Policy for Religious Education
January 2015
Introduction

At St.John’s Church School we believe that Religious Education is central to our being. It is a cornerstone for the school’s distinctive dimension.

Although R.E. is statutory, it justifies its place in the curriculum on purely educational grounds. It provides the opportunity to explore a major and distinctive dimension of what it means to be a person: the search for meaning and value in a wondrous but also confusing and sometimes threatening world. R.E. offers pupils the chance to raise and reflect on perennial questions about life. In doing this, it draws on the rich history of religious traditions in Britain, giving prominence to Christianity reflecting the fact that we are a voluntary aided school.

The Aims of R.E.

The Agreed Syllabus for Peterborough demonstrates these aims for R.E.

1. To acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in the UK.

2. To develop an understanding of the influence or beliefs, values and traditions of individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

3. To develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own; living in a society of diverse religion.

4. To develop the ability to make reasoned and informal judgements about religious issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Peterborough and the United Kingdom.

5. Enhance spiritual, moral and cultural development by:
   - Developing awareness of the fundamental questions raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them.
   - Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience.
   - Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

These are developed in the following ways, which can be seen as ‘steps’ to achieve the aims:
• Developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths in the United Kingdom;

• Understanding what it means to belong to a religious community and the influence religious faith has on individuals and communities;

• Exploring similarities and differences between and within religions;

• Perceiving the way religious reaching and practice relate to ultimate questions;

• Reflecting on the benefits and challenges of living in a multi-faith and diverse society;

• Developing the ability to analyse and think critically about religious belief and practice.

• Considering the relationship between religion and culture and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices.

• Promote inter-racial and inter-faith harmony by promoting respect for all and combating prejudice and respect for all.

Method

1. Religious Education can be taught as a weekly class lesson or sometimes as a whole block, such as R.E. week or R.E. day. We also teach R.E. in an integrated way with cross-curricular approach.

2. The Agreed syllabus has 2 attainment targets. AT1 involves learning about religions and AT2 allows learning from these religions. These are developed through enquiry based learning.

3. At Key Stage 1 90-95% of the teaching will have a Christian focus, and the remaining 5-10% will concentrate on Islam.

4. At Key Stage 2 75-80% of the work will have a Christian focus, and in lower Key Stage 2 the remaining 20-25% will explore Sikhism and Judaism, with Upper Key stage 2 covering Hinduism. Each will be taught as a single study on the general basis of two terms for Christianity and one for other faiths.

5. The teaching of Christian Festivals will take place. The festivals to be explored are:

   • Epiphany (liturgical colour: white)
   • Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent (liturgical colour: purple)
   • Holy Week: Palm Sunday (red), Maundy Thursday and Good Friday (stripped bare) and Easter Sunday (white)
- Pentecost/Whitsun (red)
- Advent (purple) and Christmas (white)
- Saint John’s Day (red)

These may be linked into the weekly collective worships. Easter, Christmas and St.John’s Day are observed before or after the school holiday.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment is crucial in informing our teaching and ensuring learning is maximised. We assess progress in R.E. in the following ways:

Formative
- Short Term Assessment to inform day to day planning.
- Quality marking (recorded on children’s work).
- Lesson evaluations including notes on individual or groups of children (recorded on Weekly Plans)
- Class lists of skills work covered.

Summative
- Report to parents in Annual Report.
- Reporting to parents in confidential interviews.
- Relevant part of Foundation Stage Profile.
- R.E. is reported to parents through the use of the Individual School Report.

Recording
Record are made regularly so progress can be gauged and monitored. The children’s level of attainment are recorded against the Level Descriptors in the attainment targets.

Differentiation

In R.E. children are often free from the constraints of other curriculum areas due to the ‘hands on’, oral aspect of the subject. However, when pupils are recording their work on paper we support them according to our Planning for Differentiation chart.

Resources

We have in school baskets containing relevant artefacts to the religion. A variety of religions are supported in our school library. Visitors to the classroom are encouraged to share their religious faith and practises.

These resources are monitored and/or repaired by the co-ordinator.

Reporting
Foundation Stage – these comments will be written under the ‘knowledge and Understanding of the World’ section.

As part of the annual report to parents, reference will be made to a child’s capabilities in R.E.

**Monitoring, Evaluation and Development**

It is the role of the co-ordinator, Head teacher and Governors to monitor and evaluate the R.E. teaching throughout the school. We monitor and evaluate the curriculum in the following ways:

- Lesson observations with feedback.
- Book trawls.
- Monitoring teachers’ planning and records.
- Staff meeting, discussion about children’s work.

**Inclusion**

We aim to meet the needs of all our children by treating them differently. We promote the individuality of all our pupils irrespective of ethnicity, attainment, age, disability, gender or background.

The subject matter of R.E. sometimes raises sensitive issues. It is important therefore that staff are aware of and sensitive to the background and personal circumstances of their pupils.

Parents can withdraw their child from Religious Education if they feel their own religious beliefs are in conflict with those of the school. Any parent wishing to do so should come and talk with the Headteacher.

Please refer to Inclusion Policy for more details.

**Special Needs**

Children with special educational needs will be encouraged to develop at their own pace. Teachers plan carefully using previous records and appropriate activities.

**Spiritual Development**

Spiritual development is to be judged by how well the school promotes opportunities for pupils to reflect on aspects of their lives and the human condition through, for example, literature, music, art, science, religious education and collective worship, and how well the pupils respond.
People matter – everyone has infinite worth and untold potential
Body, mind, emotion and spirit are all interwoven, not separate
We grow as individuals by relating to ourselves, to other people, the natural world and the world of the spirit
We are all part of a community
Diversity of thought, experience, culture and life is to be valued
There is more to life than material success
Faith traditions are an important source of wisdom and insight on spirituality

Every subject has the potential to encourage pupils’ spirituality. Spiritual development across the curriculum includes these objectives:

- To recognise the value of relationships and the worth of each individual
- To pursue issues which help establish what it means to be a “person”
- To treat all people with respect, regardless of inner feelings
- To sustain pupils’ self-esteem in the learning situation
- To develop the self-awareness of pupils
- To foster the emotional life of the pupil
- To allow pupils to investigate and reflect upon their own values
- To create an atmosphere which enables pupils and staff to speak freely about their beliefs or what is meaningful and significant to them, including the darker areas of life such as grief or death
- To develop the self-confidence of individuals to express their inner thoughts in a variety of ways
- To provide opportunities for the expression and enjoyment of imagination, inspiration, insight, understanding and empathy
- To encourage time for reflection on the inspiring quality of the world (eg power of nature, human inventiveness and creativity)
- To promote opportunities for stillness, silence and reflection and the exploration of inner space
- To encourage the search for meaning in life
- To promote the quest for learning and share the joy of learning
- To develop the ability to use all of one’s senses
- To explore what commitment means
- To explore symbol, image, allegory and metaphor
- To encourage a spirit of enquiry and open-mindedness
- To explore an approach to the holy or sacred
- To transcend the mundane

Health and Safety
When children handle artefacts staff must be aware that when and where the artifact was made safety standards may not have been as stringent as they are for British educational equipment.

When planning to take children out of school to places of worship, please refer to the school’s Educational Visits Policy in conjunction with the Head and School Governors.

**Related policies and Documents**

- The National Curriculum
- Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage.
- Assessment Policy.
- Special Needs Policy.
- Health and Safety Policy.
- Equal Opportunities Policy.
- QCA Scheme of Work

**Policy Review**

This policy will be reviewed in September 2017 or if a newer syllabus is released.