



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

(To be read in conjunction with our Collective Worship Policy, Our Values Statement and British Values Statement)

“The school aims to serve its community by providing education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all of its pupils.”

School Ethos Statement

Philosophy

At Staverton C of E Primary School our mission is to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. Recognising its historic foundation, the school will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

National and Legal Framework

Religious Education (RE) at Staverton C of E Primary School will be provided in line with the legal requirements. These are that:

- The basic curriculum will include provision for RE 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 which is provided shall be in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus for Northamptonshire (Statutory Advisory Council for Religious Education 2011-2016).

Aims

It is the intention of Staverton CE Primary School that Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. It develops the children’s knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and addresses the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. It enables children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. It helps children learn from religions as well as about religions.

Staverton CE Primary is a caring school, committed to a creative curriculum and to meeting the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, academic and physical needs of every child. RE has an important contribution to make towards this by providing an environment where children feel secure and able to express their views and beliefs. They are encouraged to value their own opinions, whilst developing respect and sensitivity for the views of others. Pupils are encouraged to understand the importance of the role that each individual has to play in the life of the school and of the wider community. Links are made with a variety of faith groups to help develop this aim.

Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, our aims in RE are for pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in the United Kingdom;
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, from the local to the global;
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in the United Kingdom.
- Enhance spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by

1. Developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings and other beliefs can relate to them;
 2. Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience;
 3. Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs.

Right of Withdrawal

In keeping with the law, parents may withdraw their children from RE provided they have given written notification to the Headteacher. The school will ensure that suitable supervision is provided. We note that teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching RE if they wish to do so but must give notice of their intention in writing to the Governing Body.

RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children or staff, or to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another. We hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the open Religious Education being taught at our school and we encourage the participation of all.

Collective Worship

RE is different in nature to Collective Worship and hence, the aims of RE are different and distinct from those of Collective Worship. RE is about developing skills, knowledge and understanding in order to make decisions about the important questions. Worship is about being given the opportunity to participate in an experience which can lead to a heightened sense of spiritual awareness. Collective Worship can emphasise the more ritual and ceremonial aspects of worship and can be used as a springboard from which to launch a project or inspire a larger number of children at one time.

RE cannot be taught wholly through assemblies. The assembly context does not give the opportunity for the exercise of many skills; for example, research, which is a part of RE for which a classroom context is essential.

Collective Worship and RE are therefore distinctive activities which help the school deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

RE Context

- The context of RE at Staverton Church of England Primary School is that of a rural primary school, serving children in the age range four to eleven years.
- We work to the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus.
- 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 other members of the 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 feel that it is important that the children are not only introduced to the faiths of those within their school community but also to those faiths represented in the wider community. An introduction to the key beliefs, practices and impact of faith will hopefully lead to understanding, sensitivity and respect for fellow humankind. RE helps this by welcoming visitors from other cultures and beliefs to talk to the pupils.

Pupils also have the opportunity to experience the celebration of different cultures and festivals other than their own, within RE and other areas of the curriculum and Collective Worship.

Time Allocation

RE is part of the Basic Curriculum and all schools are required to teach RE to all pupils on the school roll, except where parents exercise their right of withdrawal. The Qualifications and Curriculum Development Authority (QCDA) recommended and exemplified a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at

Key Stage Two, a recommendation endorsed by the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus. The time allocation at Staverton Church of England Primary School will be 36 hours at Key Stage One and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two. RE will form part of the planning in the Early Years Foundation Stage; the time allocation expected is equivalent to 30 hours of direct teacher input over the Reception Year. RE curriculum time does not include Collective Worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work.

RE Planning

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus. Long term planning is organised on a two year rolling programme to ensure progression and challenge as the children move through the school. School designed units are planned by the RE Subject Leader in consultation with the relevant members of staff. These units are designed to provide cross-curricular links and are relevant to the experiences and understanding of each age phase. Each unit of work is designed to ensure coverage of:

- Attainment Target 1 - Learning about religion
- Attainment Target 2 - Learning from religion

We recognise the importance of teaching to the Attainment Targets of the Agreed Syllabus in a balanced way.

RE is based around termly themes or cross curricular units in Key Stage One, where Christianity and Judaism are the major religions studied. In Key Stage Two, pupils learn about Christianity throughout the key stage, and also have major learning opportunities with regard to Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism.

Wherever possible the starting point for each unit of work reflects the personal experiences of the children which then leads on to an in depth exploration of the specific content.

No teacher can be an instant expert in all religions. Staff who feel the need to build up their own subject knowledge can use the “Beginner’s Guide to religions” in the Agreed Syllabus Support Materials. Further materials are available from the RE Subject Leader.

We aim to draw on a variety of speakers/representatives from relevant faith groups and off site visits to places of worship to enrich the curriculum experiences provided. We also draw on our close links with our local community and St Mary’s in Staverton.

Foundation Stage

We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the Reception class where it is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the religious education aspects of the children’s work where appropriate to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We aim to ensure that a variety of teaching and learning styles are adopted by teachers in RE to allow access by all pupils. The variety enables pupils to encounter their preferred learning style as well as to develop a broad repertoire. The teaching and learning styles used promote a range of skills such as thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and research. Examples of active learning strategies and activities which we use are:

- Dramatic conventions;
- Group Work;
- Individual Reflection;
- Use of music and art;
- Artefact handling;
- Multi-sensory approaches;
- Visits and Visitors;
- Use of ICT;
- Use of photos, posters and DVDs

Cross Curricular work is encouraged in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning.

