



St Edward's Church of England
Primary School

Religious Education Policy

October 2014



St. Edward's Church of England Primary School

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

"To have knowledge, you must first have reverence for the Lord"

Proverbs 1:7

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 St Edward's mission statement states that "lively faith and Christian values permeate all that is done". Religious Education has a key role in achieving this.

1.2 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St Edward's we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the Anglican faith and the major world faiths. We address the fundamental questions in life, 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 faiths represented within our school. Children reflect on what it means both to have a faith, and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.

2.0 AIMS

2.1 The aim of religious education at St Edward's is to enable pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge, understanding and respect for the beliefs and practices of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
- reflect on beliefs, values and traditions in order to understand their influence on individuals, communities, and culture;
- make informed responses to religious and moral issues;
- express curiosity about and learn to grapple with fundamental questions of life;
- develop and deepen their own belief, values and sense of self worth;
- make their own spiritual journey.

3.0 THE LEGAL POSITION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 3.1 Our school curriculum for religious education 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 to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors via the Head Teacher. 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.
- 3.2 In keeping with the Foundation of the School, the religious education curriculum is taught in accordance with the tenets, teachings and practices of the Church of England and is also a major part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Chelmsford Diocesan Syllabus supported by the Essex 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 the 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.

4.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING

- 4.1 Teaching and learning in RE is based on the key principle that good teaching 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.
- 4.2 Teaching and learning in RE enables children to build on their own experiences and 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 talk to the children.
- 4.3 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 discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.
- 4.4 We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and 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, for example, by:
- setting common tasks that 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 and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

5.0 CURRICULUM PLANNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class within the Foundation Stage.
- 5.2 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Chelmsford Agreed syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.
- 5.3 We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group.
- 5.4 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. Class teachers plan for each lesson and include specific learning objectives for that lesson, differentiation and detailed activities.
- 5.5. In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Development Matters goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.
- 5.6 In Foundation Stage and Year 1, the study of religion will be focussed on Christianity and children will be introduced to other religions from year 2 onwards. In Key Stage 2, the majority of Religious Education will continue to be the study of Christianity; however the curriculum includes the study of other world religions.

6.0 CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO THE TEACHING OF OTHER SUBJECTS

Religious education can promote learning across the curriculum in a number of areas.

6.1 Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through religious education

6.1.1 Religious education provides opportunities to promote **spiritual development** through:

- discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, beliefs about God and values such as justice, honesty and truth;
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices;
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity;
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God;
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging;
- developing children's own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.

6.1.2 Religious education provides opportunities to promote **moral development** through:

- enhancing the values identified within the National Curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust;
- exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders;
- considering what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy about values and ethical codes of practice;
- studying a range of ethical issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious respect and personal integrity;
- considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

6.1.3 Religious education provides opportunities to promote **social development** through:

- considering how religions and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns;
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions as well as the common ground between religions;
- articulating pupils' own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.

6.1.4 Religious education provides opportunities to promote **cultural development** through:

- encountering people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures;
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices;
- promoting racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.

6.2 Promoting citizenship through religious education

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting citizenship through:

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding;
- enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly;
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally;
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.

6.3 Promoting personal, social and health education through religious education

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting personal, social and health education through pupils:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions;
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views;
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

6.4 Promoting key skills through religious education

6.4.1 Religious education provides opportunities for pupils to develop the key skills of:

- communication through developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary, reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language (including sacred texts, stories and poetry, prayers, liturgy and worships), communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts, talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments;
- application of number through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis;
- information technology through using CD-ROMs and the internet selectively, researching information about religions and beliefs, teaching and practices, using email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of religious education;
- working with others through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect and sensitivity.
- improving own learning and performance through setting targets as part of religious education development, reviewing their achievements and identifying ways to improve their own work;
- problem solving through recognising key issues to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues (for example, considering their own and religious ideas on good

and evil), ethical dilemmas and priorities in life. Promoting other aspects of the curriculum.

6.4.2 Religious education provides opportunities to promote:

- thinking skills through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions, reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways;
- financial capability through considering the responsible use of money, the importance of giving and the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty, gambling, business and investment;
- creativity and culture through considering the scope of human nature, sources of inspiration and discovery, connections between beliefs, values and forms of artistic expression, appreciating the value of cultural distinctiveness and reflecting on beauty, goodness and truth in creative and expressive arts;
- education for racial equality and community cohesion through studying the damaging effects of xenophobia and racial stereotyping, the impact of conflict in religion and the promotion of respect, understanding and cooperation through dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs;
- effective contributions to scientific, medical and health issues through exploring philosophical and ethical questions of the origin, purpose and destiny of the cosmos and life within it, exploring the nature of humanity and human interaction with the world, exploring developments in genetics and medicine and their application and use and exploring concepts of health and well-being and their promotion;
- links to employment, vocations and work-related learning through a focus on individual sense of purpose and aspiration in life, and through considering the appropriateness and relevance of religious education to a wide range of employment opportunities and the development of spiritual and ethical issues linked to the world of work;
- education for sustainable development through helping pupils consider the origins and value of life, the importance of looking after the environment and studying the ways in which religious beliefs and teachings have influenced attitudes to the environment and other species.

7.0 TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

7.1 In our school, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE, we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). Please refer our policy for Special Educational Needs.

8.0 ASSESSMENT

8.1 Formative assessment

Teachers use assessment for learning strategies during lessons in order to inform planning and ensure that children are making progress during lessons.

Teachers follow the marking and feedback policy when marking RE work. Next step marking, giving detailed feedback and clear guidance for improvement is planned for and occurs on a regular basis. Children are required to respond to feedback and make the suggested improvements.

During lessons pupils assess themselves and their peers against differentiated success criteria which are based on the Diocesan level descriptors.

8.2 Summative Assessment

Teachers use level descriptors as set out in the Diocesan syllabus in order to assess children's work for both attainment targets 1 and 2 at planned points during each unit of work. These are used to give an overall level judgment for AT 1 and 2 at the end of each unit.

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Approved by Head Teacher:

Head Teacher

Date