

St Levan Primary School

where all children SHINE-for life

RE Policy - September 2016

Introduction

St Levan is committed to providing a rich and varied curriculum for children to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding about religions and beliefs. The children of St Levan are receptive to developments in and influences from a wider world, through family and personal contacts, the media, from their education and links with and support for children in other parts of the world (UNICEF). St Levan aims to offer a wide-ranging education, to prepare our children for life not only in their own community but also in a wider world. Religious Education is taught, as in other curriculum areas, by starting with the children's own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community and in the wider national and international community.

Aims:

Through RE we aim to develop children's knowledge and understanding of world religions, religious traditions and other world views, including secular perspectives to prepare our children for living respectfully in a multi-cultural society. Our work on RE enables our pupils to relate well to others, to have understanding of themselves, to make a positive contribution in school, and to be increasingly active citizens. At St Levan and through the teaching of RE, we are determined to give our children a safe space to develop and voice their opinions and opportunities for reflecting, considering, analyzing, questioning, evaluating and communicating their own thoughts respectfully.

This policy is closely linked to supporting the development of 'Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social' development; 'PSHE'; understanding 'British Values' and ensuring 'PREVENT' ideals are supported to ensure all children are kept safe.

Legal Requirements

RE is a part of the basic curriculum of the school, as set out in 2002 Education Act and the School Standards Framework Act 1998, and must be taught to all pupils from Foundation Stage through to Year 6, unless they have been withdrawn from it by their parents. The Cornwall Agreed Syllabus 2014 is the legal document to which our RE plans must adhere. It must reflect the fact that Christianity is the main religious tradition in Great Britain, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Children and young people also *need to be equipped to handle increasingly complex and important questions about meaning and identity and how we can live together in a multi-cultural, multi-faith and secular society.*

Equal Opportunities

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background, special need or disability. RE at St Levan aims to develop a balanced view of the multi-cultural society which we live in and to respectfully acknowledge the faith, non-faith or cultural background of every person.

Provision for Withdrawal from RE

Two provisions of law need to be noted:

- Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from Religious Education in accordance with the Education Act 1944, sections 25(4) and 30, which was re-enacted in 1988. Reasons for withdrawal do not have to be given and the school must enable parents to exercise this legal entitlement. Parents are asked to contact the Headteacher if they wish to withdraw their child. It is hoped that, in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached and arrangements made for alternative Religious Education or other supervised learning. Please see Appendix A 'Withdrawal from RE'.
- Teachers may withdraw from Religious Education. Their classes, however, are legally entitled to Religious Education. The Headteacher is responsible for alternative provision for pupils. Staff are not required to give reasons for withdrawal. Currently no member of staff exercises this right.

Why do we teach RE?

RE is an important part of the school curriculum and is taught to meet the child's stage of development and experience. It is also vital that pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. Therefore, self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness and appreciation and wonder are developed at each stage. Religious Education is an academic discipline through which the fundamental concepts of the great religions can be explored in a way that means that they may be accepted or rejected freely and intelligently. The Cornwall Agreed Syllabus of study is designed to enable our pupils to develop:

- ❖ A sense of identity and belonging.
- ❖ Respect for and sensitivity to others in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.
- ❖ The ability to ask questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs in God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- ❖ Knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that provoke questions.
- ❖ Personal reflection and spiritual development.
- ❖ An understanding of how we can all learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions whilst exploring our own beliefs and questions of

meaning.

The two attainment targets '**Learning about Religion**' and '**Learning from Religion**' provide the aims and direction for teaching and learning in RE. The CCC Agreed Syllabus can also be found online:

<https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/media/9227047/Agreed-syllabus-2014.pdf>

We encourage the following skills and attitudes to be developed:

SKILLS FOCUS:

Reflection /Empathy /Communication /Analysis and evaluation /Reasoning /Enquiry

ATTITUDES FOCUS:

Respect /Open-mindedness /Self-esteem /Sensitivity /Critical awareness
/Appreciation and wonder

In this context RE benefits all children by:

- Developing their knowledge and understanding of world religions, religious traditions and other world views, including secular perspectives
- Offering opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development
- Enhancing children's awareness of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures
- Encouraging children to develop their sense of identity and belonging
- Enabling children to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens of the global community
- Developing the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues
- Enabling children to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own
- Offering opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 1. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experience, and of how religious teachings can relate to them
 2. responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of different religions, and to their own understanding and experience
 3. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their learning

What do we teach during RE?

We build children's subject knowledge of all principal religions. Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Buddhism are the religions studied, although we are responsive to our children, local community and a secular world view.

This gives our children as broad a view of the world as possible. R.E also provides

opportunities for children to reflect on their own views and opinions and to consider those of others. In this way it is closely linked to a child's general social and emotional development.

Key Stage One – Christianity and aspects of either Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism or Judaism; plus a religion specific to the class (if necessary), as well as non-religious worldviews as appropriate.

Key Stage Two – Christianity and aspects of either Islam, Judaism, Hinduism and Buddhism; plus the option of Sikhism or a religion specific to the class, as well as non-religious worldviews as appropriate.

The Foundation Stage and KS1 form the basis of children's future understanding and therefore should begin with children's own experiences and feelings, particularly around special times, people, places and objects/symbols. Many opportunities should be given for thinking, talking, listening and responding to others respectfully. Much emphasis should be placed on valuing and caring for other people in our local community and also for children to relate their understanding to a wider/global community.

In KS2, similar opportunities should be offered and children should be encouraged to openly discuss their understanding, opinions and attitudes about religion and encouraged to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.

Staff may have their own religious beliefs/faith and may show this through the wearing of religious or spiritual symbols. However, the teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own. Teachers must be sensitive about the language that they use, for instance swapping, 'I go to church on Sundays' to, 'Christians go to church on Sundays'.

Our teaching of RE allows children to learn about world religious traditions and reflect on what the ideas and concepts mean to them. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum. We build on children's own experiences and we celebrate traditions from all our represented and non-represented faiths.

How do we teach RE?

The Cornwall Syllabus encourages teachers to adopt a wide range of teaching approaches and RE pedagogies to the learning and teaching of RE. At St Levan Primary school, staff will have their own preferences and styles of teaching and they will develop an approach that suits the needs and requirements of their children. Children will have the opportunity to respond to material (including DVDs and artefacts) in a variety of ways: these include story, poems, art work, design and technology, drama, discussion and music. Due to the rural location of St Levan, we organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of religious groups to come into school. Visitors to school should also be encouraged to give

children the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about another person's experiences of living/ celebrating through different faiths. All visitors will be met by a member of staff and the content discussed prior to contact with the children.

Cross curricular Links

RE contributes significantly to other areas of the curriculum. It contributes to the teaching of English by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. In addition, some of the texts selected for use in Literacy may have religious themes or content. RE is often taught through Art or DT and may also be linked to other subjects such as Music.

There are strong links between RE and PSHE. In RE, children are taught about the values and moral beliefs which underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. British Values are emphasized when there are natural links.

Assessment

Like all other subjects, teachers will assess pupils' work in RE. Attention is given to both Learning about Religion (AT1) and Learning from Religion (AT2). Assessment of RE is done in accordance with the age related expectations in the National Curriculum. Pupils at KS2 will be assessed relative to attainment and effort at the end of the year and the assessment results recorded to inform reporting to parents. In order to do this effectively staff will use the learning indicators in the programmes of study.

Examples of work produced, videos, photographic experiences should also be kept as an evidence base for making evaluations about the teaching of RE and the successful levels of learning that have been achieved. This should be straightforward and manageable.

As the home may be the greatest source of a child's knowledge and understanding of RE, it is appropriate to set home-learning tasks related to developing and sharing their understanding.

Health, Safety and Well-Being

Visits to places of worship and other RE related venues are encouraged as an important part of developing a child's understanding of the role religion plays in communities.

Staff will ensure that the context of the learning that will take place during the visit will not undermine a child's own faith or challenge their belief and will only be presenting a knowledge base about a faith.

Permission will be sought from parents/carers for each child to attend the visit. We acknowledge the sensitivity that some families may have with regard to their child visiting another place of worship; we assure parents through providing detailed information and encourage all children to participate.

Time-Tabling for RE

A minimum of 5% of curriculum time is recommended as an aggregate over each Key Stage in order for RE expectations to be met.

At St Levan Primary School our recommended time allocation for KS1 is 36 hours and 45 hours for Key Stage 2 per year.

The children in the Foundation Stage are taught RE through topic work and the interests of the group.

In KS1 and KS2 RE may be taught either discreetly or as part of a cross-curricular approach e.g. through PSHE, history, geography, art or as part of a focus day or period of time e.g. Christmas and Easter.

Collective Worship is separate to the teaching of RE, though strands of Collective Worship may be used to enhance the RE curriculum.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social Development

These are areas of a child's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. At St Levan Primary School, Religious Education plays a part in:

- Developing an awareness of a 'spiritual' dimension to life (personal beliefs, the search for meaning and purpose, the sense of awe and wonder) and in offering opportunities to discuss this area in a structured way (spiritual).
- Providing a forum for pupils to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by (moral).
- Encouraging interest in and an understanding of others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of 'community' (social).
- Evaluating the influence of Christianity on daily life in Britain, on the pattern of the year, on public occasions, festivals and ceremonies, architecture, laws, art, music, drama and literature and in considering other cultural and religious expressions in British society, evaluating the riches that diversity offers (cultural).

Religious Education and its Relationship to Collective Worship

In law, Religious Education and Collective Worship are distinct. Religious Education is part of the school curriculum; it has to be delivered appropriately for pupils of different ages and abilities. It cannot be delivered during Collective Worship. However, during Collective Worship at St Levan, stories from the Bible as well as stories from other traditions are told and enjoyed, festival days and celebrations are often mentioned, and we enjoy assemblies led by members of religious communities. These complement and bring depth to our Religious Education programme. A separate policy is available for Collective Worship.

Monitoring and review

The Headteacher is responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and for seeking the views of staff, children and parents. The Headteacher will report to the governing body on the effectiveness of this policy.

This policy was approved by the full governing body in September 2016. It is due for review by September 2019.

Appendix A: Withdrawal from RE

Rationale :

The governors recognise parental rights to withdraw their children from R.E. lessons in accordance with the 1988 Education Reform Act.

Aims :

There are several steps that need to be taken to make the process safe, efficient and incorporated into the smooth running of the school.

Guidelines :

If parents wish to withdraw their child/children from RE lessons they need to:

- Make contact with the school in person or by letter.
- Establish with the Headteacher their concerns and whether they intend partial or total withdrawal for their child/children.
- Establish with the Headteacher the practical implication of withdrawal.

It is not envisaged that establishing the reason and practicalities be either lengthy or a means to change parents minds, but to seek clarity and understanding.

Parents will be asked to provide suitable alternative work of a religious nature for their children for the R.E. period. It will not be the responsibility of the teacher either to set or mark alternative work.

When possible, children will be allocated to different classes in order to ensure suitable supervision. These arrangement may need to change from week to week.

Conclusion :

By following these guidelines, the withdrawal of children from R.E. will be clear, efficient and safe for the children.

Appendix B: Sample letter responding to a request to withdraw a child from RE

Dear [parent/carer],

We respect your right to withdraw your son/daughter from religious education (RE) lessons and/or collective worship, under section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998.

Please note that this right allows you to withdraw your child from RE lessons and acts of collective worship, but does not apply to other areas of the curriculum. As a result, please be aware that we are not required to excuse your child when questions or issues related to religion arise in other subject areas, such as history or art.

Please be aware that if a pupil is withdrawn from RE, the school has a duty to supervise him/her but is not required to provide additional teaching, and the child will usually remain on school premises.

However, if you would like alternative arrangements to be made for your child to partake in RE of the kind you wish him/her to receive, please let us know. We may be able to provide this RE here in school or, if it is convenient, we may be able to send your son/daughter to another school where suitable RE is provided.

Alternatively, if the local authority agrees, you may be able to make outside arrangements for your child to access the kind of RE that you want. Under these circumstances, we would allow him/her to be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to attend this external RE.

I would be grateful if you could review your decision in the final four weeks of this school year, and then let me know whether you will continue to withdraw your son/daughter during the next academic year.

Yours sincerely,

[Headteacher]