The assembly ended with another moving song, this time written by one of the pupils.

This was a powerful presentation. The three Year 11 pupils clearly have learnt a lot about themselves and others. It was difficult to assess the impact on those watching but it is likely that it was significant. A sample of pupils spoken to at the end indicated that they had been quite moved and that, possibly, their values and attitudes had changed. The pictures seemed to have had a big impact and also the song which younger pupils had not heard before.

It is sometimes difficult to judge pupils' development but there is probably enough evidence here to say that pupils' values and attitudes are developing well. For some pupils who respond to the opportunity to pray, this has a religious inspiration. Pupils' moral perspectives are also developing as well as their social awareness and an understanding of the culture of the homeless. The development is clearly greatest for the three Year 11 pupils but there is also an impact on those who are listeners.

Example 6: extract from evidence on Year 10 pupils' written work in SRE.

End-of-unit written work focusing on relationships. Pupils had been asked to write advice booklets on a theme of their choice for inclusion in the school library. All were of good quality. Particular examples were booklets on 'Why mum wants a new partner' which showed a sensitive understanding of the needs of someone older; and 'How to treat your girlfriend', which was a sensitive and subtle exploration of what a relationship means for a 15 year old. Some pupils wrote advice booklets on what to do if you/your friend/ your girlfriend becomes pregnant and there was another booklet entitled 'I hate my brother'. What came across particularly well was the encouragement to pupils to take account of their own social and cultural backgrounds as well as the perspectives of others.

This example, which involves the careful exploration of issues linked to sex, health and relationships, offers evidence on many aspects of SMSC development. It provides inspectors with evidence on how pupils think they should behave and why and suggests that they do this well. There is also evidence of good social and cultural development focusing on the need to be thoughtful about others and to show care for interests other than one's own.

Example 7: evidence on Year 11 pupils' written work in geography. Upper set.

GCSE projects on Lake Nakuru area of Kenya. Good-quality work showing that pupils have a good understanding of the environmental challenges facing this area of Africa. This includes an understanding of moral issues – whether to develop? How? Advantages and disadvantages of development? Pupils very clear that development brings improvements in income and services but that there are significant environmental costs. Some interesting conclusions drawn.

In this example, there is strong, clear evidence of pupils' ability to recognise moral dilemmas, to evaluate the evidence and arguments and to come to their own views.

Example 8: notes from an inspector on incidents involving pupils from the severe physical disabilities unit.

At a changeover time between lessons, one of the more severely disabled pupils was making her way down a crowded corridor in a wheelchair to her next lesson. There were pupils all around, all making their way on foot to their next lessons. No one was paying her much attention – certainly no more than they were paying to any other pupil in the corridor. My initial reaction was to be upset by this and what I saw as the callousness of the pupils. However, the disabled student survived the corridor and the school quietened down.

After reflection, and seeing more of the school, I decided I had misread the situation. In fact, I now think I was seeing something very positive taking place – the total acceptance by pupils of that pupil as a person to be treated just like anyone else. This was well illustrated for me later when I saw an able-bodied boy go up to another severely disabled boy. There then followed what was obviously a good-natured interchange on the previous night's football match on the television. It ended with the able-bodied boy grinning, punching the disabled boy in a friendly way, rather harder than I would have liked, and he walked off leaving the disabled boy with an equally broad smile on his face. I later saw the pair of them playing snooker together in the community room with the able-bodied boy helping the other to reach balls in the middle of the table and the disabled boy advising the other on the quality of his shots. In another incident, one disabled girl tore a strip of an able-bodied girl who promptly gave back as good as she got. There was no deference or condescension on either part.

The inspector's interpretations of the evidence may, of course, be disputed. However, taking them at face value, these are examples of good SMSC development. There are indications that pupils have a clear sense of identity and confidence, irrespective of whether they have a physical disability or not. There are also indications of relationships which help pupils understand their feelings towards other people and concepts such as equality and consideration for others. Pupils' moral development appears to be good because of the evidence of the respect they show regardless of physical attributes. Pupils' social development is good, judged by the very positive relationships that exist between pupils.

Example 9: extract from notes of an interview with Year 7 pupils.

I spoke to a group of ten pupils in the playground at lunchtime. All said they liked the school. They said that the teachers were friendly and helpful. They also said that other pupils were friendly and supportive. They were clearly all aware of the multi-cultural nature of the school and said this was a virtue. One said that 'it makes the school more interesting'. When I asked for examples of pupils being supportive, one boy told me that he had just been swimming and, for the first time, had managed to jump off the diving board. One of the girls explained that the boy had been too frightened for weeks to do it but they had all helped him and they were all very pleased. Another girl said that she found the mentoring by older pupils very helpful. The pupils all went off and I later saw them (boys and girls) playing football together.

