



# **St. Catherine's C. of E. Primary School**

## **RE Policy**

# St. Catherine's C of E School

## Religious Education Policy

### 1. Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St Catherine's C of E School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of 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 other world religions.

#### **The aims of religious education are to help children:**

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

- ◆ Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity through study of the Bible and an understanding of its impact on the lives of Christians.
- ◆ Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition through a study of some other world faiths and how this compares and contrasts to Christian beliefs and practises.
- ◆ 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.
- ◆ Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

### 2. The legal position of Religious Education

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 ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention 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 is informed by the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus and we deliver the Christianity element through a published scheme called "Understanding Christianity". The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

### **3. Teaching and learning style**

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.

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, Christmas 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 and talk to the children.

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.

Our RE curriculum is entirely inclusive, but 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, 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);
- Providing stimulation and challenge for all abilities;
- 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**

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Cornish Agreed Syllabus and deliver the Christian element through the resource "Understanding Christianity". This scheme is designed to work as a spiral curriculum, with children revisiting topics in different years, thus allowing them to build upon prior learning and deepen their understanding and make links to other concepts. The planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

There are eight core concepts in "Understanding Christianity", based around the idea of teaching the Bible as the "Big Story". Each unit of work begins with a question that children then try to answer through activities drawn from three strands: making sense of the text, (Bible study); understanding the impact, (putting faith into action) and making connections, (how ideas may connect to their own lives and understanding of the world).

At St. Catherine's we also have ten special Bible stories that we draw upon to promote understanding of Christian values and practises., and these may be explored through RE lessons as appropriate to the curriculum.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term).

As a Church of England school we are entitled to devote more curriculum time to the teaching of Christianity than non-church schools and thus we teach Christian topics for five half-terms and other faiths for one, usually the second half Summer Term. In this way as children progress through the school they gain an understanding of some other important world faiths: Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

## **5. Foundation Stage**

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the nursery and Reception Class.

In the Foundation classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. 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. Additional RE topics covered throughout the year include the major Christian festivals and some significant festivals from other faiths. The Reception Class are also undertaking some aspects of the topics in "Understanding Christianity", as appropriate to the age of the children.

## **6. Cross Curricular Aspects of Religious Education**

### **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 the Literacy Hour 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.

### **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.

### **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.

RE may also be explored through art, music, DT, dance and geography.

## **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. Assessment and recording**

We assess each child, using feedback from informal observations and recording and through end of term assessments using the resource "Festival Matters". We also use Assessing without Levels (AWL) grids to record our assessment of the children's levels in RE. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

## **8. Resources**

We endeavour to provide a wide selection of resources to enhance the teaching of RE, including: artefacts; models; soft toys; books; DVDs; Bibles to span all ages; posters and art packs. The "Understanding Christianity" scheme also provides a variety of printable resources and many links to appropriate websites.

## **9. Monitoring and review**

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. The leader 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 subject-leader has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.