



SEAGRY AND SOMERFORDS' WALTER POWELL PRIMARY SCHOOLS' FEDERATION

Religious education policy

July 2015

Religious Education (RE) Policy

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 Religious Education (RE) enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Seagry and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools' Federation, 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 not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religion as well as *about* religion.
- 1.2 The aims of Religious Education are to help children:
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
 - develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
 - develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
 - be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
 - develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
 - develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
 - have respect for other people's views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

2 The legal position of Religious Education

- 2.1 Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act (EA) states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly-based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'.
- 2.2 Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral, social and cultural awareness.
- 2.3 The Principal Aim of RE in Wiltshire is to engage pupils in enquiring into key questions arising from the study of religion and belief, so as to promote their personal and spiritual development. The agreed syllabus also promotes the celebration of religious and cultural similarities whilst valuing their differences. Our school RE curriculum is based upon this and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.
- 2.4 The EA 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.
- 2.5 The Federation acts in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 that stipulates that RE is compulsory for all children. Schools are not obliged to provide RE to pupils who are under compulsory school age (section 80(2)(a) of the Education Act 2002). The EA allows parents to withdraw their child from RE classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have

given written notice to the school governors. The EA also allows teachers to refuse to teach RE, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The RE curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral, social and cultural teaching.

3 Teaching and learning style

- 3.1** 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.
- 3.2** 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, Diwali, Passover 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.
- 3.3** 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 working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations using the computers and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.
- 3.4** We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities and ages, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability and maturity of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example by:
- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
 - setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
 - grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
 - providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
 - using teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

4 Curriculum planning in Religious Education

- 4.1** We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with Wiltshire's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.
- 4.2** We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. At present we are developing a 2-year rolling program. At KS1 we teach some RE topics in conjunction with other subjects. For example, some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.

Religious Education (RE) Policy

4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader holds planning meetings to enable all teachers to plan each unit of work using the new syllabus.

4.4 The plans for each lesson lists the specific learning objectives. These individual plans are discussed during planning meetings.

5 Foundation Stage

5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception year.

5.2 In the KS1 class, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Profile which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

6 Contribution of Religious Education to the teaching of other subjects

6.1 English

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

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

6.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our RE 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. We promote this by having a school council who are elected to represent the views of all pupils and to improve our school. 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.

6.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching RE at Seagry and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools' Federation 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 doing so, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

7 Teaching Religious Education to children with special needs

7.1 At Seagry and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools' Federation we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school

Religious Education (RE) Policy

curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

8 Assessment and recording

8.1 We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the national curriculum levels of attainment. We record the attainment grades in the children's Progress Files, which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

8.2 The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

9 Resources

9.1 We have sufficient resources at Seagry and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools' Federation to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. There is a set of bibles for both key stages in the library and we use Swindon and Wiltshire Learning Resources to source any religious artefacts that help to enrich the teaching and learning of RE. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research.

10 Monitoring and review

10.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in RE. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE subject leader presents the Head Teacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. Specially-allocated time is made available for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Policy review

The review cycle for this Policy is every three years.

This Policy was agreed by the Governing Body, Head Teacher and Staff at Seagry and Somerfords' Walter Powell Primary Schools' Federation on 13th July and is due for review by July 2018.

Signed: Chair of Governors