

Religious Education (RE) Policy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. As a Church of England school, St Peter's CE Primary School aims to reflect and implement the 'Church of England Statement of Entitlement' to ensure that students are receiving high quality RE teaching. At our school, students and their families can expect a religious education curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and other major religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children in 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 learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

1.2 The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual, philosophical and moral issues arising in their lives;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity as a living world faith that influences the lives of people both in Britain and around the world;
- to know and understand about other major world religions and value systems found in Britain and worldwide;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop investigative and research skills, and make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity in society.

Together, these objectives enable children to become religiously literate.

2 The legal position of religious education

2.1 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 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. Links with the Christian values of the school and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are intrinsic to the RE curriculum.

Our school RE curriculum is based on the Understanding Christianity resource and the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus. 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. As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement, Christianity is the majority study in RE.

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 hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.
- 3.2** Teachers use a range of resources to form an enquiry based approach that engages with holy texts and helps develop religious and theological literacy. Religiously literate children are able to:
- empathise with others;
 - make links within and between faiths
 - evaluate and ask questions;
 - reflect upon and understand the views of others;
 - respect and understand a range of religious beliefs.
- 3.3** 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 organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. We then use these experiences to further develop their religious understanding.
- 3.4** In RE lessons, children are given the opportunity to 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 and they feed back regularly.
- 3.5** 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, for example, 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);
 - 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 Curriculum planning in religious education

- 4.1** We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Understanding Christianity resource and the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education 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 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 devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group.
- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. These plans are distributed to staff and the RE subject leader reviews them on a regular basis. Medium planning ensures that children have complete coverage of the syllabus, but do not have to repeat topics.
- 4.4 The class teacher plans for each lesson and generates the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes. These plans are often discussed on an informal basis with the RE subject leader. Teachers are responsible for ensuring that lessons provide a balance between three disciplines: theology, philosophy and human/social sciences.

5 The Foundation Stage

- 5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class and nursery class. In the early years, teachers use the Jack in the Box Big Bible Story resource to plan lessons, alongside The Sandwell Agreed Syllabus.
- 5.2 In reception and nursery classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As they are 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 Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

6 Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

6.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Although RE lessons must have an explicit RE learning objective, children are often using and applying English skills through written tasks, when reading and understanding religious texts and participating in discussion.

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

Through our religious education 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 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 religious education 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 multicultural 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** Information and communication technology enhances religious education, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. Using the internet, children are given the opportunity to select and analyse information. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Older children use *PowerPoint* to help them 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. iPads can also be used to 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 religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education 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.
- 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** We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in religious education. 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. Teachers will assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as they observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child verbal feedback to help guide progress. Children are then 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, to aid further planning and when passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.
- 9.2** Class teachers assess children's progress termly, inputting this data onto the school assessment system. This is then used by the RE subject leader to monitor progress and ensure coverage across the school.

- 9.3** Samples of children's work are kept 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 religious education teaching units. We keep general resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of equipment linking to each major religion. Individual year groups also have their own folder of resources linked to the Understanding Christianity resource and the Sandwell Agreed Syllabus. There are bibles in each key stage, and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library and individual classrooms have a good supply of RE topic books available for use both in RE lessons and independent reading.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1.1** The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school.
- 11.1.2** The subject leader presents the head teacher with a termly action plan which is reviewed regularly. The action plan reviews current practice and sets out a plan to move RE teaching forward by highlighting areas for further development. This information is also shared with governors each half term in the head teacher's report.
- 11.1.3** The RE subject leader is allocated time to undertake monitoring of RE teaching throughout the school. This involves learning walks and book scrutinies, which are often undertaken alongside a member of the senior leadership team.
- 11.1.4** This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.

Signed:

Date: