

**Sparsholt C of E Primary School**

**Religious Education Policy  
2020-2022**



## **Rationale:**

At Sparsholt C of E Primary School, we believe that Religious Education should be taught within an enriched and creative curriculum. This is underpinned by our core Christian values of Courage, Compassion and Creativity.

We are a Voluntary Controlled Primary School with a Christian foundation and, as such, Christianity is at the forefront of our religious education. The 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all pupils of compulsory school age. While the statutory requirement for RE does not extend to children under compulsory school age, it can form a valuable part of the educational experience of children in the EYFS. It can contribute particularly to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy, knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development.

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions in life. We want children to reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We believe that the starting point for Religious Education (RE) is the child's own developing awareness of their own spirituality, moral standards and codes of behaviour, their experiences and their attempts to make sense of them. Through Religious Education, we seek to help children understand the world of faith, spirituality and religion, encouraging them to reflect in as great a depth as they are able, on the experiences that life brings their way.

At Sparsholt Church of England Primary School, we intend that RE will:

- Adopt an enquiry- based approach in line with the Hampshire agreed syllabus "Living Difference III", beginning with the child's own life experience before moving into learning about and from religion.
- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- Not attempt to convert pupils to a particular faith, but give them time and space to discuss religious, spiritual and /or philosophical ideas.
- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses, developing an increasing openness to the plurality of ways it is possible to be religious.
- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.

- Teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and help to challenge prejudice. As a school, within our RE programme, we will teach and give children a deeper understanding of Judaism in KS1 and Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism at Key Stage 2 alongside Christianity.
- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Nurture spiritual development.
- Provide an opportunity for children to engage with religious texts and theological ideas.

### **Teaching and Learning**

Sparsholt Church of England Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled School, therefore we deliver RE in accordance with the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus 'Living Difference III'. We use the 'Understanding Christianity' resource, alongside the 'Big Story of Christianity' (Frieze) to enrich our exploration of theological concepts and Christianity in particular. We base our teaching and learning style on the principle that outstanding teaching in RE allows children to reflect on both what the religious concepts mean to them and also what they could mean to others. In RE lessons at Sparsholt Church of England Primary School, children experience a wide range of challenging, enjoyable and stimulating activities that are accessible to all. We have regular visitors, trips and artefacts to enrich learning. Through RE, the children explore the meaning, purpose and value of life, through gaining knowledge and understanding of key concepts which relate to their own lives, the beliefs and practices of Christianity and other major religious traditions or worldviews to help them form informed and respectful views of the World that they can apply to their own experiences. Additionally, we support children's Social, Spiritual, Moral and Cultural development through participation and co-operation with others, for example, meeting people who are believers and encounter the practices and customs, art, music and literature that underlie what they do.

### **How is RE organised in this school?**

Living Difference and Understanding Christianity bring together learning about and from religion, Questioning, and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Each enquiry has a five step process which starts from the children's own life experiences using these as a bridge into the investigation of the religion being studied. We help children to debate 'big questions' that are not easily answerable. Learning is assessed and children have opportunities to express their own thoughts and

beliefs and empathise with believers of that religion or belief position. As a Church of England school, at least 50% of our teaching focus is based on Christianity.

### **The religions taught are:**

Reception and Key Stage 1 – Christianity, Judaism

Key Stage 2 – Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Buddhism

### **Differentiation/SEN**

Living Difference III and Understanding Christianity are written as a universal core curriculum provision for all children. Inclusivity is part of its philosophy. Teachers will tailor each enquiry to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential.

### **Assessment**

Each enquiry has built-in assessment so that teachers can ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. This task is the formal opportunity for teacher assessment of the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This evidence is used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in planning for deeper learning and reflection.

### **Monitoring**

The RE leader monitors delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children and scrutiny of their written work to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision.

Evaluation of the programme's effectiveness is conducted on the basis of:

- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes
- Staff meetings to review and share experience
- Monitoring of assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.

### **External contributors**

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. RE plays an important part in teaching our school Christian values. We believe that a person's core values are strongly held beliefs about themselves and the world around them that help to shape their lives.

When posing questions and debating religious ideas, we encourage the children to apply their thinking to our school core Christian Values of Courage, Compassion and Creativity.

External contributors from the community, e.g. our local clergy – Revd Jax (Rector), local members/ speakers from other religions etc. make a valuable contribution to the RE programme, as do visits to places of worship including the Medina Mosque in Southampton, and Winchester Cathedral. Their input is carefully planned and monitored so as to fit into and complement the programme. Teachers are always present during these sessions and remain responsible for the effective delivery of the RE programme.

### **The Learning Environment**

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for each other's views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care.

### **Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues Involving parents and carers**

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should never feel obliged to discuss their own beliefs unless they feel comfortable doing so and can ensure that this will not influence or restrict the children's own expression. Within our teachings, it is also important to uphold the Christian ethos of the school whilst still respecting the beliefs and views of others.

The school believes that it is important to have the support of parents, carers and the wider community for the RE programme. Parents and carers will be given the opportunity to find out about and discuss RE through:

- Displays
- Children's work
- The School Publication- The Worship Times

## Withdrawal from RE lessons

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of RE. Those parents wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher and/or RE Leader who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents will be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and will be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school will also review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

## Links to other policies and curriculum areas

We recognise the clear link between RE and the following policies and staff are aware of the need to refer to these policies when appropriate.

- Collective Worship policy.
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equality Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- Safeguarding Policy

## Training and support for staff

All staff benefit from training in order to enhance their RE delivery skills. Opportunities are provided for staff to identify individual training needs on a yearly basis and relevant support is provided. In addition to this, support for teaching and understanding RE issues is incorporated in our whole staff training programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies. We access the use of the diocesan planning and development team.

## Policy Review

This policy is reviewed every 2 years or sooner should there be changed to the curriculum.

Review frequency by the Head teacher	2 yearly
Last approval date	Dec 2020
Next approval date	Dec 2022
Is this policy statutory or non-statutory?	Non-Statutory
Signature of Head teacher	
Signature of Chair of approving body (FBG)	N/A