

## Policy on Religious Education (RE)

**As a caring Church School, we are committed to the Christian values that develop a distinctive ethos underpinning the way in which we carry out our work and the way in which our children learn. We wholeheartedly adopt the “Every Child Matters” agenda and believe that we can inspire all members of our school community to achieve their full potential.**

At our school we aim to:

- Develop Christian values and principles.
- Help all members of our school community in achieving to their potential.
- Enable each child to develop an enquiring mind with the ability to question and discuss, so that they become independent, life-long learners.
- Provide an environment which is dedicated to promoting high standards of achievement for all and a love of learning which will be life-long and achieved within a Christian context

### 1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Bardney Church of England and Methodist Primary School, we develop the children’s knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and 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.

1.2 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.
- to have a consideration of the person as an individual and also a member of communities.

### 2 The legal position of religious education

2.1 Our school curriculum for RE meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents and carers to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention 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. Our school RE curriculum is based on the LA's Agreed Syllabus, and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect 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.

### **3 Teaching and learning style**

3.1 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. Teachers aim to stimulate interest and enjoyment in learning, and especially to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve. Practical activities such as cooking, model making, role play or art work are included where appropriate. Wherever possible visitors are encouraged to come into school.

The subject is approached using two key aims;

- Learning about religion – which includes enquiry, investigation, identifying and interpreting features and aspects of religion. It covers knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other.
- Learning from religion – which aims to develop pupils' ability to reflect on, and respond to, their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils' should learn to develop and communicate their own ideas in relations to questions of identify and belonging, meaning, purpose and values.

3.2 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. The planning of RE generally allows for important events in each of the religions to be taught at the appropriate time of year. We organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. Singing in assembly will be Christian in character reflecting our Collective Worship however the theme for assemblies may be drawn from other religions.

3.3 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.

3.4 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.

### **4 RE curriculum planning**

4.1 RE is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. 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.

- 4.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach RE topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2, we place an increasing emphasis on the study of religious themes and topics in their own right.
- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have some mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus, but do not have to repeat topics.
- 4.4 The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

## **5 The Foundation Stage**

- 5.1 We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.
- 5.2 In reception classes, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, RE planned and taught within the outcomes for knowledge and understanding of the world. The curriculum is based on material which most children in Lincolnshire encounter and the experiences they have as they begin school. Knowledge of religion, beliefs and cultures is essential to achieve some of the early learning goals and therefore RE forms a valuable part of the Foundation Stage.

## **6 Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas**

### **6.1 English**

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in the Literacy Hour have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is RE's way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters, diaries and record information, in order to develop their writing ability.

### **6.2 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship**

Through our RE lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour and we also link lessons to the SEAL curriculum. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

### **6.3 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

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.

## **7 RE and ICT**

- 7.1 ICT enhances RE, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using the Internet and CD-ROMs. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Older children use PowerPoint to help them to make presentations on various topics, such as sacred symbols in different world religions. Younger children can take photographs of the class acting out a Bible story. They can then make a class storybook of it, by adding in speech bubbles and a narrative text. Or, using desktop software, they can create a special book in which each pupil has his or her own page; they also make a cover and binding for the book, and draw up a set of rules for its use. A digital video camera can record a visit to a place of worship, and pupils can also find the various artefacts in churches by doing virtual tours on church websites.

## **8 RE and inclusion**

- 8.1 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. For further details, see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Discrimination; Gifted and Talented Children; English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- 8.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.
- 8.3 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education.
- 8.4 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.

## **9 Assessment for learning**

- 9.1 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. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future. This information is used to assess the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.
- 9.2 The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates the expected level of achievement in RE in each year of the school.

## **10 Resources**

10.1 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 both 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.

## **11 Monitoring and review**

11.1 The coordination 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.

11.2 The quality of teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of lesson observations.

11.3 This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

**Adoption Date: February 2014**

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