

## Religious Education Policy

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Barton St. Peter's School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity, as well as the major world faiths of Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism. 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 as well as *about* religions. We believe that Religious Education actively promotes our school values of **Friendship, Family, Forgiveness, Trust, Thankfulness and Compassion**. It places specific emphasis on pupils valuing themselves, and others; the role of the family and the community in religious belief and activity; the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences; sustainable development of the earth. We believe that Religious Education has an important part to play in promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development of our pupils, the promotion of citizenship and development of personal, social and health education and key skills.

### Legal requirements

- Religious Education is a component of the basic curriculum. It forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship
- Religious Education must be taught according to a locally agreed syllabus prepared by a specially convened standing conference. Our school Religious Education curriculum is based on the 2011 Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and it meets all the requirements set out in that document
- Religious Education must be taught to all registered pupils. This requirement does not apply to Nursery classes in maintained schools
- Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of their Religious Education lessons if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors
- Teachers are also allowed to refuse to teach Religious Education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors
- The statutory requirements regarding Religious education are set out in the DFE Circular 1/94 Religious Education and Collective Worship. (See also The Education Act 1996 and School Standards and Framework Act 1998)

### Aims

In accordance with the guidance given in the Non-Statutory National Framework, (QCA 2004), the general aims for Religious Education are encapsulated in the two Attainment Targets of Agreed Syllabus (2011) namely -

**AT1** - The development of **knowledge and understanding** of the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other principle religions and non-theistic traditions represented in Britain.

**AT2** - Provide opportunities for **reflection and response**, to evaluate ideas and experiences of life and religion.

The following major objectives provide a sound basis for working towards the above Attainment Targets which are intended to -

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences

- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition
- Be able to reflect on our own experiences and develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life
- Develop an understanding of religious traditions and appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today
- Develop investigative, reflective, social and research skills and to enable pupils to make reasoned judgements about religious issues
- Have a respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity of society through understanding similarities and differences
- Introduce the ideas and experience of religion in the world around us
- Lay the foundations for future understanding of religious beliefs and practices
- Develop an understanding of the beliefs, practices and institutions of Christianity and other major religious traditions represented in Great Britain
- Allow pupils to explore their own beliefs and values in relation to those of others
- Foster positive attitudes towards others and their beliefs and values
- Encourage an appreciation of the variety of experiences of life and how these may be interpreted
- Foster respect for all and care for the environment

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

We base our teaching and learning style in Religious Education on the key principle that good teaching in Religious Education enables children to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching encourages children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We provide opportunities for children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes studied in the Religious Education curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in Religious Education enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences of religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, and The Hajj 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 to talk to the children.

Although mainly Christian in content, we aim to give the children a more in depth look at Hinduism at Key Stage 1, to continue with Islam (Y3/4) and Sikhism (Y5/6) at Key Stage 2. They compare the religious views of these faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. From time to time other World Faiths are considered. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies (see Collective Acts of Worship Policy)

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, emphasis being placed on first hand experiences, 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 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

### **Curriculum Planning**

Religious Education is taught in all year groups, by all teachers. It is planned for at Long, Medium and Short Term levels. All staff plan from the Programmes of Study in the Agreed Syllabus and adhere to the Schemes of Work developed to accompany them. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit. We ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

The Long Term plan maps the Religious Education themes studied in each term during each Key Stage over the whole year. Medium Term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. These are taken straight from the Agreed Scheme of Work. Short Term plans consist of specific learning objectives for that lesson and the activity used to deliver that objective along with appropriate assessment arrangements.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

This is through on-going Teacher Assessment using the National Levels of Assessment for both Attainment Targets 1 and 2. Evidence is gathered through observation, oral discussion, written tasks etc. When children have shown consistency, the relevant level and statements are highlighted/dated in the Pupil Profile booklet. The pupils' overall attainment is reported annually through the written report at the end of the year.

Samples of children's work are kept in a school portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in Religious Education in each year of the school.

### **Cross curricular links**

Opportunities for cross-curricular links exist within the teaching of Religious Education.

