

**Offwell Church of England
Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

Religious Education Policy

Our Core Values: Honesty, Loyalty, Caring, Sharing and Forgiveness

Our Vision: Be Well, Learn Well, Live Well, Offwell

Reviewed: November 2023

Next review: November 2027

Principal Aim

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Introduction

Religious Education must be provided for all registered children in the school. The school provides Religious Education in accordance with the requirements and advice of the Diocese of Exeter and the Agreed Local Syllabus.

The importance of religious education in the curriculum

- Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking 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.
- In RE pupils learn about religions and beliefs in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Pupils 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.
- Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and beliefs, enabling them to develop their own ideas, values and identities.
- RE should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and beliefs.
- Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

The Devon and Torbay Agreed Syllabus is followed at Offwell, which includes learning from a range of religions and beliefs and incorporates the Understanding Christianity approach. This approach means that children **'make sense'** of the religions and beliefs studied, **'understand the impact'** of these beliefs in people's lives and **'make connections'** in their learning and their wider experience of the world. The 2019 syllabus offers open, enquiring, exploratory RE, suitable for pupils who have a religious faith of their own as well as for those who have no religious faith.

All pupils develop their understanding of Christianity in each key stage. At Key Stage one the other focus religions are Judaism and Islam whilst at Key Stage two they are Hinduism, Judaism and Islam. Within EYFS, children study Christianity and a range of stories belonging to different religious traditions. There

are opportunities for other religions and non-religious worldviews (e.g. Humanism) to be considered throughout both key stages.

Time allocation

It is recommended that at least 5% of curriculum time be allocated to clearly defined religious education. This is in line with the requirement of the agreed syllabus. The programmes of study in this agreed syllabus have been written with this in mind. Approximately this amounts to:

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

Within Church of England schools, this also stands alongside the National Society's Statement of Entitlement. This states that at least 50% of the RE curriculum should be based on exploring Christianity.

'Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews fostering respect for others.'

Church of England Statement of Entitlement 2019

The Aims of RE

The curriculum aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary.
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities.
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation.

2. understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:

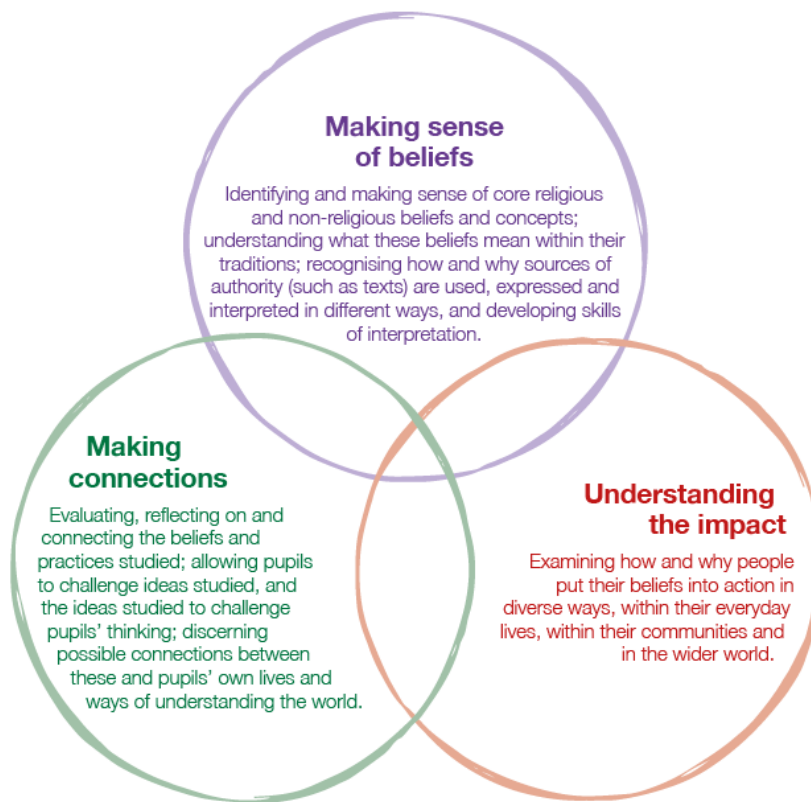
- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways.
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

3. make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses.
- challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response.
- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding.

The teaching and Learning Approach

Devon and Torbay Agreed Syllabus for RE 2019–2024



RE Curriculum

All children are entitled to receive a broad and balanced curriculum and RE plays an important part in this. We aim for all children to experience high quality Religious Education by planning in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and guidance from the Diocese of Exeter. Credible RE publications may also be used to support the teaching of Religious Education.

