



# Fenstanton and Hilton Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

### September 2017

#### **Our School Vision**

Children only have one childhood. Being part of a community of children is unique within life's experience. In this school we value every child and strive to enrich the whole person.

We believe that learning should be vivid and real: a joy in itself. We nurture adaptable and flexible learners who are passionate about learning and have the skills to embrace every challenge and opportunity with confidence.

## **1 Aims and Objectives**

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Fenstanton and Hilton primary school we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address fundamental questions of life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

### **We aim to enable pupils:**

- to acquire knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principle religions represented in Great Britain (AT1-Learning about Religion and Belief);
- to develop the ability to explore, to reflect on and to respond to human experience, drawing on their study of religion (AT2-Learning from Religion and Belief).
- The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children to:
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- 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 make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity in society.

## **2 The Legal Position of Religious Education**

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on The Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus 2013, and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that 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.

## **3 Teaching and Learning Style**

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 to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Hannukah 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. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations on a computer and share these in assemblies.

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

We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

setting 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);

providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child.

## **4 Curriculum Planning in Religious Education**

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with The Agreed Syllabus 2013. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term.

The teacher/HLTA taking the class writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes.

## **5 The Early Years Foundation Stage**

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In reception classes, the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus 2013 is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

## **6 Contribution of RE to the Teaching in other Curriculum Areas**

### **6.1 English**

Religious education 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, thus 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 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)**

Through our religious education 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. 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.

## **6.3 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Through religious education in our school 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 so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

## **6.4 Computing**

Computing enhances religious education, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using the Internet. They also use computing to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Children may use *PowerPoint* to help them make presentations on various topics, such as sacred symbols in different world religions. Children may take photographs of the class acting out a Bible story. They can then make a class storybook of it, by adding in speech bubbles and a narrative text. A digital video camera can record a visit to a place of worship, and pupils can also find the various artefacts in places of worship by doing virtual tours on church/temple websites.

## **7 RE and Inclusion**

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to a church, for example, that involves a journey) we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

## **8 Assessment for Learning**

The principles of Assessment for Learning are central to effective teaching and learning in RE. We build in occasional summative assessment opportunities to enable teachers to make judgements of

pupils' attainment against the Level Descriptors (see The Agreed Syllabus 2013). We assess knowledge, understanding and skills and make formal assessments of pupils as 'achieving', 'working towards' or 'working above'.

## **10 Monitoring, Evaluation and Review of this Policy**

The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in RE is the responsibility of the subject leader in line with the school's leadership work plan. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in their teaching, being informed about current developments in RE, and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject in the school. The subject leader reviews and evaluates the action plan and budget annually.

This policy will be reviewed 3 yearly by the Standards Committee and any amendments will be minuted and should be approved by staff, school council and the full governing body. The governing body will consider if governor visits are contributing to the information that the governing body has about progress towards meeting priorities and targets identified in the School Development Plan.