



# Religious Education Policy

## Cockfield CEVC Primary School

### Introduction

The study of RE should:

- provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life; beliefs about God; issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human;
- stimulate consideration of the person as an individual and also a member of communities;
- make a central contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children;
- promote the values of truth, justice, respect for all people and care of the environment;
- place specific emphasis on pupils valuing others and themselves, within families, community groups of faith and activity, both in similarities and differences of expression;
- encourage discussion about celebration of stewardship of the earth;
- enable pupils to examine and question values and beliefs, reflecting on their own uniqueness, and sharing feelings and emotions through forming and maintaining positive relationships, both with other children and with adults;
- explore the significance of humanity in relation to our environment, and our responsibility towards it;
- provide a basis for exploring the 'big questions' about life, and what individual responsibility means.

The aims of RE are:

- to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, principally, and other world religions and belief systems, which offer answers to the challenging questions;
- to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practice & expression and the influence of religion on individuals, communities and cultures;
- to encourage pupils to learn from the diversity of religions, beliefs, values and traditions whilst affirming their own faith or search for meaning;
- to challenge pupils to reflect on, consider, interpret and discuss beliefs and faith and to communicate their response in a range of ways, including drama, prayer, art and music;
- to encourage pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging and enable them to flourish individually within the school and local community, and ultimately as citizens in a pluralistic society
- to prepare pupils to respect and show sensitivity to others, including those with different faith and belief, or none.

## Teaching and learning style

At Cockfield Primary we adhere to the agreed syllabus for Suffolk to structure our teaching of religious education. Throughout each year children are introduced to a series of learning themes in discrete RE sessions or combined with topic learning where appropriate. Teaching and learning styles vary according to the learning theme.

The subject is approached using two key aims:

- **Learning About Religion;** which includes enquiry, investigation, identifying and interpreting features and aspects of religion. It covers knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other, as well as the characteristics of religion. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary.
- **Learning From Religion;** which aims to develop pupils' ability to reflect on, and respond to, their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils should learn to develop and communicate their own ideas in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and values.

## Statutory requirements for the teaching of RE in English schools are:

- RE must be provided for all registered pupils except those withdrawn at their parents' request.
- Christianity is studied in depth at each key stage to 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian' (Education Act 1988)
- RE in Cockfield CEVC School meets the legal requirements through the implementation of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus
- As a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School, Cockfield School will use the Church of St Peter and St Paul in the village for celebrations as well as RE learning. Teaching about Christianity will be non-denominational in general, and children will learn about denominational differences through expression and practice in Christianity.

Time allocation of RE is in line with recommendations - 36 hours per year in Key Stage 1 and 45 hours per year in Key Stage 2. This can be in weekly sessions, or as a 'block' through special days, whichever suits the unit best. Approximately 30 minutes of RE per week is taught in Reception where there is no recommended time allocation.

The planning of RE should allow for important events in each of the religions to be taught at the appropriate time of the year.

Singing in assembly will be mainly Christian in character reflecting our Collective Worship termly 'Values' themes, which are illustrated on display in the corridor outside the Library. See Collective Worship Policy for further information.

In RE lessons teachers aim to stimulate interest and enjoyment in learning, and especially to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve. Lessons are planned to take account of different learning styles, and to provide a variety of activities to promote learning. Lessons will be whole class based and thus mixed ability, but children may be grouped for discussion or

activities where smaller numbers are appropriate. In addition, 'Challenge by Choice' will also be used so that children can select the learning they feel is best suited to their needs.

A wide range of approaches is offered using e.g. artefacts, pictures, discussion or texts as starting points. Children are introduced to the sacred texts of the religions, and taught how these are used by each. Practical activities such as cooking, model making, role play and simulation are included where appropriate.

At Cockfield CEVC School we recognise the importance of visitors and educational trips. Where appropriate and possible, visitors are encouraged to come into school and visits are made to outside agencies, such as to the Discovery Centre at St Edmundsbury Cathedral as well as places of worship, from a range of world faiths.

### **RE curriculum planning**

RE is a statutory subject under the Education Act.. The Suffolk Agreed Syllabus provides the framework for planning long term outlines (2year cycle). This long term plan is based on covering the agreed religions, using a set of learning themes for each key stage. These themes are developed into key questions in the Non-statutory Curriculum Guidance for RE in Suffolk Schools and teachers construct units of work around them. The long term plan is reviewed and revised by the Subject Leader, in line with the cycle of Policy review. Teaching staff have the choice about when in a year they deliver each unit so that it best fits their curriculum but all units must remain in the same year of the cycle so that complete coverage is ensured.

Medium term plans are constructed as units of work covering the key questions and ensuring that both the Aims are covered in each lesson, to create a balanced approach to a topic. Specific learning objectives are taken from the syllabus to form the lesson focus and children are encouraged to reflect on their learning by reviewing these at the end of a unit topic.

### **Contribution of RE within the Key Stages 1 and 2 curriculum**

At seasonal times RE texts can be usefully employed in English for the purposes of drama, presentation and speaking and listening activities, including class or school productions. Our library is well stocked with a range of books about all major world religions which can be used as part of English lessons as well as in the study of RE.

RE can make an important contribution to use of language, enabling pupils to acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary, and to communicate ideas with depth and precision. I KS2 in particular there is more of an emphasis on communicating clearly in spoken language using appropriate specific vocabulary.

RE promotes thinking and questioning skills, use of reasoning and argument to present different viewpoints. It supports history or science in discriminating between historical or scientific evidence and that of faith and belief from Divine revelation. Learning about the origin and spread of religious belief uses geographical knowledge, and helps consolidate understanding of the world defined in maps.

Music and art are widely used within RE lessons as starting points; in turn RE contributes to knowledge and understanding of both of the latter areas, as forms of expression of spiritual belief. Children present their work using a variety of crafts including modelling and cooking, contributing to DT.

ICT is an important medium for teaching and learning in RE. Children may develop and use essential ICT skills within RE as they investigate and find out information from internet sources, evaluating the usefulness of their sources. In addition digital photography/video brings authentic images into the classroom and children may use them to record their work, and/or to present it in class or in assemblies.

RE should make a significant contribution to inclusion in its focus on promoting respect for everyone.

### **Supporting children with SEN and the Able, Gifted and Talented**

Lessons are accessible to all abilities, through offering a range of teaching styles, and should be adapted for access, or made more challenging as appropriate. This is particularly something to be aware of in the mixed age classes we have at Cockfield Primary School.

Teachers identify pupils with SEN and AG&T, and provision will be made to support them in RE; for example support may be targeted, AG&T group discussion times may be set aside. In addition, those who have a particular interest may be encouraged to share their knowledge as part of lesson time, making short presentations or posing challenging questions.

Use of a range of questions and opportunities for discussion will help all children.

### **RE in the Early Years**

Reception age children have an entitlement to religious education under the Early Learning goal of 'Understanding the world'.

Children will have weekly sessions of RE focussing on key questions around faith, using stories, practical activities and resources and artefacts as appropriate. Sometimes RE will consist of 2 shorter sessions across the week,

### **Assessment and reporting**

Teachers assess children's understanding and knowledge based on the lesson learning objectives set. These assessments are usually formative and used to plan the next steps in learning for individuals, groups or the whole class.

Over a unit of work assessment is made according to key attainment target steps descriptions, for both learning aims. Levels in KS1 and KS2 are summative to record attainment achieved. They are the basis for a descriptive evaluation of a pupil's progress in RE, which will be reported to parents annually.

In EYFS assessment is made using the criteria to achieve the ELG.

## **Resources**

Library stock includes a good range of up to date text books and stories for RE use. There are sets of Bibles, plus Jewish, Christian and Muslim information and story books. There are copies of some Jewish, Christian and Muslim writings in the school library. In addition there are copies of the sacred texts for class demonstration use, to show how these are viewed by religious adherents, remembering to show respect and care for these special books.

A collection of artefacts for each religion is available. We have symbolic objects as well as practical items for children to handle and use.

Music from the three religions is available on disc and can be linked to festivals, celebrations or times of penance in their respective calendars. Music is used to provide times of reflection and spiritual enhancement.

In addition resource boxes are available to borrow from the Discovery centre at the Cathedral and from SIFRE.

Central resources are regularly reviewed and as finances allow, new items are bought.

## **Monitoring and review**

The subject leader will undertake review of the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus throughout the school, and oversee the two year long term plan. Adjustment of timing and organisation of topics may be made, where it is felt appropriate.

Standards of work will be monitored by the subject leader through lesson observation and scrutiny of children's work, and child interviewing/perception surveys will be undertaken. A report of the findings will be used to inform development of RE further, as relevant.

Class teachers will meet to discuss the long term plan and its implementation over the 2 years; the subject leader will disseminate current policy and developments from national strategies to the team.

## **Provision for Withdrawal from RE**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE session (fully or partially) Schools must enable parents to exercise this legal entitlement. Parents must contact the headteacher if they wish to withdraw their child, but specific reasons do not have to be given. It is hoped that in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached and arrangements for alternative RE or supervision can be made.

Teachers may withdraw from RE. Their classes, however, are legally entitled to RE. The head teacher is responsible for alternative provision for pupils. If a member of staff chooses to exercise this right, staff members would swap teaching responsibilities, with the subject leader

teaching RE for the affected class and the other member of staff teaching an alternative subject in the subject leaders class.

Cockfield Primary School

September 2016

Review: September 2018