

Policy for Religious Education

Reason for the policy

This policy has been written to:

- Ensure all staff, governors, the church and parents have a clear idea of the provision of and approach to RE in the school;
- Establish an agreed philosophy for Religious Education which will support the aims of the school and enhance the religious, moral and spiritual development of all pupils;
- Clarify the legal requirements for religious education for staff, governors and parents.

The Legal Position of RE

The Education Act of 1996 requires that:

- Religious education should be taught to all pupils, except for those withdrawn at the parents' request;
 - Religious education in controlled schools should '*be taught in accordance with an agreed syllabus*' (in this case, '*Vision and Insight*', the agreed syllabus for Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth.);
 - An agreed syllabus should '*reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain*';
 - An Agreed syllabus '*must not be designed to convert pupils or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils*'.
- (adapted from *Vision and Insight* p2):

Section 352 of the 1996 Education Act recognises the distinctive place of RE as part of the basic curriculum alongside the National Curriculum. RE has equal standing in relation to the core and foundation subjects within the school.

The Nature of RE

Religious Education should promote a reflective approach to life and enable and enrich this process through the pupils' study of Christian and other faiths represented in this country.

School Policy and the Locally Agreed Syllabus

In accordance with the 1996 Education Act, the teaching of RE at our school follows the LEA agreed syllabus, *Vision and Insight*. A copy of this document is held by all teaching staff at the school.

Entitlement

RE is provided for all pupils, regardless of religions, race, gender, ethnicity, age or ability.

In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, parents have the right to withdraw their children from parts or all RE lessons and they are not legally obliged to state their reasons. In order to avoid misunderstanding, any parent wishing to withdraw their child may arrange a meeting with the Headteacher to discuss:

- Religious issues about which the parent would object to his/her child being taught;
- Practical implications of withdrawal and the circumstances in which the school can reasonably be expected to supervise or accommodate parental wishes.

In accordance with the DES circular 3/89 V.1., teachers have a legal right to withdraw from the teaching of RE lessons. Any teacher wishing to withdraw must confirm this in writing to the Headteacher and Chair of Governors.

Aims

The policy aims to:

- Provide a clear statement of intention which reflects the school's ethos and aims;
- Support a consistent approach to RE in the school;
- Promote knowledge, skills, concepts and attitudes appropriate to the subject;
- Provide an overview of RE which meets the requirements of *Vision and Insight*.

Objectives

The objectives of the policy are to:

- Foster in pupils a reflective approach to life in order to develop their own spirituality;
- Promote knowledge of the richness and diversity of religion and range of issues it raises;
- Promote the skills of reflection, empathy, comprehension, investigation, interpretation and analysis with regard to people's beliefs;
- Develop an understanding of concepts, particular to religions, which relate to human experience, symbolism and investigation;
- Promote the attitudes of curiosity, open-mindedness, self-awareness, respect, wonder and appreciation in order to acquire a more holistic understanding of the religious and spiritual dimension of human life.

Approaches to Teaching and Learning

Religious Education is taught as a separate subject in accordance with *Vision and Insight*. It is not the intention of the school to promote any one particular religious standpoint in RE lessons. In each year group there is a focus on Christianity and one other major religion (either Sikhism in Years 3 and 5 or Judaism in Years 4 and 6). The long-term plan for RE indicates the religion and learning focus for each unit of work. (*Appendix 1*)

The Subject Manager has revised all RE medium-term plans since January 2000 in accordance with the LEA agreed syllabus. These plans aim to build on pupils own experiences and understanding in a progressive way. The reference to programmes of study in the medium term plans reflect a balance of content from both Attainment Targets of *Vision and Insight*, as well as including aspects of the Complementary Study Units (CSU).

Teaching and learning can be enhanced in RE through the appropriate use of visitors. (*Appendix 3*) The school has established good links with Bitterne Parish Church and representatives of the church have been invited into school to contribute towards some aspects of the Christianity units of work.

