



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

To a Church school, religious education and collective worship should be seen as part of an integrated experience, with collective worship acting as an expression of what is taught in many RE lessons. Pupils gain a religious education in its fullest sense in a Church school through good, well-planned and well-organized collective worship, through the example of Christian teachers, and through the quality of RE teaching.

The Way Ahead, para 4.14

Religious Education 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.

Religious Education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

(Religious Education the non-statutory national framework)

Our R.E. policy is drawn from the inspiration provided by the Diocese of Chichester's 'Excellence and Distinctiveness Guidance, 2005'. We aim to:

- Nourish those of the faith
- Encourage those of other faiths
- Challenge those who have no faith

Religious Education should enable children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions that people ask. At St. Peter's we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children to learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of R.E. at St Peter's:

- That the R.E. in our school should be of the highest standard
- That the R.E. should reflect the school's distinctive Christian character (Christianity has a central role in the R.E. curriculum, usually taking up between two thirds and three quarters of the time available).
- To show children that Christianity is about following the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is relevant to their daily lives.
- To extend children's ability to reflect upon themselves as whole people, experiencing life through body, mind and spirit.
- To help pupils understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The objectives of R.E. are to enable learners to:

- Think theologically and explore the great questions of life and death, meaning and purpose
- Reflect critically on the claims of Christian belief

- See how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenges that Jesus' teachings present in today's society
- Develop the skills needed to read and understand the Bible text
- Recognise that faith is based on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world
- Develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- Experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community
- Engage thoughtfully and respectfully with other faiths and traditions
- Become active citizens, serving their neighbour
- Understand how faith can sustain people in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition

While remaining loyal to our Christian foundation, we also strive to develop an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other major faiths by helping our children to:

- Learn *about* other faiths and their beliefs, traditions, practices and value systems, and *from* other faiths through encounter (where possible) and dialogue
- Recognise and respect people of all faiths in their search for God
- Develop an understanding of what it means to different people to be committed to a religious tradition and to appreciate, and respect, the cultural differences in Britain today
- Recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths
- Enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition
- Enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions
- Recognise the common human quest for justice, peace and love
- Have respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity in society

Principles and Practice

We teach R.E. according to the New Agreed Syllabus and base our teaching on its three aims:

Know about and understand a range of religions and world views:

...to gain knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of Christianity in particular and world religions in general

Expressing ideas and insights/ engage with religions and worldviews:

.....developing the capacity and skill to respond thoughtfully to and evaluate what they learn about religions.

The legal position of Religious Education

Our school curriculum for R.E. meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (E.R.A.) which stipulates that R.E. is compulsory for all children, including those in the Reception class who are less than five years old. The E.R.A. allows parents to withdraw their child (ren) from R.E. classes if they so wish, though this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The E.R.A. also allows teachers to refuse to teach R.E., but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. It is expected that staff will not exercise this right, having elected to teach in a Church school.

Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in R.E. on the key principle that good teaching in R.E. allows children 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 R.E. curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in R.E. enable the 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 Harvest, Christmas, Easter and St. Peter's Day to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. We value highly the link we hold with our local churches; St. Peter's Anglican Church, Corpus Christi Catholic Church, The Evangelical Free Church and use these relationships effectively to support the religious education and spiritual development of our children. The representatives of the local churches are regular speakers in our school assemblies.

Curriculum planning in religious Education

We plan our R.E. curriculum in accordance with the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus for R.E. As a base we use the Guidelines for RE teaching from the Guildford Diocese. We ensure that the topics studied in R.E. build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we try to ensure that the planned progression built into the schemes of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in two phases; long term and medium/short term. The long term plan maps the R.E. topics studied during each term in each Key Stage. The R.E. subject leader works out this plan following consultation with staff.

