

# ST JOHN THE BAPTIST C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL



*Life in all its fullness*

## **Religious Education Policy September 2021**

- A Christian school where every child is encouraged on their journey of faith.
- A place to practice 'people skills' to prepare us to become good citizens.
- A well led and governed school
- An exciting, quality environment
- A happy, healthy, safe place to learn how to look after our bodies and minds
- An inclusive place that nurtures children's individual talents
- A school that enables us to develop our character

# **ST JOHN THE BAPTIST C OF E PRIMARY SCHOOL**

## **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. At St John the Baptist Church of England Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we enable them to consider the fundamental questions in life and to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. 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 religion about religions as well as developing skills to investigate religion.

1.2 The aims of religious education are to help children:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- 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 religious differences in Britain today;
- Develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.
- Develop a practical understanding of our Christian values of; Hope, Wisdom, Encouragers, Forgiveness, Resilience, Self discipline, Justice, Love, Thankfulness and Compassion.
- Develop a sense of awe at the world and order of God's creation.

### **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 Foundation 2 class who are less than five years old. 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 Nottinghamshire LA Agreed Syllabus 2021 as approved by the Diocese of Southwell and supported by a range of other materials and resources especially including “Understanding Christianity”. 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.

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. 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 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 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.
- 3.1a Our collective worship policy links to this as our aims in this focus on children having opportunities to express their own personal faith.
- 3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable 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 come into school and talk to the children. We have an especially close relationship to our local C of E church who support us too.
- 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 rights of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues in class sometimes using computers and either working individually or in groups.
- 3.4 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 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 **Curriculum planning in religious education**

4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Nottinghamshire LEA Agreed Syllabus 2021 and in consultation with the Diocese of Southwell. It is resourced through a variety of materials including exemplifications of planning within the Syllabus and resources produced by the Diocese of Southwell. 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.

4.2 We have a long term plan which incorporates the Understanding Christianity material.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long term, medium term and short term).

4.3 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. In Key Stage 2, we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.

4.4 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. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

4.5 The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and

discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader. Planning outlines “learning about” objectives as well as opportunities from children to reflect on this thereby enabling them to learn “from” other religions and develop the skills for studying religions and world views.

- 4.6 Within the year, one or more RE Days are planned for where children move around the whole school learning key facts and/or experience a variety of topics from RE which may involve major festivals, rights of passage, symbols, Christian traditions.
- 4.7 In conjunction with the Collective Worship Policy and long-term plan, theme weeks are planned to support the children learning key events from the Christian calendar. The theme of these will be decided upon each academic year (e.g. Easter and Pentecost weeks).

## **5 Foundation Stage**

- 5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the Foundation class.
- 5.2 In Foundation classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Foundation 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 EYFS Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

## **6 Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects**

### **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. Some of the texts that we use in Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion and this is one of our ways of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

### **6.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)**

We use ICT where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

### **6.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship (People Skills)**

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. This contributes to the discussions of topics such as smoking, drugs, RSE and health education which are covered in our people skills lessons. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a British 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.

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

Through teaching 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. This is known as character values.

### **7 Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs**

- 7.1 At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education forms part of the school 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 progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the 2021 Agreed Syllabus allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.
- 7.2 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.
- 7.3 Intervention through an identification of special educational need, 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.
- 7.4 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in

activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a Sikh temple, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils in line with our usual off site visit procedure and policy.

## **8 Assessment and recording**

- 8.1 We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a term of work and combined with specific assessment tasks, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the agreed syllabus levels of attainment. We record the attainment grades, which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.
- 8.2 The class leaders keeps samples of children's work in class portfolios. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school. It also shows the progression of the class as they move through the school.

## **9 Resources**

- 9.1 We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there are boxes of equipment.
- 9.2 We buy into the support REACH each year which helps us keep RE up to date and well resourced. It also keeps staff well supported.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE subject leader presents the head teacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he has specially allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching

in the subject. This time will be incorporated in to the Management timetable.

Reviewed: September 2021

Review: September 2023

Reviewed by Staff: P Collins

Governor : Rev D Mayo