Cross Curricular Links:

Literacy: RE embeds skills of literacy in a variety of ways e.g. speaking and listening skills, drama conventions, reading different texts and writing in different genres.

ICT: This contributes towards the objectives of RE by the use of:

- Interactive whiteboards;
- Internet;
- CDs/Video and other multi media;
- Digital photography;
- Power-point presentations etc.

PHSE, Citizenship and Community Cohesion: Through our RE, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. It promotes the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. It also promotes sensitivity for others and enables discussion of a range of views, opinions and beliefs which help to prepare children to become valuable citizens in a culturally diverse society. By trying to ensure that visitors from different Faith Communities and cultural backgrounds and visits to places of worship both within the immediate community and the wider community are planned into the RE Programme of Study where possible, we aim to develop community cohesion through RE.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development: RE plays a key role in pupil's spiritual and moral development, and makes a distinctive contribution to their social and cultural development. This is outlined in detail in the Agreed Syllabus. 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, hence, develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Values based curriculum: We are introducing core Christian values into all areas our curriculum to ensure that a Christian approach is evident in everything we do.

Equal Opportunities

In keeping with the aims of the school policy for equal opportunities, the teaching of RE endeavours to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to educational opportunities regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, race, ability, social background or physical capacity. Care is taken in RE to avoid the reinforcement of negative or stereotypical images and RE aims to celebrate and appreciate cultural diversity through a variety of materials, tasks and experiences, in order to reflect the cultural diversities of our society.

Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

Whole school policy with regards to the provision for special educational needs and the most able 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 academic ability.

Special Educational Needs: RE contributes towards the policy by ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are able to:

- Develop their self-confidence and awareness;
- Understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups;
- Bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom;
- Develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience;
- Reflect on and consider their own values and those of others;
- Deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour.

Access to RE for pupils with learning difficulties can be improved by;

- Using sensory materials and resources through sight, touch, sound, taste or smell, for example music, tactile artefacts, plants in a sensory garden.

- Giving pupils first hand experiences, for example, visitors to schools, visit to religious buildings, involvement in festivals.
- Organising a range of activities to give personal experiences, for example, dance, drama, visits to a range of environments.
- Helping pupils to understand and appreciate their world and its diversity.
- Using a range of resources, for example, interactive/sensory stimuli, ICT, to increase pupils' knowledge of religions and the elements in them;
- Using specialist aids and equipment;
- Providing support from adults or other pupils when necessary, while allowing pupils the space, time and freedom to develop skills for themselves;
- Adapting tasks or environments and providing alternative activities where necessary, for example, tactile story books, puppets, role play, music making, presenting work as a painting instead of writing.
- Being aware of the pace at which pupils work and of the physical and mental effort required.
- Balancing consistency and challenge according to individual needs.

Most Able: These pupils in RE are identified by teachers as those pupils who:

- Show high levels of insight into and discernment beyond the obvious and ordinary;
- Make sense of and draw meaning from religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices;
- Are sensitive to , or aware of, the mysteries of life and have a feeling for how these are explored and expressed;
- Understand, apply and transfer ideas and concepts across topics in RE and into other religious and cultural contexts.

It is important that the full range and scope of RE activities and learning experiences give pupils access to high levels of attainment. For example, pupils who are most able in RE should be appropriately challenged by:

- Using a variety of challenging questioning strategies to explore religious phenomena;
- Setting extension tasks to encourage greater depth of understanding;
- Using authentic materials from a faith;
- Focusing on interpretation of symbol, metaphor, text and story and the ways in which these stimulate reflection on meaning and discernment;
- Challenging and developing use of spoken and written religious language with both sacred texts and general literature;
- Teaching pupils correct terminology and language needed to handle sophisticated religious, spiritual, ethical and philosophical questions ideas and materials;
- Using questions and tasks from later key stages to stimulate responses through argument, analysis and prediction;
- Encouraging pupils to make connections between their work in RE and other subjects.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

In line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for RE, until instructed differently, we presently use Level Descriptions to help make judgements about pupil progress and attainment. All teachers have the Level Descriptions, a 'Skills Ladder of Progress' and a bank of pupil speak 'I can' statements linked to the Level Descriptions for both attainment targets, which they can draw upon for setting lesson objectives, end of unit evaluations and for reporting to children, parents and staff as appropriate.

Pupils' work in RE is assessed by making judgements both by staff and the pupils themselves during lessons and at the end of a unit of work. These judgements are used by the teacher to decide 'where next' with a lesson and within the unit, as well as the next time that particular skill, attitude or knowledge is encountered.

An annual report for RE informs parents of their child's progress and attainment, as required by law.

The RE Subject Leader works with teachers to create a folder of examples of children's work.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Year 2 and Year 6 summative RE data is presently submitted to the Local Authority on an annual basis for monitoring purposes. The Subject Leader will maintain an active awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and all teachers are asked to keep track of their needs for support or training. The Subject Leader's role also includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice.

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored and reviewed by governors on a two yearly basis, or when the need arises.

Signed by
Chair of Governors

Date: