



## **Policy for Religious Education**

### **Religious education at our schools**

Our vision in our school is of a community where people of different beliefs and religions live side by side, displaying mutual respect, understanding and friendship. Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together. It is essential that our children and young people are supported in developing these qualities and, whilst growing in confidence, achieve a level of critical awareness that helps them to become shapers of a solid cultural and religious understanding.

The effective teaching of RE will contribute towards our aim of achieving 'Good people who do well'.

We believe that religious education is an essential part of the school curriculum, helping to prepare children for the opportunities, experiences and responsibilities of everyday life and contributing to their development as individuals. High quality Religious Education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enables learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We teach according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum and we teach this through the Understanding Christianity resource. The use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Links with our school vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

### **Values and aims**

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child: spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all pupils:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

## Curriculum

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects.

This means that the RE curriculum:

Is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.

Reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy\*

*\*Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well informed conversations about religion and belief. (Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE.)*

Enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.

Provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.

Supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.

Encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs

Offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.

Ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

Reflecting the school's academy funding agreement, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each

year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be no less than 5% in key stages 1&2.

## **Teaching**

We recognise the importance of teaching RE in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way, in line with our Teaching & Learning policy. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Researching information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
- Engaging in pair and group work.
- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Experiencing visits and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- Taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. Questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

We also hold 2 yearly RE days where all teaching and support staff engage in RE activities based around Christmas and Easter. This gives our teaching team the chance to teach RE, to use our curriculums effectively and to plan activities based around the needs of the RE curriculum ensuring progression from year group to year group. It provides the children with the opportunity to consolidate their learning and also allows opportunities for 'digging deeper'.

## **Assessment**

Assessment in religious education will:

Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as Understanding Christianity.

Be directly related to the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus

Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.

Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.

Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.

Include pupil self-assessment.

Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.

Enable effective reporting to parents.

## **Legal Requirements**

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28). The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes. We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the importance placed on RE as a core subject in a church school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff.

Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. We ask that and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

J Elcock

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