

Religious Education (RE) Policy

Stanford in the Vale CE School

February 2016

Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Stanford in the Vale School, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address fundamental questions concerning, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children to learn from religions as well as about religions.

Our objectives in the teaching of RE are, for all of our children:

- to develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions or value systems adhered to in the UK;
- to develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- to be capable of reflecting on their own experiences, and of developing a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- to develop an understanding of religious traditions, and an appreciation of cultural differences in the UK today;
- to develop their investigative and research skills, in order to hold reasoned opinions on religious issues;
- to have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society.

The legal position of religious education

Religious Education must be taught in all state-funded schools although objectives are not given within the National Curriculum (2014). Our school RE curriculum is based on the LA's Agreed Syllabus, and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. As a church school, the syllabus has also been checked with our Oxfordshire Diocese advisors. If parents wish to, they may withdraw their child from Religious Education classes, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. As a Church of England Aided school, the RE syllabus reflects the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values, and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think

about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups. Sometimes, they prepare presentations on a computer and share these in assemblies.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, e.g. by:

- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- grouping the children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

We have strong links with the local Church. The Vicar visits the school frequently to take set Collective Worship sessions, and lessons or small group activities. We actively encourage the involvement of the Church community as we feel it enhances the children's understanding.

RE curriculum planning

RE is no longer specifically stated within the new National Curriculum (September 2014), however, it is still of high importance within primary education. We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the LA's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Teachers are provided with a yearly overview of topics to be taught. These are guidance only and can be done in any order or replaced with a different unit if it fits with the topic currently being taught. Detailed planning for the units on the overview are available for staff on the staff network. These plans provide a variety of teaching activities as well as information on previous knowledge. Teachers are required to print off these plans and annotate them with differentiation and next steps for learning.

The Foundation Stage

We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the Foundation Stage.

In Foundation Stage, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

RE contributes significantly to all areas of teaching. Where possible, the RE curriculum is used in conjunction with our topic teaching. This provides the children with a more holistic view of world faiths and how they have developed throughout history.

Through our RE lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required to respect others and the need for personal responsibility. By promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Through RE in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong, through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multi-cultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

RE and ICT

ICT is used to enhance RE, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using the Internet and interactive resources. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Children are also taught e-safety through the Computing curriculum.

RE and inclusion

At our school, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. Our teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the individual needs of children with learning difficulties. These children are highlighted on weekly planning timetables and will have a detailed account of learning needs on either their Pupil Profile or Pupil Passport (see SEND; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language policies).

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in RE. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to a Sikh temple, for example, that involves a journey), we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment

Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might produce a PowerPoint presentation based on their investigation of sacred texts. Teachers will assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or

verbal feedback to help guide progress. Children are then encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future.

Teachers record achievement against RE objectives on Classroom Monitor. These objectives highlight achievement linked to their stage (for example, year 3 will be working within Lower Key Stage Two). Children will be highlighted as beginning, developing, secure or exceeding within their stage. The RE co-ordinator also tracks three children from each year group, collecting samples of written work, photographs and speaking and listening notes. This work is used to ensure progression and well as a balanced coverage of knowledge based learning as well as reflective learning.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. We keep resources for RE in a central store, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. There is a set of Bibles for all Key Stages, and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in RE. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research.

Monitoring and review

The co-ordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in RE and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe RE lessons across the school.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Clare Webb

RE Co-ordinator

Completed: February 2016

To be reviewed: February 2018