In order to deliver Religious Education that is of the highest standard

Planning and preparation include:

- Opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year
- Visits to places of worship to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community
- Welcoming visitors from a variety of local churches to share their experience of Christian life and belief
- Liaison with the local churches to enable these visits and links to occur

A variety of teaching approaches are encouraged:

- Teacher presentations, role play and story telling.
- Questions and answer sessions, discussions and debates.
- Individual and group research.
- Photographs, pictures and maps
- I.C.T, television, video, film, tape, CD, radio and PCs to research and communicate ideas.

The school and classroom environments provide:

- High quality displays that reflect current R.E. topics
- Sets of Bibles in language appropriate for the users
- Access to religious artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- Encouragement of mutual respect based on Christian values, where pupils and teachers are able to talk openly and freely about their own beliefs and practices without fear of ridicule

The quality of learning in R.E. enables:

- High achievement in R.E. reflecting its importance in a Church school
- Pupils to be enthusiastic about their work in R.E.
- Pupils to make appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the major world religions
- Pupils from Christian families to talk openly about their beliefs and values during lessons and to grow in their faith

- Pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith
 - Pupils with no religious background to face the challenge of the Christian faith
 - Pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the possibility of doubt and uncertainty in today's world
- INSET will be included with the School Improvement Plan. External INSET will reflect budgetary constraints.

Foundation Stage

We teach R.E. to all children in the school, including those in the Reception classes. In our Reception classes, R.E. 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 R.E. aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals that underpin the curriculum planning for children in the EYFS.

Special Educational Needs.

Children with special educational needs will work alongside the other children in their group, as in other curriculum areas, but differentiation in approach, language and expected outcome will be appropriate to the varying needs in the class. We aim to meet the full entitlement of every child in our school. To optimize inclusion the children's differing needs for learning (including children with special educational needs) will be addressed through differentiated activities. Steps to Success may support children who are identified as having special educational needs. These will specify differentiated learning and assessment.

Contribution of R.E. to P.S.H.E. lessons

Through our R.E. lessons we teach about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, particularly in upper Key Stage 2, we plan in discussion on such subjects as smoking, drugs and health education. We also, throughout the school, promote the values and attitudes needed for citizenship in a democracy, by teaching and encouraging respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. We would hope that by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we are enabling our children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of society.

Spiritual development

Spiritual development within R.E. enriches and encourages the children's discovery of God the creator and of the wonder of the world in which they live. This is promoted through:

- Exploring their relationship with God and being encouraged to see themselves as His children, unique and loved by Him
- Exploring and experiencing prayer and worship from a variety of Christian traditions
- Giving thanks to God for all aspects of school life
- Discussing and reflecting upon key questions of meaning and truth
- Opportunities to discuss feelings and emotions openly
- Opportunities to develop their gifts of imagination and creativity
- Encouraging curiosity and questioning so that their own views of religious and spiritual ideas can be developed within a secure environment
- Developing a sense of personal significance and belonging
- Encountering Christian fellowship

Cultural development in R.E. provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a world-wide multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

Assessment and recording

Children's work is assessed by making informal judgements throughout lessons. Work is marked in line with the school's Marking and Feedback policy, although not all work will be formally recorded. On completion of a unit of work, an assessment task provides support to assess a child's level.

These levels will inform future planning assessment; reporting to parents; and curriculum monitoring and data analysis by the subject leaders.

Resources

Resources for each R.E. unit are stored in a central resource area. Religious Education Resource boxes containing artefacts and other topic materials are also borrowed from the Diocese to enhance the teaching of R.E. An audit of Religious Education Resources is outlined in the Religious Education Action Plan.

Monitoring and review

- The RE subject leader will monitor Long Term and Medium Term plans, standards of children's work and the quality of teaching and learning in R.E.
- The subject leader will manage resources.
- The subject leader will endeavour to keep up to date with information, initiatives and developments in Religious Education and disseminate this as appropriate.
- The subject leader will be aware of staff development needs and encourage continuing professional development and the sharing of good practice..
- The subject leader will analyse data and make reports to staff and the SLT.
- The subject leader will be responsible for drawing up an action plan for Religious Education and provide a strategic lead for the subject in the school.