



Religious Education Policy
Sherborne Abbey CE VC Primary School

Date of policy review: October 2015
Next review date October 2017

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

Sherborne Abbey is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school therefore we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus using 'Discovery RE' as a means to deliver the curriculum.

It is expected that 5% of curriculum time be given to the teaching of RE.

Rationale/Aims for teaching RE

In Religious Education at Sherborne Abbey Primary School, which is taught in accordance with The Dorset Agreed Syllabus, our aim is that Religious Education will:-

- **provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- **enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **teach pupils to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.

- **Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery**

Skills in Religious Education

Pupils should be helped to develop skills for learning through Religious Education. Progress in RE is dependent on the development of a range of skills which enable pupils to understand the concepts.

Skills of Engagement: Empathy and Interpretation

Skills of Investigation: Investigation and Application

Skills of Evaluation: Discernment, Analysis and Evaluation
Skills of Expression: Reflection, Expression and Synthesis

Attitudes in Religious Education

Attitudes such as respect for others and respect for the truth, care for all people and determination to achieve should be promoted through all areas of school life. There are some attitudes that are fundamental to Religious Education. These attitudes enable learners to enter fully into the study of religions, and are in turn fostered and deepened by the study of RE.

Attitudes of: Curiosity, appreciation and wonder.

Attitudes of: respect for all

Attitudes of: critical awareness

Attitudes of: open mindedness and questioning

Attitudes of: self-awareness

The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at Each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance.

The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

RE is an important subject in contribution to the schools development as a Rights Respecting School.

Approaches to teaching RE.

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through locally agreed syllabuses, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content.

Religious Education at Sherborne Abbey Primary School is delivered in the following way.

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities.

KS 1 and KS 2

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that

At KS 1 pupils study Christianity and Judaism

At KS 2 pupils study Christianity and Hinduism, Islam and Judaism

Assessment and Recording of RE

In line with the school policy on assessment and recording it is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. Three times a year each pupil will complete an agreed key assessment task that will form part of his or her work done in RE. The class teacher on a separate pro forma will record the level achieved by each pupil. The level achieved will be used by the co-ordinator to track pupil progress through the school

and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that each pupil is set work that is appropriately challenging.

There are 2 attainment targets in RE

Attainment Target (AT1) is concerned with human experience as well as the study of key beliefs, teachings, sources, practices and forms of expression.

Attainment Target (AT2) is much more than just the personal response of pupils to their learning as it requires an increasing depth of knowledge and understanding as pupils develop their learning.

Monitoring

The RE co-ordinator will monitor RE within the school through analysis of assessment data, class observations, scrutiny of books and talking to the children each year. Any issues picked up will be fed into the SIAS self-evaluation form and addressed at staff meetings, INSET and working with teachers and/or Governors.

The co-ordinator is responsible for contributing to the Church School self-evaluation process (SIAMS) making sure it is regularly updated alongside the Collective Worship co-ordinator.

Foundation stage

Foundation Stage RE follows the guidelines as laid down in the Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council Handbook for Foundation Stage RE.

Learning experiences and opportunities in the Early Years Children should be provided with opportunities in RE to:

- listen to and talk about appropriate stories which engage children
- directly experience religion – engage with artefacts, visit places of worship (with a focus on feelings and symbols), listen and respond to visitors from faith communities;
- get to know and use religious words accurately e.g. God, Bible, synagogue, church prayer
- use all five senses – smell (e.g. incense); taste (e.g. special foods) see and touch (e.g. religious artefacts); hear (e.g. chants/hymns/prayers/bells);
- make and do – make festive food, role play, dress up, dance;
- have times of quiet and stillness;
- share their own beliefs, ideas and values;
- talk about their feelings and experiences;
- use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live;
- begin to use ICT to explore religious beliefs as practised in the local and the wider community.

Responsibilities for RE within the school, (Co-Ordinator, Head teacher and Governors)

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified, if appropriate, supported by teaching staff with planning, assessment etc. and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the head teacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to RE. In these circumstances, head teachers might wish to seek advice from their LA or SACRE.

The right of Withdrawal from RE

At Sherborne Abbey Primary School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Sherborne Abbey Primary School.

Managing the right to withdraw

- The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.

- The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 18 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.
- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.
- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.