

St Thomas' CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy

(Updated September 2017)

Aims and objectives

At St Thomas' CE Primary School, Religious Education promotes:

1. A knowledge of Christianity; its stories, traditions, festivals, worship and teachings
2. An awareness of life's spiritual dimension
3. A sense of Christian morality; explored through values of truth, hospitality, loyalty, peace and forgiveness
4. A knowledge and respect for the other major world faiths.

Through the above, we aim to help children to:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in their own life experiences
- develop knowledge and understanding and respect of the range of religions and cultural differences found in Britain
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition
- develop investigative and research skills to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues

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 a vital part of our school's spiritual and moral teaching and promotes both citizenship and PSHE.

We aim to provide an RE curriculum with a 2/3 emphasis on Christianity. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian but that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions. This also accords with LDBS guidelines and the locally agreed syllabus (RBK&C SACRE). **Children have at least one RE session per week.**

Teaching and learning style

We believe that good teaching in RE should allow children to extend their own sense of values and develop their spiritual growth through their discussion, reflection upon, questioning and responses to a variety of religious ideas and concepts. Children study particular religious themes and compare the views of different faith groups. *Where possible, religious teaching links to our Creative Curriculum themes and values.* Discussion is guided by the principles of Philosophy for Children (P4C), creating a safe, collaborative learning community, within which the children take ownership of their learning, in pairs, groups or as a whole class, to share and discuss ideas. This approach develops a much deeper understanding of RE - getting beyond simply learning facts to handling ideas and questions more effectively. Learning in RE may be shared at assemblies and at festivals celebrated in both the school and church.

We aim to differentiate the RE curriculum and promote inclusion in a variety of ways including:

- setting of open-ended tasks;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty;
- grouping children in a variety of ways;
- providing resources to support or challenge as appropriate

- using adult or peer support
- talk frames and word mats aide discussions and writing
- drama and retelling stories
- using stimulus to develop questioning and discussion.

Curriculum planning in religious education

Our religious education curriculum themes are planned in a yearly topic overview, ensuring coverage, continuity, challenge and progression. There is an emphasis on enquiry, questioning and the promotion of the 'big' questions and higher order thinking strategies to challenge and extend pupils' thinking.

The curriculum concentrates on developing a detailed and thorough understanding of Christianity, together with a broad range of religious beliefs from other faiths. They are introduced in conjunction with the teaching of Christianity to enable children to draw comparisons and make links where appropriate.

The relationship between the Christian character of the school and the teaching of RE is clear. Our Christian and British values are discussed within the curriculum and children reflect on their meaning.

Resources used to assist the teaching of the Religious Education curriculum include:

- The agreed syllabus for Religious Education (The New 2017 LDBS Curriculum)
- Books (including age appropriate Bibles) and websites, video media
- Artefacts, pictures and photographs
- Experience of people and places which illustrate teaching points

The RE overview plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term throughout each key stage; giving a broad and balanced experience of:

- Stories from the old testament
- World faiths
- New testament teaching
- Reflection and consideration of people, places and events which are relevant to Christianity.

Class teachers create flip charts from the syllabus to develop skills based learning intentions for each lesson, using child speak. These flipcharts are kept in the class' planning folder on the shared drive, and are monitored by the SLT and RE coordinator. The RE co-ordinator works with teachers to assist planning, resourcing and delivery of the objectives as appropriate.

Wonder Book

The vast majority of our evidence will be collected within the wonder book. Expectations of the wonder book are laid out below:

- An entry for every R.E. lesson (10 per term)
- All entries must be dated
- All entries must have the LI included
- Entries can include: flipcharts, photographs, photos of white board work, post-its, children's responses written in speech bubbles (or similar)
- Flipcharts should be annotated if there has been a class discussion with no written evidence on white boards
- Must ensure that the book contains entries which show the depth of the children's learning
- Work must be stuck into the WB promptly, and the book should be open on display within the classroom to show the children's latest work

RE Books

All work in the R.E. book will determine children's assessment outcomes. Expectations of the R.E. book are laid out below:

- One entry per half term (6 per year).
- KS2 should be an extended piece of writing which includes a writer's toolkit.
- All entries should be marked in detail in keeping with the school's marking policy.
- Moving on comments should be used for all students.

Foundation Stage

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the Nursery and Reception classes (Foundation Stage). In the Foundation Stage, Religious Education is taught through stories and events linked to themes studied each half term on a two-year cycle. Learning can be taught through all areas of the Early learning goals in the Foundation Stage Curriculum through stories, songs, role play, trips and visitors and investigation with the aim that children have a sense of awe and wonder of the world and creation and a feeling of being special and unique as well as belonging to a wider family.

Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education forms part of the school curriculum aims to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. We aim to provide learning opportunities in Religious Education that enable all pupils to make progress.

Assessment and recording

We assess attainment of Religious Education through marking and continuous assessment of children's responses and ideas. We aim to give children feedback to praise efforts and move children on in their understanding.

The school has adopted the QCA 8 level scale of expectations in RE. This document has been used alongside the New LDBS syllabus to plan a coherent scheme of work, which ensures the correct pitch and level of progression within each key stage, so that children meet the age-related expectations for their year group. The QCA 8-level scale is used by teachers to plan the appropriate level of challenge in lessons and develop next steps for learning.

At the end of the academic year, a child's QCA level is recorded on SIMS which is based upon the six entries in their RE books.

Resources

Resources are available to teach all our religious education scheme of work. The RE Coordinator oversees the ongoing development of the Religious Education scheme of work. Resources for religious education are kept centrally. There are bibles, storybooks, resources books and resources to support teaching of all world faiths.

Monitoring and review

The RE coordinator is responsible for monitoring the standards of work and quality of the teaching in Religious Education, supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school including its development in the School Improvement Plan.