



St. Anne's Church of England VA Primary School

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

This policy should be taken and used as part of St Anne's Church of England School overall strategy and implemented within the context of our vision, instrument of government aims and values as a Church of England School.

Introduction

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'.

St Anne's CofE VA Primary School is a Voluntary Aided (VA) school; therefore we deliver Religious Education in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, 'Awareness, Mystery and Value (**AMV**).' Material chosen will be drawn from six major religions, namely; Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam and according to the appropriate key stage. In line with the North Somerset Agreed Syllabus, the teaching of religions will reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Britain are, in the main, Christian and promote the values of tolerance and respect.

Aims and purposes

At St Anne's CofE VA Primary School we aim that Religious Education will:-

- **encourage pupils in appreciation of the religious dimension of life and in an understanding of how and why people respond to it.**
- **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 and show tolerance for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and help them to challenge prejudice and injustice.
- **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.**

The Religious Education Curriculum

- **The Religious Education curriculum provides opportunities for children to develop the following skills and attitudes** - Skills - investigation, interpretation, reflection, empathy, evaluation, analysis, synthesis, application, expression and self-understanding; Attitudes - curiosity, fairness and respect.
- **Children will have the opportunity to respond to learning in a variety of ways.** This may be through: poems, stories, reports on visits, design technology, ICT, music, drama, maths, work, discussions, displays and through their own behaviour.
- **The right to withdraw.** Parents/carers may withdraw their child from Religious Education provided they give written notification to the school. Teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents/carers and teachers would feel comfortable with the type of Religious Education we offer at St Anne's CofE VA Primary School.

The Contribution Religious Education makes to other curriculum areas and aims

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.

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 on-going development as a Rights Respecting School.

Teaching Approaches

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.

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

Our pupils should have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

Organisation

RE is mostly taught across all classes and year groups as a discrete subject following the Awareness, Mystery and Values units; however, we also aim to explore links between RE and other areas of the curriculum and topic work. RE will also link regularly to the current Value Focus, with activities that follow up and further expand upon issues and discussions in Collective Worship.

See also current Year Group overview of units attached.

Assessment and Recording of RE

Pupils are required to be assessed during the Key Stage.

Assessment will be in line with the school policy on assessment and recording. See Marking and Feedback policy.

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils' work through marking / providing feedback.

Children's work should regularly be assessed in relation to 'I can...' statements provided with the AMV units.

Assessments can take place in a variety of forms and from different sources, including key assessments tasks, pupil self-evaluations, peer assessments, mind mapping, feedback jottings from discussions, oral contributions.

Monitoring

RE will be monitored within the school in a variety of ways: work scrutiny, pupil conferencing, learning walks, lesson observations and analysis of assessments, as appropriate.

Our Church School Ethos Group (comprising a number of parents, governors and key staff) will meet regularly and help monitor the school's RE as part of its role in evaluating our Church School ethos and contributing to future strategic planning.

Responsibilities for RE within the school

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 in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject 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 on people's everyday lives
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress

The right of Withdrawal from RE

At St Anne's CofE VA 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 our school.

Managing the right of withdrawal

- 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 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.

Religious Education Policy in respect of St. Anne's Church of England VA Primary School has been discussed by the Governing Body.

Signed by:

Chair of Governors: Date:

Head teacher:Date:

Agreed at the Governing Body Meeting on: