

# St. Stephens Community Academy

## 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 Stephens Community Academy 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.

#### **Our curriculum for R.E aims to ensure that all pupils:**

- meet challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- learn about religions and beliefs in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response and to agree or disagree respectfully.
- are equipped with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and beliefs, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- develop an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and beliefs.
- gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence.

### **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 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 and other faith elements 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.

## **2. 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 adapting and matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

## **3. Curriculum Planning in Religious Education**

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Cornish Agreed Syllabus and deliver the Christian and other faith elements 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).

As a non-church school, we spend four terms a year on Christianity and two terms on other world faiths: Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

## **4. Foundation Stage**

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in the Early Years.

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.

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

### **English**

Religious Education contributes to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the Understanding Christianity units focus on text first where the children can learn about a text and what it says before examining how this changes the life of a person in that religion and then what they can learn from it.

### **Computing (ICT)**

We use ICT where appropriate in Religious Education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

### **Personal, social and health education (PSHE), Relationships and Sex Education (RSE) 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 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.

RE may also be explored through Art, Music, DT, Dance, History and Geography.

## **6. Assessment and recording**

Formative assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. All sessions begin with a recap/recall of previous learning-Flashbacks. Teachers use feedback to ensure pupils are learning new learning, building on prior learning and making links between new and previous learning. Pupils will add to their 'big questions' mind map each lesson to build up a picture of their learning over the unit.

Summative assessment is recorded on iTrack during the end of year assessments. Reports to parents are given via parent meetings and pupils' attainment is reported via an annual report.

## **7. Resources**

We endeavor to provide a wide selection of resources to enhance the teaching of RE, including: artefacts; models; books; films; example of texts linked to the religion being studied and visitors. The "Understanding Christianity" scheme also provides a variety of printable resources and many links to appropriate websites.

## **8. 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 school subject leader and trust lead are 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 direction for the subject in the school.



