



'Learn to love and love to learn; in God's love each one will shine'

St. Andrew's Church of England (VC) Primary School
Religious Education Policy

Rationale:

At St. Andrew's Primary School it is our vision for every child in our school to have

- * positive self-esteem through inner confidence and strength
- * creativity of thought within a life-long passion for learning
- * excellence, high personal achievement and the experience of success
- * a set of values by which to live
- * an enjoyment of childhood

.... All developed within a caring Christian environment.

As a Church of England School, we affirm and value every member of our school community. We recognise each child and adult as a child of God, as unique and special to God and have a commitment and responsibility to provide the best possible education for our children within a caring Christian community. As a Church of England school we aim to develop and maintain a Christian ethos.

Background to Religious Education at our school:

Many families who send their children to this school are 'nominally' Christian. We do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are a very few children who are from religions other than Christianity and many from non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with "learning about religions" and "learning from religion" and it is not the role or practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times. "The school will respect the individuality of every pupil and seek their maturation not by indoctrination, nor by coercive evangelism, but by demonstrating in work and deed the reality and importance of a spiritual dimension of life." ('Christianity in Church of England Schools' Diocese of St. Albans).

St. Andrew's School is fully inclusive and is committed to a policy of equal opportunity for all pupils. RE is available for all pupils regardless of their own particular belief or lack of belief. Under the 1944 and 1988 Acts, parents have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Education or parts of Religious Education. Parents who wish to do so are encouraged to discuss this with the Headteacher first. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE (DFE Circular 1/94). During the current Headteacher's tenure, no child has been withdrawn from Religious Education, nor has any teacher withdrawn from teaching this subject.

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the basic curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined, we must follow the Agreed Syllabus provided by our Local Education Authority (Hertfordshire). However, as a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school, we do not have to follow the Hertfordshire scheme of work but have the flexibility to use other schemes in covering the Agreed Syllabus. (See below).

Aims:

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. At St. Andrew's we value highly the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually and are proud of our caring ethos. These are reflected in the RE curriculum. The aim of Religious Education at St. Andrew's School is to contribute educationally to the development of pupils as individuals and members of society; by fostering a reflective approach to life in the context of a growing understanding of the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and religious practices of the human race.

Religious Education should enable pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. These include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, each of which is represented in Hertfordshire.
- develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, including the local community;
- develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions;
- enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 - developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experience, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;
 - responding to such fundamental questions in the light of their own experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
- recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within an ethnically and socially diverse society.

As a Church of England school, we follow the recommendations of the National Society in that a majority of our time is spent studying Christianity (see below).

We have close links with St. Andrew's Church and the local community around us.

Objectives:

Learning

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life; beliefs about God; the self and the nature of reality; issues of right and wrong; and what it means to be human. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. Religious Education should encourage all participants to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to acknowledge that others hold beliefs different to their own.

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, an awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and by respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from our own. Religious Education is comprised of two closely related aspects: Learning about Religions (AT1) and Learning from Religion (AT2).

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum. RE is at its most effective when these two attainment targets are closely related to learning experience and are approached in tandem.

AT1 Learning about Religions

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

AT2 Learning from Religion

- respond to religious and moral issues in an informed and considered manner;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the question of meaning within religion.

Children will be "Learning about Religions" and "Learning from Religion" through:

- investigation; the use of first-hand and other resources to understand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories.
- questioning; developing curiosity about life, relationships and the natural world
- empathy; developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as wonder, forgiveness, sorrow, joy and to try to see the world through the eyes of others
- reflection; the ability to consider thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs of oneself and others
- relating; linking significant features of religions, making associations between them, to understand what makes religions distinct and/or similar and
- expression; the ability to identify and explain feelings and aspects of religions

Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas.

- Belief and Teachings – e.g. stories, religious leaders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death
- Religious Practices and Lifestyles – e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, effects on individuals
- Ways of Expressing Meaning – e.g. sacred texts, art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, forms of religious and spiritual expression, silence/stillness
- Human Identity, Personality and Experience – e.g. belonging, preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people
- Questions of Meaning and Purpose – e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, making sense, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences
- Values and Commitments – e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, morality.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and to develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches. Providing a balance between these two key attainment targets underpins our teaching of RE.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

- visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
- role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
- artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect whilst deepening knowledge
- parents; by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, role play, drama, asking and answering questions, using a range of sources including ICT, works of art, artefacts, visits and visitors.

Assessment, recording and reporting:

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined following the Eight Level Scale in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2012-2017 – at emerging, established and exceeding levels.

Assessment in RE at St. Andrew's School is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing. Through activities such as discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment. This information is then recorded termly against the statements of attainment in line with other Foundation Subjects in the curriculum. The Subject Leader analyses this data after each assessment period and submits a report on his/her findings to the Senior Leadership Team.

As a teaching staff we have undertaken training in the assessment of RE as well as moderation exercises to ensure that we are familiar with the statements and what they mean in the context of a pupil's work.

The children in KS1 and KS2 record their work in an exercise book or on display, although we recognise that much of the work in KS1 will be through discussion. An individual pupil's progress will be commented upon in the RE section of the annual report written to parents and is written with reference to the on-going records made or pieces of work retained. Evidence of RE work will also be seen in classrooms and hall displays and church services.

Time Allocation: In line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2012-2017 we plan for RE to be delivered flexibly according to the statutory requirements of the EYFS at Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1 pupils spend 60 hours over 2 years (approximately 10 hours per term) and 156 hours over 4 years (approximately 13 hours per term) at Key Stage 2. Time allocation does include visits and RE curriculum days but not school productions related to festivals, or Collective Worship time.

Planning:

A yearly scheme of work has been devised to meet the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. To create the St. Andrew's Scheme of Work (see attached) which forms the basis for our planning and delivery of RE, we have drawn on the following schemes of work:

- Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2012 - 2017
- Diocese of St. Alban's Units of Work on Christianity
- Foundation Stage LCP (Nursery only)

Our scheme of work builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. This scheme shows that Christianity is taught across the school, whilst we have planned that aspects of all six principal faiths are explored, primarily over Key Stage two. We have used a combination of teaching RE through topics (or blocks of work where more than one curriculum area is linked together in a coherent way) and as a separate subject, depending on the material which has to be covered.

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE Subject Leader is available to help with this and can offer advice on appropriate resourcing.

When planning each unit of work the teacher will identify:

- which parts of the programme of study are to be the focus,
- the learning objectives for the unit (i.e. what the pupils should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their work),
- the activities planned to achieve them, time allocated and
- any resources, visits or visitors needed.

The work planned will be relevant to the needs of the pupils.

Cross-curricular opportunities: RE teaching and learning may be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. There are very special opportunities to explore multicultural issues and those of equal opportunities, as well as a consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality. Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

The role of the subject leader is to:

- Take the lead in policy development
- Monitor coverage of the St. Andrew's Scheme of Work and carry out an annual review of the syllabus
- Carry out a termly work sampling and planning trace
- Monitor standards in teaching and learning in RE and advise the Senior Leadership Team on action needed
- Support colleagues in their development of planning and implementation of schemes of work and assessment
- Support colleagues in identifying and attending CPD opportunities as relevant
- Take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of central resources – ensuring that they are readily available and accessible
- Keep up to date with the developments in Religious Education and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate.

Policy 'overseen and approved' by: Governors' School Improvement Monitoring Curriculum and Ethos Committee

Policy written: February 2010

Policy reviewed: November 2013 and January 2015

Policy to be reviewed: Autumn 2017 (with new agreed syllabus)