A wide range of teaching strategies can be used to deliver the RE lesson which include:

- Visits to places of worship and visits from members of different faith communities;
- Exploring and making religious artefacts;
- Listening to religious stories on tape or video;
- Reflection on religious symbols, sounds and the use of silence;
- Using CD-ROMs, RE Wequests (see the school's website) and other IT packages to study particular aspects of religion;
- Role play, craft, art and dance to enhance learning opportunities.

Staff Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher is responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the 1996 Education Act and the locally agreed syllabus are adhered to.

The Deputy Headteacher/Subject Manager is responsible for:

- Taking the lead in policy development;
- Ensuring progression and continuity across the key stage through the development of long and medium term plans
- Supporting colleagues in the implementation of the short term planning and providing suitable resources for activities within each unit of work;
- Monitoring progress and standards within the subject;
- Purchasing suitable resources and artefacts, including IT-based resources for the subject;
- Keeping up-to-date with developments in RE and disseminating information to colleagues as appropriate

Bibliography

The following documentation has been used when revising this policy and writing guidelines:

- Agreed LEA syllabus: *Vision and Insight* (April 1998)
- *RE Primary News* Spring 2000 (focus on School Policy)
- Policy for RE (Copnor Infant School, *RE News*, Spring 2000)

RE Guidelines

Responsibilities of the RE Subject Manager

Reference to the responsibilities of the RE Subject Manager should be made to the job description held in the staff handbook.

Planning

Long-term planning

The long term plan for RE is focussed on what to teach in this subject. In accordance with the Assessment Policy Guidelines, the long term plan for RE comprises an overview of the RE unit for each half term or term, detailing the religions and main focus (*Appendix 1*). In addition, the tracking of Programmes of Study across the Key Stage forms part of the long term plan for the subject (*Appendix 2*)

Medium-term planning

The medium term planning details when particular units of work will be undertaken. Medium term planning in RE follows an agreed format for this subject, in accordance with Assessment Policy guidelines; a copy of the planning and resources is held in year group folders.

The Subject Manager has considered the use of QCA units of work for RE and reference has been made in the planning where these units have been used.

Attitudes

Attitudes such as respect, open-mindedness and tolerance will be promoted throughout all areas of school life and are not confined to RE lessons. However, RE can act as a focal point for the development of particular attitudes, fundamental to understanding different religions and the spiritual dimension to life.

These attitudes have been included in the LEA agreed syllabus (p17) and include:

- **Curiosity:** a desire to search for meaning, enquiring into religion and a wish to seek for truth and explore ultimate questions;
- **Open-mindedness:** listening to others' views; having an open mind when investigating religion and avoiding prejudice in discussion;
- **Self-understanding:** developing a mature sense of self-worth, personal value and personal relevance of religious and spiritual questions;
- **Respect:** recognising the human rights of people to hold and practise their beliefs; respecting those with different opinions from one's own and appreciating similarities and differences;
- **Wonder and appreciation:** holding a sense of curiosity and wonder; appreciating the power, value and significance which religion has for people and recognising the importance of religious commitment in people's lives.

The needs of the Able Child and children with Special Educational Needs

Able Children

The needs of the able child will be met through careful differentiation and questioning by the teacher. Where appropriate, separate extension activities will be set in order for the pupil to achieve his/her full potential in the subject.

Children with Special Educational Needs

The LEA agreed syllabus recognises that the Programmes of Study and end of Key Stage level descriptions for a particular Key Stage may not reflect realistic expectations for some pupils with special educational needs.

Equal opportunities

RE is provided for all pupils, regardless of religions, race, gender, ethnicity, age or ability. Further details can be found in the school's policy for Equal Opportunities.

Cross-curricular links

There are useful links between RE and other subjects in the curriculum. These include links with Literacy, Geography, History, ICT, PSHE, Music and Art. Links between RE and other subjects can be found within the medium term planning in the 'points to note' section.

Adopted Date

Review Date