

Pott Shrigley and Bollington St John's
Church of England Primary Schools



Sharing our Gifts and Growing our Talents Together

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. Across the federation we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and also an understanding 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* religions as well as *about* religions. As a Church aided school we have a commitment to teaching religious education in accordance with "the rites, practices and beliefs of the Church of England". Religious Education is mainly based on the teaching of the Christian Faith, with the addition of one other religion at Key stage 1 and two at key stage 2.
- 1.2** The aims of religious education are to help children:
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences; and to lay foundations for and to foster the spiritual growth of children.
 - develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and some of the 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 cultural differences in Britain today;
 - develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
 - to assist and encourage young people to experience Christian life and worship through actual participation in Church life and worship and familiarity with the Church building and environment, thus developing strong links between Church and School for the benefit of the children.
 - To help children to understand the beliefs and values of Christianity through the study of the bible and other sources.
 - have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

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 reception class who are less than five years old. 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 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 was written in conjunction with Sue Glover and agreed by the Governing Body. It is supported through the Encounter and Response Framework and the Chester Diocesan Guidelines for Religious Education. Teachers also use the Blackburn Diocese Scheme of Work to inform planning.

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 both 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. To this end we use Godly Play and P4C to encourage enquiry in RE lessons.

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.

3.3 As Church Schools the children will have an explicit awareness of a Christian faith and indeed many families will have a strong commitment to the Christian faith so many of our stories will be based on Christian teachings.

3.4 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 rites of passage or festivals. 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.

3.5 We recognise the fact that 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 Diocesan guidelines and the curriculum is agreed by the Governing Body. 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 carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). 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. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.
- 4.3** 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 some 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 but do not have to repeat topics.
- 4.4** 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 often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

5 Foundation Stage

- 5.1** We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.
- 5.2** In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception 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 Early Learning 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 our way 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 and CD ROMs. 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

Through our religious education lessons, 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 attitudes required for citizenship in a 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. We do emphasise our Christian ethos and foundation by actively promoting Christianity and the value systems implicit in it.

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.

7 Teaching religious education to children with special needs

7.1 In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

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 unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the national curriculum levels of attainment. We record the attainment grades in our mark books, 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 RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

9 Resources

- 9.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. There is a set of bibles for both key stages and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The Cheshire Resource library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research. St Christopher's Church at Pott Shrigley and St Oswald's Bollington are valuable resources for our school.

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 headteacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.

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