

## Religious Education Policy

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE Subject Leader & staff.

### The importance of RE in our school

RE is a vital element in the curriculum in our school in a rapidly changing society. We teach RE to develop children's understanding of Christianity, Islam (principal religions) and other world religions. It offers opportunities for personal reflection, spiritual development and to produce pupils who are religiously literate and able to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief. This could be achieved through an RE curriculum that ensures a balance of these key disciplines: Theology, Philosophy, Social and human sciences. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures. Within the context of our locality, RE has an important part to play in preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society.

**Aims for RE** Along with other subjects of the curriculum, we aim to

- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity as well as other principal religions and world views
- Focus on concepts as well as content, within the context of enquiry based learning
- Explore authentic religious material, e.g. sacred texts
- Reflect diversity in terms of the changing religious landscape of the UK, so that they are prepared for life in modern Britain
- Engage and challenge pupils
- Reflect pupils' own experiences and provide a safe space for discussion
- Present religious belief as a real, lived phenomenon, not something exotic or belonging to the past
- Take into account the increase in the number of people with non-religious beliefs and identities
- Provide opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, preparing all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- Help to prepare pupils for adult life, enabling them to develop respect and sensitivity for others
- Enable pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths are different from their own, promoting an ability to combat prejudice.
- Encourage pupils to develop their own sense of identity and belonging to enable them to flourish individually in their own communities and as citizens in a plural society.
- Challenge children to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses

### RE at Hawthorn Tree School will be provided in line with the legal requirements.

All maintained schools and academies in England must provide Religious Education (RE) for all registered pupils, including those in the sixth form and reception classes, unless withdrawn by their parents [*School Standards and Framework Act, 1998, Schedule 19; Education Act 2002, Section 80*].

- The basic curriculum will include provision for religious education for all pupils on the school roll;
- The content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain;

- The RE that is provided shall be in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for Lincolnshire LA (published in 2018).
- 

**Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, our aims in RE are:**

- To enable each child to explore our shared human experience and the questions of meaning and purpose which arise from our experiences;
- To enable pupils to know about and understand the beliefs and practices of some of the great religions of the world, particularly those represented in Lincolnshire and the UK. Among these religions, Christianity and Islam have a particular place, and are taught in each year of the primary phase.
- To promote respect, sensitivity and cultural awareness by teaching about the religions represented in the region and the country;
- To affirm each child in his/her own family tradition, religious or secular;
- To provide children with opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- To develop the ability of pupils to think about, and develop for themselves, beliefs and values by which they can live through studying concepts like celebration, the sacred, authority, religious belief and lifestyle, and through exploring the fundamental questions of life.

**Context**

We work to the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus (2018). We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome the diversity, and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities in RE and in general.

We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas. We understand that 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.

**The main changes in 2018 from the 2012 syllabus include:**

- Increased clarity and support material to bridge the gap between syllabus and Classroom.
- Provision for SMSC is seen as a whole school issue, but RE is expected to make a significant contribution to spiritual and cultural development.
- To develop tolerance and respect and should help prepare them for 'life in modern Britain.'
- Increased clarity and guidance about assessment of RE;
- Greater clarity and guidance about RE in church schools and special schools;
- More emphasis on learning through concepts and enquiry

Four key areas of enquiry or 'big ideas' –

- God/Ultimate Reality: what do people believe?
- Being human: what is humanity?
- Community, worship and celebration
- Life journey: marking important events in life
- **These areas are the threads that will run through stage 1-3 and should be used in planning to ensure progression.**

## **Time Allocation**

It is up to schools to decide how they plan their RE curriculum and there are many models in place, e.g. weekly sessions, blocked time, RE days/weeks. In this agreed syllabus (AS) It is recommended that approximately two thirds of time (over a year) is spent on the compulsory units and the remainder of the time on additional units. However, recommendations made by the Dearing Review (1996) were a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two. This recommendation was endorsed by the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus, 2018. The time allocated at Hawthorn Tree School will be one hour per week at Key Stage One (5% of taught time) and one hour ten minutes per week equivalent at Key Stage Two (5% of taught time). RE curriculum time does not include assembly or collective worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work. RE is delivered on a weekly, fortnightly or blocked basis.

## **Whole school aims**

Worship at Hawthorn Tree Primary School will make an important, but not exclusive contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils. It will give children time for reflection and opportunity to respond to spiritual and moral issues, as well as the importance of British Values. We would aim to foster a community spirit with shared values. Collective worship should encourage consideration of the beliefs and views of all within the school community.

