

Diocesan Education Service
Promoting Values & Virtues in Catholic Schools

Background Information

SMVSC takes place within the Catholic life of the school and is not something confined only to RE, assemblies and citizenship. Schools provide opportunities for children's development in SMVSC through the activities and experiences within the Curriculum (all subjects including RE) and beyond through Collective Worship, extra-curricular activities, through community links including the parish, through charitable outreach and so on. It therefore follows that the self-evaluation and inspection of SMVSC has to explore these different aspect of school life and this is the approach taken by OFSTED.

As part of this direct reference to the significance of the development of Gospel values and virtues and was made.

***Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham must include Vocational Education as part of their provision**

Promoting Values & Virtues

As Catholics we desire to follow the teachings of the Gospel revealed through the Church. We look to scripture for revelation from God which will guide us in the way he wants us to live. In the Gospels and our Church tradition we find the person of Jesus, through his teachings and interactions with people, showing us the way to live our lives. The Beatitudes (Matthew 5) encapsulate the values we want to live by and that we would want to nurture and develop in the children in our care:

*Faithfulness & Integrity, Dignity & Compassion, Humility & Gentleness, Truth & Justice,
Forgiveness & Mercy, Purity & Holiness, Tolerance & Peace and Service & Sacrifice.*¹

As Catholics we also believe in the importance of developing a virtuous life. The Catechism describes a virtue as "an interior disposition, a positive habit, a passion that has been placed at the service of the good."²

The cardinal virtues common to all people are *Wisdom, Justice, Courage and Self-Control* (sometimes referred to as the natural virtues). To acquire these virtues takes determination and practice: it is part of the human experience to wrestle between virtues and vices, between right and wrong. As St. Augustine says "Virtue is what one does passionately; vice is doing what one cannot stop doing because of passion."³

God's help, however is always at hand and, through the Sacrament of Baptism, God bestows on us the gifts of *Faith, Hope and Love* (known as the Theological Virtues) which, with the aid of the Holy Spirit, should we choose to use them, help us to acquire and develop the other virtues. Cardinal Vincent, as Archbishop of Westminster, in an address to Headteachers affirmed this and also recognised the role the school plays:

"But such a conviction, such a supreme advantage of knowing Christ, gives rise to a way of life which we believe fosters true virtue, true steady life-building habits of mind and action. That's what virtue is. It's those habits of mind and action which genuinely serve the common good....Schools are the places where such virtue is generated or where it is neglected."⁴

¹ 'Christ at the Centre' (original version) www.bdes.org.uk/doc_miscellaneous.asp

² 'YOUCAT' 'Youth Catechism of the Catholic Church' 2011 CTS Ignatius Press

³ ibid

⁴ Archbishop Vincent Nichols Heythrop Conference Day 'Education and Young People' 3 June 2009
www.rcdow.org.uk/cardinal/news/christian-values-in-schools-2009/

Note that whilst the development of these virtues is in the service of God that does not mean service which is exclusive only towards other Catholics. When Jesus talks of love it is love for all: Jesus teaches us to 'love your neighbour as yourself'; in the new commandment Jesus instructs the Apostles to 'love one another as I have loved you' and to make that love known to all: 'Go out to the whole world and proclaim the Good News.'

The Jesuit Pupil Profile

At the Diocesan Heads conference in the summer 2014 Fr. Adrian Porter from the Jesuit Institute spoke about the way in which the Jesuit schools have taken a very direct and strategic approach to the formation of the whole child. In their Pupil Profile, which is rooted in Ignatian theology and spirituality, they have created a series of statements based on the Virtues through which they have made explicit their purpose and intention as educators: they have described what a child in their care is growing to be and how the school is consciously and deliberately nurturing this. In the profile are eight sets of words which have been paired together because of their complementary and harmonising relationship to one another: from the development of one virtue springs another.

Whilst this Jesuit Pupil Profile has been devised by the Jesuit community Fr. Adrian and the Jesuit Institute are very kindly allowing the Archdiocese of Birmingham to use and develop their materials. For our purposes it has been renamed the Catholic Schools Pupil Profile.

Pupils in a school in the Archdiocese of Birmingham are growing to be ...	Schools in the Archdiocese of Birmingham help their pupils grow...
Grateful for their own gifts, for the gift of other people, and for the blessings of each day; and generous with their gifts, now and in the future.	By encouraging them to know and be grateful for all their gifts, developing them to the full so that they can be generous in the service of others.
Attentive to their experience and to their vocation; and discerning about the choices they make and the effects of those choices.	By promoting the practice of attentive reflection and discerning decision making: in teaching, in the examen, prayer and retreats; and through the practice and example of school leaders and staff.
Compassionate towards others, near and far, especially the less fortunate; and loving by their just actions and forgiving words.	By being compassionate and loving in the way pupils are treated, especially when a pupil is in trouble; and by opening pupils' eyes to those who suffer poverty, injustice or violence.
Faith-filled in their beliefs and hopeful for the future.	By passing on the living and faith-filled tradition of Jesus Christ; by having persevering faith in the pupils, and by encouraging them in turn, to have faith and hope in themselves and others.

Eloquent and truthful in what they say of themselves, the relations between people, and the world.	By developing an eloquent language which pupils can use to understand and articulate their emotions, beliefs, and questions, encouraged by the example of their teachers to be truthful in the way they represent themselves and speak about the world.
Learned , finding God in all things; and wise in the ways they use their learning for the common good.	By the breadth and depth of the curriculum; by excellence of teaching, and the creation of opportunities to become more learned and wise .
Curious about everything; and active in their engagement with the world, changing what they can for the better.	By leading pupils to be curious about the universe and all human activity, and to take increasing responsibility for their own learning, and by providing opportunities for them to be active in the life of the school, the Church, and the wider community.
Intentional in the way they live and use the resources of the earth, guided by conscience; and prophetic in the example they set to others.	By being a school community which is intentional in its way of proceeding to build-up quality of life; and which is prophetic in the way it offers an alternative vision of education and the human person rooted in the gospel.



The Jesuit Pupil Profile also has its own tag cloud shown on the left.

The tree is symbolic of the growth of the virtues. Within its branches comfortably resting is the goldfinch which has been used in art since medieval times to symbolise Christ and the Passion.

The Jesuit logo has been replaced with Catholic Schools Profile which is emerging from the seed symbolised by the DES badge.

The Profile provides a thematic focus for **Collective Worship and SMVSC** over a specified length of time. Whilst all of the aspects of the profile are being touched upon the school can really emphasise a particular pair of words throughout a half term. Each half term the focus will change. It is our intention that across the whole of the Archdiocese the schools will focus upon the same pair of virtues at the same time. This will enable us to share ideas and resources and strengthen our common bond.

Term	Virtues
Autumn 1 2015	Grateful & Generous
Autumn 2 2015	Attentive & Discerning
Spring 1 2016	Compassionate & Loving
Spring 2 2016	Faith-filled & Hopeful
Summer 1 2016	Eloquent & Truthful
Summer 2 2016	Learned & Wise
Autumn 1 2016	Curious & Active
Autumn 2 2016	Intentional & Prophetic

The cycle then starts again. The advantage of themes repeating at different times of the school year means that we won't become bound by the idea that there are certain times of the year are when we demonstrate a particular virtue. We will be able to revisit the virtues in new and imaginative ways.