In this example, the pupils have strong, developed (and developing) views. Social development is good. This is well illustrated by the care and support they give one another. There is good cultural development, recognising and valuing the different backgrounds from which the pupils come. The boy overcoming his fear of jumping off the diving board will have contributed to his personal development.

Example 10: extract from notes taken in an interview with the headteacher

- *Headteacher commented that, when he came to the school four years ago, there was underachievement generally. Pupils were undervalued by staff, governors, parents and the wider community, including the local press. Pupils also undervalued themselves. Different backgrounds of pupils were acknowledged but they were neither celebrated nor valued: this applied as much to white pupils as to those from other heritages.*
- *Headteacher began with audit of where different cultures and traditions were recognised in the school. This revealed a patchy picture – for example, in RE, different religions were studied but with little reference to the pupils' own beliefs and experiences. In contrast, in careers education and guidance, staff were well aware of what influenced pupils' career choices and they had some good ways of challenging, in a sensitive and respectful way, certain attitudes and prejudices. Headteacher also realised that, in their everyday interactions with each other, the pupils knew far more about each other than the school had formally recognised – white pupils in a Year 8 class knew more about how their Muslim friends were going to celebrate Eid than was formally acknowledged by the school.*
- *The audit also considered how the school raised self-esteem and mutual respect. It found that pupils from all heritage groups were achieving all sorts of things which could have been applauded but which were not recognised. This included achievements in sport in clubs outside school, in places of*

worship and other community organisations, in part-time work, and in the family, such as caring for younger siblings.

- *A start was made by ensuring that main events affecting the different communities in the school were raised, explained and discussed in assemblies and tutor periods: for example, the opening of a new community centre on a socio-economically deprived estate where a large number of white pupils lived. Another early change was to ensure more regular and more detailed reference in assemblies, tutor periods and elsewhere to the major festivals celebrated by the different ethnic and religious groups in the school. For example, Ramadan and its implications were fully explored, including the direct impact on those pupils who were fasting. Eid was formally celebrated, with all pupils being invited to join in thanksgiving prayers in assembly led by a Muslim governor.*

This example is very much about how a school began to encourage SMSC development. It deals, centrally, with how the school began to develop pupils' understanding of themselves, self-esteem and respect for others. The example says a good deal about what the school believes in and respects – in particular, cultural diversity. It also reflects the effectiveness of senior management. Credit should always be given for initiatives (such as those outlined here) that are likely, in the longer term, to lead to the better development of pupils.

Example 11: extract from an inspector's concluding notes on pupils' SMSC development

Overall, the school provides rich experiences to support pupils' development but there is no formal monitoring of how well it is doing, which means that some opportunities are lost. For example, although many pupils are involved in the wider community in various ways, some are not. Provision and, therefore, development are uneven between pupils and some pupils may even 'slip through the net'.

This is really the only negative comment made about SMSC in the school. It started well with its audit of provision but then has eased off monitoring its effectiveness. Monitoring is not easy but there needs to be a sensible and pragmatic system to ensure that the school is being as effective as possible and that time, effort and money are not being wasted.

Part D: Reaching judgements

At the end of an inspection, the various judgements made by all inspectors are drawn together to form a coherent overview of the quality of pupils' SMSC development and what the school does to support this. This needs to be convincing, clearly justifying the judgements on quality. Judgements are also made on how the quality has improved since the last inspection and inspectors give clear indications of the actions needed to improve it further.

In the case of Owlsmoor School, it is clear that pupils' spiritual development is very good. Even in the few examples given, there is clear evidence of the development of pupils' beliefs and values, an understanding of feelings, self-respect, an understanding of the beliefs and values of others, and a respect for others. Pupils' moral development is also very good. In particular, they are developing a very good understanding of contemporary moral codes, including where there are differences between the cultures represented in the school. They are also willing to express their views, respect the views of others, and to reassess when appropriate. Their social development is very good. They are developing an ability to adjust their behaviour in different contexts and in response to different people. They co-operate very well and treat others, property and the environment with great respect. They are active participators in the local community even though this is not always organised directly by the school. Pupils' cultural development is also very good, not least because of the rich diversity in the school and the way pupils recognise and respect it. They are developing a very good understanding of their own and other cultures represented in the school. They value diversity and are open to ideas for change.

Owlsmoor is also very good because of its planning. For example, unlike many schools, Owlsmoor has policy documents on pupils' SMSC development which give the school's own definitions of what SMSC development means and how it can be encouraged. Moreover, each department has to build SMSC-related aims into its planning and documents.

Though arguable (and an inspection team would argue it very carefully), what stops pupils' development from being 'excellent' (as opposed to 'very good') is that although the school initially conducted an audit and then responded to this, it has no continuing system for monitoring the effectiveness of its provision. In consequence, there are sometimes gaps in provision, some missed opportunities, and some unevenness in the experiences of different pupils.