

LETHBRIDGE PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum.

Section 352 of the Education Act 1996 identifies the distinctive place of RE as part of the basic curriculum alongside the National Curriculum.

As RE is not nationally determined the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. The Swindon Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2011 is used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE (note 1).

Religious education is to have equal standing in relation to the core and foundation subjects within the school.

Families who send their children to Lethbridge Primary are in the main 'nominally' Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with "learning about religions" and "learning from religion" and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL

Religious Education means educating children about religion without prescriptive objective to indoctrinate. At Lethbridge we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship on the grounds of conscience. 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. Children must not be unsupervised, therefore parents may have to be responsible for supervision of children at this time if the school is unable to do so.

Teachers may also opt out of teaching RE on grounds of conscience.

THE AIMS OF PURPOSES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At Lethbridge Primary School we aim that pupils might:

- Develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and its impact on our local community, and on our society today
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of some of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain today. These include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, each of which is represented in Swindon.
- Develop a sense of respect for religious traditions, beliefs and practice.
- Grow in their spiritual development

- Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery
- Develop skills and attitudes which will support their personal, moral, social and cultural development (See the locally agreed syllabus for specific skills and attitudes)
- Explore some questions of meaning and consider how the world's religions have responded to them.
- Think about their own beliefs and values in the light of the beliefs of others, both religious and non-religious, and the values of the school community.

OBJECTIVES

Learning

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, an awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own by Learning about Religions and Learning from Religion.

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum.

Attainment Targets 1 and 2

Learning about religion (Attainment target 1) includes:-

- Enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, truth claims, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression.
- Skills of interpretation, analysis, evaluation and explanation.
- Communicating their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary.
- Identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.
- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

Learning from religion (Attainment Target 2) is concerned with developing:-

- Pupils' ability to reflect on and respond to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion.
- Pupils' skills of application, interpretation, evaluation and questioning of what they learn about religion.
- Pupils' ability to communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.
- An attitude of willingness to question and explore in order to develop sensitivity and empathy towards others.

APPROACHES TO THE TEACHING OF RE

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.

Both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 are following the Swindon Agreed syllabus for RE 2011.

In accordance with the structure of this syllabus we have agreed that:

At KS 1 pupils study Christianity and Islam with opportunities to encounter other world faiths linked to festivals and topics

At KS 2 pupils study Christianity and Judaism with encounter units in Hinduism and Sikhism.

SKILLS AND ATTITUDES

- The teaching of RE will focus on a broad and secure base of skills that underpin the ability to think, reason, reflect and articulate ideas. This is applicable to the whole curriculum and a vital means to giving children access to a good understanding of world faiths.

The above skills are cumulative across KS1 and KS2 and examples follow below:

- **Investigation** – ‘I can search for answers’
- **Interpretation** – ‘I can understand and explain words, actions, events, symbols and artefacts’
- **Analysis and Evaluation** – ‘I can develop an argument’
- **Synthesis** – ‘I can comprehend and develop concepts relative to a wider perspective’
- **Application** – ‘I can make considered connections and distinctions between the beliefs of others’
- **Communication** – ‘I can express my thoughts, ideas, beliefs and values clearly to other people’

Attitudes to be developed in RE include:

- Self awareness
- Respect for all
- Open-mindedness
- Appreciation and wonder

The Scheme of Work will address these specific skills and attitudes.

(Swindon Agreed Syllabus (SAS), 5-8 attached Appendix)

Continuity and progression were given due consideration when the Scheme of Work was produced. This will be reviewed regularly in accordance with the School Development Plan.

Religious Education is taught in a variety of ways:

- Through topics as appropriate
- As a separate RE-led topic
- Through teaching contexts
- Through resumes

In order to achieve these aims and fulfil legal obligation the following minimum hours are devoted to RE each year:

- KS1 – 36 hours
- KS2 – 45 hours

ASSESSMENT

Over the course of the academic year both AT1 and AT2 will be assessed. Where possible this will be achieved through a key task that integrates the assessment of both attainment targets. However, it is recognized that it is inappropriate to assess some aspects of RE, spiritual development, for example.

The purpose of this assessment is to inform classroom planning and to give an indication of pupil progress and development.

