Curiosity, Courage, Compassion

'A community learning together in God's love'

Thundridge and Tonwell St Mary's Church Schools' Federation

Religious Education Policy

Date updated: September 2022

Review Date: September 2023

BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT TONWELL ST MARY'S SCHOOL

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents. It is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

As RE is not nationally determined a locally agreed syllabus of RE is prepared by a local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and adopted by a local authority. It is this Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022 (extended to 2023), which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE *(note 2).*

Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian or from non-religious backgrounds and we welcome children from a range of faith backgrounds, school is committed to valuing the opinions, beliefs and practices of all and to showing sensitivity to minority groups.

PURPOSE OF STUDY AND AIMS

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually, is reflected in the RE curriculum.

RE 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.

Purpose of Study: At this school we aim to achieve high quality RE for all pupils. RE teaching provides pupils with a systematic knowledge and understanding about Christianity, principal religions and worldviews, which give life value. RE aims to enable pupils to become religiously and theologically literate, so they can engage in life in an increasingly diverse society. It is not about telling pupils what religious views they should have but rather assists them in gaining shared human understanding, developing personal identity and searching for meaning in the context of evaluating different viewpoints.

Aims: The curriculum for Religious Education aims to ensure that all pupils develop knowledge and understanding of **sources of wisdom and their impact** whilst exploring **personal and critical responses.**

Sources of wisdom and their impact*. All pupils should:*

- know, understand and explore the significance and impact of sacred texts, other sources of wisdom and ways of expressing meaning
- express ideas and insights about the nature of beliefs, values and practices and their impact upon the identity of individuals and communities
- recognise and explore the diversity which exists within and between religious traditions

Personal and critical responses. *All pupils should:*

- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections, critical responses and connections to faith and belief enquiring into philosophical, moral and ethical issues
- engage with the questions and answers offered by religions and worldviews

concerning ultimate questions and human responsibility

- develop the skills required to engage with others in dialogue and to cooperate in society with respect and compassion

CONTENT AND APPROACH

From Reception classes to Year 6 pupils must:

- follow a coherent and systematic study of the principal religion of Christianity across each key stage and
- be introduced to the other five principal religions represented in Great Britain by the end of key stage 2

At key stage 1 a minimum of two religions are studied

EYFS	Children will encounter Christianity and religions and beliefs represented in the class, school or local community. Religious Education will support a growing sense of the child's awareness of self, their own community and their place within this.
Years 1 and 2	A minimum of two religions are studied. Christianity and at least one other religion. Pupils also learn from other religions in thematic units.
Years 3 and 4 Years 5 and 6	A minimum of four religions are studied. Christianity and at least three principal religions chosen from Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism will be studied in depth. Pupils also learn from other religions and worldviews in thematic units. Lower KS2 – Christianity (Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism). Upper KS2 – Christianity (Judaism, Buddhism). All six principal religions are introduced or revisited by the end of the key stage 2.

Teaching the programmes of study contributes to developing religious and theological literacy through religions and worldviews. We explore eight key areas of learning throughout each key stage to meet the aims of our curriculum (in no particular order)

Beliefs and practices
Sources of wisdom
Symbols and actions
Prayer, worship and reflection
Identity and belonging
Ultimate questions
Human responsibility and values
Justice and fairness

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. Through a range of strategies, such as: enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, artefacts, visits and visitors of faith and belief, pupils are actively engaged in learning.

TIME ALLOCATION FOR RE

In line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022:

At EYFS RE is delivered flexibly according to the statutory requirements of the EYFS
At Key Stage 1 pupils spend 60 hours over 2 years (approximately 10 hours per term)
At Key Stage 2 pupils spend 156 hours over 4 years (approximately 13 hours per term).
<u>These minimum time requirements include visits and RE curriculum days but not school productions related to festivals, assembly or collective worship time.</u>

(See Collective Worship policy).

WITHDRAWAL

At this school it is our practice to talk to parents to ensure that they understand the aims and value of the RE curriculum before honouring the right of withdrawal from RE *(note 6).* Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from RE. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child is expected to consult the headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022 sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the expected end of key stage learning outcomes as a requirement outlined in the syllabus. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

Through activities for example, 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. This information is then recorded on non-core assessment grids for assessment and in line with other areas of the curriculum.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and the RE report is written with reference to the records made or pieces of work retained.

PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage the school follows enquiry based approach set out in 'Religion for Today and Tomorrow' non-statutory guidance supporting the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022/ some additional elements of the previous Hertfordshire Primary Scheme of Work for RE (2012-2017) have been retained/ we draw upon to resources provided by the Understanding Christianity project. Our long-term planning builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the eight key areas of learning. Our schemes of work ensure that pupils have encountered and explored the religions through the EYFS and Key Stages 1 and 2. We have used a combination of teaching RE through the creative curriculum, RE days and as a separate subject, depending on the material which has to be covered.

Our curriculum intent statement sets out an overview of our aims, unique context and progression for RE. 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. As we have mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus and that any repetition of topics is mindful of progression.

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE Subject Leader is available to help with this and keeps a range of teachers' resources as a guide. 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, the learning tasks planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of all pupils.

CROSS CURRICULAR APPROACHES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

RE presents many opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for 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.

The RE curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development knowledge and awareness of Prevent, British values, keeping children safe and the diversity, equality and cohesion agendas, these are all essential contributing factors in providing outstanding RE teaching and learning for all children.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The RE subject leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders.

There is a yearly staff meeting on RE, led by the subject leader; where areas for development are discussed. This policy is reviewed on a biennial cycle to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

1. *Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 19: Education Act 2002, Section 80. See also section 78 of the 2002 Education Act, which applies to all maintained schools. Academies are also required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with Section 1 of the 2010 Academies Act.*

2. *The locally agreed syllabus is statutory for maintained schools without a religious character and Voluntary Controlled schools. Voluntary Aided schools are not obliged to use the locally agreed syllabus. They must, however teach RE in accordance with their trust deed. Faith and non-faith academies and free schools may use their locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with permission of the SACRE concerned), or devise their own curriculum.*

3. *The principal religious traditions taught are, in accordance with guidance from the DfE, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Humanism and Atheism are worldviews which are appropriate to include as part of the RE curriculum. Where we have pupils who are members of other world faiths (e.g. Baha'i or Jain) then in line with our inclusion policy and valuing of the individual, we include aspects of that religion in RE.*

4. *'Religious literacy' focuses on the human experience of religion and belief and the development of skills for expressing these experiences. 'Theological literacy' focuses on the big concepts upon which religions are founded, such as God, creation and the afterlife and the development of skills for expressing these concepts. These big concepts are explored through the non-statutory additional guidance document.*

5. *Sources of wisdom include: sacred texts, psalms, hymns, prayers, poems, letters, paintings, icons, artefacts and people.*

6. *(DfES Circular 1/94 para 44-49).*