



Religious Education Policy

Religious Education Policy

Berwick St Mary's C of E First School

Adopted: November 2015



Rationale

The school mission statement underpins this policy.

‘To realise the potential within every child, by providing the encouragement and challenge to inspire a love of life-long learning, within a caring community with Christian values and beliefs at its heart.’

At St Mary's Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Northumberland LA Syllabus and guidance from the Newcastle and Durham Diocese, and reflects the distinctive and inclusive ethos of our Anglican foundation. Along with the national curriculum subjects, religious education forms the basic curriculum and supports in the delivery of our core Christian values of friendship, love, trust, respect and wisdom. The purpose of religious education is to enable children to learn about religions and to learn from religion. This is exemplified in the school's Christian vision and values, uses the teachings of God and Jesus Christ to contribute to the personal development and well-being of all the children we serve.

AT1 – Learning about Religions

This includes:

- identifying, naming, describing and giving accounts in order to build up a coherent picture of each religion,
- explaining the meaning of religious language, stories and symbolism,
- explaining similarities and differences between and within religions.

AT2 – Learning from Religion

This includes:

- giving an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues,
- reflecting on what might be learnt from religion in the light of one's own beliefs and experience,
- identifying and responding to questions of meaning within religion.

Religious Education in a Church School Context

In recognition of our distinctive context, religious education has a high profile, we emphasise:

- a wide range of Christian resources including artefacts,
- a close link with the local church family,
- a Christian ethos which permeates the whole curriculum, but finds particular

- emphasis in this subject,
- the Christian foundation of the school.

Aims

Religious education should help pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other major
- world religions and value systems found in Britain,
- develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals,
- communities, societies and cultures, be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life,
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society,

Objectives

Foundation Stage

At the foundation stage, children's learning in religious education will make a variety of contributions to the six areas of learning and enables them to work towards the early learning goals. By the end of the Foundation Stage children will have particular opportunities to:

- respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings where appropriate,
- have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feelings of others,
- begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people,
- have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.

Key Stage 1

By the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils will increasingly have opportunities to:

- learn about Christianity and one other principal religion in depth (Judaism),
- encounter some special events, places, people and objects connected with the religions studied,
- listen and talk about some stories from religious traditions and begin to identify similarities
- and differences,
- reflect on and talk about puzzling questions which arise from their study of religions, their own experiences and their encounters with the natural world,
- think about themselves, their feelings and their relationships with others and begin to develop positive attitudes to diversity and difference, giving careful consideration to the views of others.

These form the criteria for assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in line with new curriculum principles of assessment without levels.

Key Stage 2

By the end of Year 4, the majority of pupils will increasingly have opportunities to:

- learn about and develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and two other principal religions (Judaism and Islam);
- encounter key events, places, people and objects connected with the religions studied and discuss their purposes and functions,
- consider the meaning of symbols, stories and festivals for members of faith communities,
- explore questions of meaning and mystery and use times of stillness to work out their own response to these,
- evaluate different points of view and show sensitivity to those whose belief differ from their own,
- relate their work in religious education to other areas of the curriculum and their developing knowledge of the world around them,

These form the criteria for assessment at the end of Year 4, in line with new curriculum principles of assessment without levels.

Planning

At St Mary's we understand Religious Education to be an essential part of our School's curriculum which will make a distinctive contribution to each child's development both individual and social.

Our planning in Religious Education is based upon Diocesan Guidelines and also draws from Northumberland LEAs Agreed Syllabus.

Religious Education is planned around the Christian year as well as blocked units usually based on world religions, and in particular Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

The work is planned to ensure a balanced, progressive and differentiated curriculum but there will be opportunity to take advantage of situations as they arise e.g. visitors, news items, children's own experiences. Children should have the opportunity to look at their own experiences and those of others. They should have the opportunity to explore religious ideas as expressed through literature, music, art and architecture and toask questions, explore ideas, visit, receive visitors, investigate, celebrate, use their senses, reflect, discover, observe and describe.

World Faiths

We include teaching about Christianity, Judaism and Islam in our Religious Education. Our teaching will reflect the multi-faith nature of our society, whilst giving due regard and reverence to our Christian foundation. The children will be living in a multi-faith community and need to develop an understanding and positive attitude for this experience.

We aim to:

- promote empathy
- celebrate diversity and similarity
- foster self worth in each child
- recognise the value of others
- promote positive attitudes.

The children should be aware that religion is a major force in people's lives in all parts of the world and that the world has enormous diversity. Even if this diversity is not the experience of our School community, the children will encounter it in history, geography, television, newspapers and books. Including world faiths in Religious Education teaching will not be a study of comparative religions but an opportunity for the children to learn something about those things which others hold to be important, teaching them tolerance and the skills required to live within a multi-cultural society.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We assess children's work in religious education 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 new national curriculum guidelines and record the attainment on the appropriate assessment sheet. Children's progress in religious education is commented upon in the annual report to parents.

Learning and Teaching

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, 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.

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.

We recognise the fact that classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the tasks to the ability 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.

Summary Statement

Religious Education at St Mary's is designed to provide our children with the learning opportunities to support their individual spiritual and academic growth based on the principles of the school's core Christian values, which guide the practice and leadership of Religious Education at St Mary's on a daily basis.