



## Religious Education (RE) Policy for Taverham VC CE Junior School

### Religious Education (RE) Policy Aims and Objectives

*As a Church of England school, we see it as our duty to give children and members of the school community the skills to maximise their engagement with the world around them, enable them to grow spiritually, emotionally and personally, and develop the character and values which will serve them well in future life and support success.*

Religious education aims to broaden children's awareness, understanding and tolerance of different belief systems, cultures and lifestyles worldwide. It enables pupils to explore some of the key ideas and concepts of major world faiths in a safe environment, investigating and reflecting upon religious values and questions.

At Taverham VC CE Junior School, we develop pupils' knowledge of Christianity and its values as well as the understanding of other major world faiths. We address fundamental questions concerning, for example, life as a journey, the existence of a deity and life after death. RE Days follow an enquiry-based process of learning based around a Big Question to enable children to engage with and explore a key concept. To broaden their understanding we use resources such as artefacts, analyse holy texts and explore the impact of the idea on people's lifestyles worldwide as well as making connections between the texts and real life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity as well as other world religions, and through this we intend to develop within pupils respect and tolerance for other people worldwide. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

### The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:

- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity as well as one other major religion in each part of Key Stage Two (Islam in LKS2 and Hinduism in UKS2);
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- develop knowledge and understanding of major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life (class Big Question);
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop investigative and research skills, and make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity in society.

## The legal position of religious education

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) and the 1996 Education and 1998 Schools Standards and Framework Act. The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they 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 based on the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2016 created by the Diocese of Norwich and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that 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.

## Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the guidelines and advice set out by the Diocese of Norwich, which states that to be 'religiously literate,' teachers must plan lessons involving the three important elements of teaching and learning that are analysing key holy texts, exploring the impact of these on people around the world and enabling pupils to make connections. Good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and the impact they have on others and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them.

By asking an interesting and relevant Big Question the children's imaginations and curiosity are fired. Each half term we have a Big Question and we alternate between the two major religions, so by the end of the Spring Term in all year groups, pupils will have studied in depth two of the key concepts from two of the world's major religions. The focuses for LKS2 are Christianity and Islam; the focuses for UKS2 are Christianity and Hinduism. Big Questions in the Summer Term have a broader focus and investigate more philosophical or impact-related questions and enable pupils to compare and contrast values across multiple religions. This means that by the end of Year 6, all pupils will have studied four full days towards two key concepts in Islam and Hinduism and eight full days towards two Christian key concepts, as well as also having had eight full days to develop their understanding of the similarities and differences between all these religions and others found across the globe.

Our teaching promotes pupils' 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 to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious concepts and traditions. We organise visits to the local church, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. Children investigate religious and moral issues individually, in groups and as a class. We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child, and also by providing pupils with choice and opportunities to develop strengths in other areas of the curriculum. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty and depth (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks)
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- allowing children to research certain areas thus working at their own pace and ability.

### Curriculum planning in religious education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2016 created by the Diocese of Norwich. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school. We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. At Taverham Junior School, we place an increasing emphasis on the study of religious themes and topics in their own right. RC has written long and medium term plans for each RE Day in every year group alongside the new Agreed Syllabus for Norfolk, so each year group team can closely follow the plan and enable pupils to meet the end of day and end of year expected outcomes.

### Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

#### 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 English have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is RE's way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. Similarly, each year group will now dedicate time to analysing holy texts from each of the major religions. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information, in order to develop their writing ability, and to try writing in other forms (eg Islamic text).

#### 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.

#### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through 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.

#### RE and ICT

Information and communication technology enhances religious education, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse Religious Education (RE) Policy information, using the Internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Older children use ICT to research religions that they are not familiar with. Younger children can take photographs of the class acting out a Bible story on the school iPads.

#### RE and inclusion

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Non-Discrimination and Access; Gifted and Talented.

#### Progress and Attainment

Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might produce a PowerPoint presentation based on their investigation into the different ways Christians express and interpret their faith. Teachers will assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or verbal feedback to help guide progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future.

#### Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units, including 4 copies of the Qur'an (in English and Urdu), although we do not yet have any copies of the Hindu holy texts. Every child is given a Bible in Year 3. We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religion taught. There is a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research.

## 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. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school. The subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual report which evaluates strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he has allocated time when required for undertaking tasks identified in the RE action plan. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Reviewed February 2017

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