Within Religious Education, children should be provided with a range of learning opportunities that may include:

- Visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from a range of faith communities
- Using art, music, dance, drama and multimedia techniques
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas
- Using story, pictures, art, photographs and a range of sources/texts to interpret meaning and explore ideas in order to deepen understanding
- Using artefacts to help children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and forms of expression
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- Developing the use of ICT (particularly DVDs and the internet) in helping children's awareness of religions and beliefs
- Developing their skills of communication, including debate, in order to be able to respond in an informed and respectful way

Key Skills in RE

RE is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. It seeks to develop children's skills in investigation, enquiry, questioning, communication/dialogue, interpretation, application, analysis, evaluation and creativity. These are important skills for children to develop.

Skills may be explored in some of the following ways:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live, the impact of religion and belief upon communities and the different ways people express their beliefs).
- Communication/dialogue (sharing their ideas about religions and beliefs in a lively, informed, respectful way including different styles of writing, oral contributions, debate and the use of ICT).
- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts).
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others, using sources of wisdom and authority to inform their thinking and understanding).

Key Attitudes in RE

As with skills RE has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote. These include self-esteem (so that every child feels valued and significant), respect (including being sensitive to the beliefs, feelings and values of others), open-mindedness (being willing to learn and gain new understanding) and appreciation and wonder (developing children's imagination and curiosity).

Assessment and Recording

In RE we provide annual reports based on the assessment of children's learning after each unit of work. Reports provide a brief summary of the work covered, a summary of the standards achieved and how the child can improve their learning. To help us in report writing we are building a portfolio of children's work (in exercise books and class RE books). We also recognise that some of the most important learning in RE (e.g. how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed.

In RE, by the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, understand and apply the concepts, skills and processes specified in the relevant Programme of Study, as in all subjects of the curriculum. Unit and end of phase outcomes support teachers' assessment and planning of RE.

By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus. This means that they can use religious words to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. They show awareness of similarities in religions and can identify how religion is expressed in different ways. They ask and respond sensitively to questions about their own and others' experiences and feelings. They recognise their own values and those of others and are aware that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer.

By the end of Key Stage 2 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus. In RE this means children can describe both similarities and differences within and between religions and worldviews. They make links between different aspects of religions and can describe the impact of religion and worldviews on people's' lives. They suggest answers to questions of identity and meaning. They apply their ideas to their own and others' lives. They can also describe what inspires and influences themselves and others. The RE Lead is responsible for the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning within Religious Education.

The contribution of RE to the wider curriculum

Within the 2002 Education Act, Section 78 states that the curriculum for children provided should be a 'balanced and broadly based curriculum which—

(a) promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and

(b) prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.'

Religious Education supports the wider curriculum by:

- Supporting the social, moral and cultural development of children, exploring the role that religion plays in the lives of people within diverse societies
- Making links between the values of the school and how values are put into practice in the lives of people
- Promoting respect for all and challenging prejudice and discriminations
- Exploring and celebrating diversity within cultures, communities, values and beliefs
- Community cohesion; exploring diversity within the local area and developing skills of respect
- How religion and worldviews in the UK and the world impact on life
- Promotion of British Values

Responsibilities for RE

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Headteacher will ensure

- RE is effectively led and managed and that standards remain high
- All children make progress in RE
- The curriculum meets legal requirements
- Achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are regularly evaluated
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- Teachers, both newly appointed and existing teachers, are provided with the correct support to enable them to become effective teachers of RE
- That teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing children's understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- Clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw

- That teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so as stipulated in their contracts
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE so that pupils can make good progress

Rights of withdrawal

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning. We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE on the grounds of conscience. We do encourage parents to contact the Headteacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school, recognising that parents have no obligation to justify their decision to withdraw their child from RE.

In any instances where RE is integrated into the wider school curriculum, the school will discuss the arrangements with the parents to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated to meet the legal requirements of the right of withdrawal.

If children are withdrawn from RE, the school does not have a duty to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Children will be supervised during the time of withdrawal.

In addition to this, where a child has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the child to receive and it is the duty of the parent to provide this alternative provision at no cost to the individual school.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all children. We will continue to monitor the impact of this policy to ensure that it meets the needs of all children.

Conclusion

It is our aim to support the Church of England Vision for Education and our own school's vision, so that we educate for knowledge and wisdom, hope and aspiration, community and living well together and dignity and respect.

Religious Education makes an important contribution to these aims and to the spiritual development of children. We aim to provide the knowledge, skills and opportunities for all children to explore their own beliefs and values and the beliefs and values of others. We aim that this will enable children to develop a sense of respect for the religious and cultural differences of others so that they may be able to contribute positively within a pluralistic society and hold respectful, informed discussions with people whose views may be different from their own.

Revised by Leader of RE: Chris Thomas

Reviewed by Headteacher: Lorna Legg

November 2023