At Hawthorn Tree Primary School, each pupil's contribution to an act of worship will be valued. Pupils will be invited to join in an act of worship with phrases such as "be still and think about these words". Acts of worship should be appropriate for pupils from both Christian and non-Christian backgrounds. Each week the assemblies will be linked by a common theme. These will be set for the school year with reference to the significant dates for the major religions, seasonal change and experiences of the children. Assemblies themes form PSHE thread throughout the school and link to the SEAL structure, British Values and UNICEF, a collections of articles on the Convention on the Rights of the Child. Collective worship will take place during assembly times. Assembly should be regarded as a time to share with the group, whether a class, year group or whole school. On Monday the Head Teacher and allocated Class teacher will introduce the theme for the week in a class assembly. It will be a time when children are in a smaller group and may have the opportunity to offer their own thoughts and responses. The theme will often tie in with the SEAL programme followed in PSHE throughout the school.

The act of worship in school is to be regarded as primarily an educational rather than a liturgical experience. Worship in school should provide some experience and understanding of what worship is, so that it remains an option for those who wish to choose it. It should not compromise the integrity of staff or pupils. The parental right to withdraw a child from the act of worship is recognised. When withdrawal is required parents should consult with the Headteacher.

## **Scheme of Work**

A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers and other interested people alongside this policy. It has been written in the light of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus 2018. RE will be based around termly themes in Reception and Key Stage One, where Christianity and Islam will be the major religions studied. At Key Stage 2, pupils will learn about Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, throughout the key stage and will also have learning opportunities with regard to other major religions, according to the one-year programme accommodating vertically-grouped classes.

No teacher can be an instant expert in religions. Staff who feel the need to build up their own subject knowledge can take up some training opportunities. CPD funds are available annually and the RE

co-ordinator is available to provide introductory reading/ computing related, material and guidance for staff.

### **Teaching and Learning Styles**

What do the Ofsted requirements mean for schools? RE clearly has a contribution to make to the provision for SMSC and British values but headteachers, senior leaders and governors need to be sure that these areas are regarded as whole school responsibilities. Carrying out an audit of provision across subjects and other school activities may be useful but it is the impact that is most significant. RE subject leaders need to consider the role the subject plays in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief alongside SMSC has the potential to raise pupils' moral awareness alongside social and cultural understanding. Our policy is to aim to increase the use of RE in art, drama, talking activities, visits, posters photos, videos, display work and other active learning strategies. Within a topic homework can be set to encourage further research or discussion at home. Cross-curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning. We recognise the importance of teaching to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus in a balanced way.

### **Resources**

Resources are stored in the new resource base (staff room), and should be returned after use in tidy and timely order. The school has invested in new books, religious artefacts, DVD's, picture packs and posters, and staff may need to familiarise themselves with the new materials. We maintain an RE story file in the library, which offers many stories from different traditions which teachers have used in RE. There is a range of RE 'big books' which can be used across the age range as well. Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

### **Visits to places of worship**

We are able to visit different Christian churches in the immediate vicinity of the school, where clergy and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in RE. We have close contact with the clergy from Fishtoft, Freiston and St Botolphs churches and parishes. It is also possible to go further afield to look at places for worship for other religions. We shall aim to use these valuable resources for all classes. We also intend to enable children at key stage one/ two to visit a place of worship from one of the other major religious traditions while studying the unit on 'religion in the neighbourhood'. The RE co-ordinator will work alongside class teachers and key stage Coordinators to organise this educational visit.

### **Educational visits**

The school has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom. All visits will benefit from an exploratory/preliminary visit if the visit is not a regular event. This subject does not usually involve practical, investigative work which will prove dangerous. However, if technology was involved as a part of Religious Education activity the safety precautions relating to that subject would apply. In the event of an outside visit the Lincolnshire Educational Visits Guidance must be followed (the necessary Risk Assessment documentation will be completed with the support of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator).

### **Matching Work to Pupils' Needs**

Whole school policy with regard to special needs and differentiation applies to RE: teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their general educational 'ability'.

### **Assessment**

We report on pupils' progress and attainment in RE to parents, as required by law. The School provides descriptions of levels of attainment, which the school has agreed to use as a basis for reporting at the end of each key stage (assessments currently in progress). We will intend to make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's progress in RE, based on regular monitoring of work with regard to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us. A folder of examples of pupils' work, which is designed to help teachers make judgments about attainment and progress, is in preparation. Staff are asked to add to it copies of pupils' work that provide clear evidence of achievement. This approach to exemplifying standards aims to clarify our understanding of what makes for quality in learning about religions and learning from religions.

### **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

We intend that this policy should operate for the next 4 years (unless there are changes to national or local guidance in the interim), and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that the policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to add to it copies of pupils' work that provide clear evidence of achievement/ progress. This will be returned to the RE subject leader each term. The co-ordinator's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice.

### **Withdrawal**

We note the rights of parents to withdraw their children from RE and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum, which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff. Please refer to the co-ordinator or head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals.

### **Named Co-ordinator:** Mrs T Millane

*This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE subject leader and teaching staff. It was approved by governors in term 5, 2018 and will be reviewed in 2020.*