For example -

It contributes significantly to the teaching of English by actively promoting the skills of speaking and listening, reading and writing. Some of the texts that we use in the Literacy Hour have religious themes or content, which encourage discussion and this is one of the ways in which we promote the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage children to record information and write creatively in order to develop their writing ability.

We use ICT where appropriate in Religious Education. The children find, use, select and analyse information. ICT is used to support research through monitored use of the internet and use of the interactive whiteboards in classrooms. Children also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve presentation. There are in addition, a number of videos and CD's which can be used to support the delivery of Religious Education.

Through RE (and PSHCE - see PSHCE Policy) we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attributes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society. We also 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 build a sense of identity in a multi-cultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in doing so they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural contexts of their lives.

There are also strong links with music, art and design, and drama. These links are planned for at the short term level where appropriate.

### **The use of Language**

Children are given the opportunity to develop the skills to express themselves correctly and appropriately, listen to others and read with understanding special religious texts matched to their level of attainment. We actively promote the use of positive language when looking at the diversity of faith, culture, experience and belief. Any incident of anti-racism is reported, as required, according to both the school and LA policy.

### **S.E.N. and Differentiation**

In our school we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of Religious Education is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. The content of the Religious Education curriculum is the entitlement of every child. When teaching Religious Education we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Differentiation is identified and planned for at short term level and any additional support for the individual is noted.

### **Gifted and Talented**

It is our responsibility to ensure that all children are challenged and their abilities nurtured. Challenge can be provided in a variety of ways, such as, varying the complexity of the subject matter, or changing the teaching and learning style.

### **Inclusion**

In planning and teaching Religious Education we have due regard for the following principals:-

- The setting of suitable learning challenges.
- The response to children's diverse learning styles.
- The overcoming of potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children. (DfEE 2000)

### **Equal Opportunities**

All staff will try to ensure through observation and recording that all children have equal access to activities and resources, and that progression is planned for and work differentiated irrespective of gender, social or ethnic background. Each child should have equal opportunities to have work displayed showing achievement at their own level.

### **Resources**

Most resources are in labelled drawers in the Resources Room. There is a set of Bibles for Key Stage 2 children to use and a wide collection of religious artifacts, posters, music, DVDs and CDs which we use to enrich teaching in Religious Education. We have a good selection of books both for pupil use and staff reference. We also have strong links with the various Churches within the locality and use them as means to introduce the children to 'Worship' in different settings.

### **Curriculum and Professional Development**

Staff training is on-going through INSET identified in the SIP and LA courses to be attended by the coordinator and other interested staff.

### **Health and Safety**

Children are taught to use any equipment and materials safely.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

Religious Education will be evaluated against the key objectives and learning outcomes stated in the Agreed Syllabus. Short term planning will reflect the fields of enquiry (see Agreed Syllabus) To ensure coverage of all relevant aspects of religions, the Religious Education curriculum will be monitored through ongoing teacher assessment of the pupils' work, through work scrutiny by the coordinator, lesson observations, informal discussions with children and staff and governor involvement.

### **Role of the Subject Leader**

- To advise and coordinate the teaching of Religious Education throughout the school
- To offer support and guidance in the planning process
- To develop ideas and resources to continue to improve the delivery of Religious Education
- To organise, purchase and maintain resources in the school
- To oversee assessment, recording and reporting.
- To build up a portfolio of work in Religious Education
- To keep abreast of current publications and developments
- To liaise with visitors
- To attend courses and subject leader meetings
- To provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school

The educational and social values of Religious Education will be reflected in the approach to the subject, ensuring that pupils receive a broad and balanced view of religion and a deeper understanding of our multi-cultural society. Although Religious Education is mainly of a Christian nature and we continue to have strong links with our local churches, the school will endeavour to promote knowledge, understanding and respect for a variety of beliefs. Thus, Religious Education seeks to promote knowledge, understanding, respect and tolerance of the beliefs and practices of all faiths and also to help pupils reflect on their own beliefs and values.

Subject Leader - B E Clarke  
September 2012

Review Date - Autumn 2015