The key task should be an integral part of teaching rather than a 'bolt on' activity. A list of key task examples follows below:

- Creative work
- Drama and role play
- Discussions and circle time
- Extended writing
- Self assessment

REPORTING TO PARENTS

End of year reports to parents will be based on the attainment and progress of children throughout the year.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all teaching staff. The responsibility for monitoring and review rests with the RE subject leaders

***Approved by Governors November 2016
To be reviewed November 2018***

Appendix

Skills to be developed in Religious Education

Our teaching must stimulate curiosity, and develop children's sense of exploration and discovery. We aim to help children understand that questions in RE are in the main contentious, and that worthwhile questions in RE will seldom simply be answered by facts. In RE we aim to develop a classroom where inquiry is the norm – children are encouraged to look for alternative possibilities and to be open-minded and flexible in their thinking. We aim to teach children to think for themselves, become reflective learners and draw their own conclusions.

A broad and secure base of skills which underpins the ability to think, reason, reflect and articulate ideas, and that is applicable to the whole curriculum, is vital in giving children access to good religious education. These skills are **cumulative** across the key stages and include:

Investigation – I can search for answers:

- I can ask appropriate questions;
- I can gather evidence from many different sources e.g. people, texts, artefacts, media, ICT;
- I can discover criteria and explore concepts and their boundaries e.g.:
 - a friend is...(definition). Is a parent or a pet a friend?
 - a human is (definition)...Is a foetus a human?
 - God is.....(definition). What is God like?
- I do not make assumptions – well, not too often!
 - just because X says it is true does not mean that it is true;
 - just because X is usually what happens, does it mean that it will always happen?
- I can find and suggest solutions.

Interpretation – I can interpret words, actions, events, symbols and artefacts:

- I can give examples of how humans try to make sense of their experience e.g. "I was sad then my Grandad died";
- I can suggest meaning of my own e.g. "I think...because";
- I can explain the meanings that are given by others;
- I can see implications – of actions; of events; of words; of belief, e.g.:
 - is X implying that he is right and others are wrong?
 - I know that if I behave like this then there will be consequences;
 - I know that belief affects behaviour;
- I can imagine and reflect on other possibilities e.g. "Have you ever thought about...creation, death, loss, awe and wonder?"
- I can develop and expand my own ideas.

Analysis and Evaluation – I can develop an argument:

- I can voice my opinions and my ideas;
- I can give my reasons;
- I can look for explanations;
- I can consider alternatives;

- I can seek reasons – from others; from myself;
- I can explore agreement and disagreement;
- I can search for and weigh up evidence;
- I can use examples to show how an argument is weak or strong;
- I can make considered and reasoned judgements.

Synthesis – I can link ideas to make the bigger picture clearer:

- I know that others including those of faith communities can share common values and ideas e.g.:
 - The value of community life;
 - that charity is important;
 - that killing is wrong.

Application – I can apply the learning gained in AT1 to my own and other people’s beliefs, ideas and experiences (AT2):

Links:

- a Muslim thinks that respect is important because... respect is important to me because...
- a celebration is important to many believers...human beings like to celebrate because...
- I know and can explain that there are connections between the values held both between members of different faith communities and those with no faith at all e.g. value of life.

Distinctions:

- I can make distinctions – does everyone think the same? Are there different beliefs about the same concept, e.g.:
 - what happens after death?
 - Is Jesus the Son of God?
 - forgiveness

Communication – I can communicate my thoughts, ideas, beliefs and values:

- I can state my opinion about matters of fact and of deep concern;
- I can empathise with the opinions and concerns of others;
- I can stick to the point in discussion – I can connect what someone says to the topic we are discussing. I can show others how a comment helps us with the topic we are discussing;
- I can say “I think this idea will help us...” I can say “Today in RE I have learned...”;
- I can accept criticism – I know that I may be wrong; I know there are other points of view; I can argue against my own ideas;
- I can correct myself: “I am trying to say...” “I did think...but now I think...”;
- I know that I can make mistakes safely in this classroom so that I can learn.

The teacher will identify several skills for development within each unit of work taught. This will normally be two or three skills for development in each half term.

Attitudes in religious education

The following attitudes are essential for good learning in religious education and should be developed at each stage or phase of religious education:

self-awareness
respect for all
open-mindedness
appreciation and wonder.

Self-awareness in religious education includes pupils:

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people.

Respect for all in religious education includes pupils:

- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when those views are different from their own
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias.
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.

Open-mindedness in religious education includes pupils:

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions
- being willing to go beyond surface impressions
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.

Appreciation and wonder in religious education includes pupils:

- developing their imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose