Stepney Greencoat

Church of England Primary School

Learning Together for Life

Jesus said, "Love one another as I have loved you" John 15:12

Religious Education Policy

Religious Education Policy for Voluntary Aided Primary Schools

"Religious Education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness." (John 10:10).

It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.

(Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)

Stepney Greencoat Vision Statement
As a Church of England School we seek to provide a Christian education for the children of the parishes of St Anne's and St Dunstan's and for those who elect to come to our school. Children are presented with the teachings of the Christian faith as the revelation of God's truth and are encouraged to grow in that faith, respecting the beliefs and cultures of others.

Education is seen as being concerned with excellence in learning and with the spiritual and social growth of children, developing the individual potential of each child to the fullest.

School context and expectations

We have high expectations of all our pupils and deliver a curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling children to become religiously literate within an inclusive and safe space that promotes critical thinking and celebrates and respects difference.

1. Introduction

This policy has been adapted from LDBS to ensure that it reflects our school's theologically rooted Christian vision and the collective worship practice that happens within our school.

It is intended to assist staff and pupils in developing a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and the school's theologically rooted vision and associated Christian values.

2. What is RE?

RE is a core academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local,

national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools A Statement of Entitlement, the Aims and Objectives of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures, and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual, and philosophical ways of living, believing, and thinking.

3. Curriculum balance and time

Reflecting the school's trust deed or academy articles of association and funding agreement, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of RE curriculum time.

Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. At Stepney Greencoat, 10% of curriculum time is allotted to the teaching of RE.

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

4. Legal requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over). (DfE Circular 1/94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28)

The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in Key Stage One is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in Reception class, but not those in Nursery. However, at Stepney Greencoat, we have made the decision to include Nursery in teaching discreet RE lessons using the LDBS curriculum.

The school must grant without question any request from a parent to withdraw their child. Parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to withdraw their child. However, in view of the distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. This is supported by ensuring that prospective families are fully informed as to what pupils learn and how pupils learn in RE.

The school continues to be responsible for the supervision of any child withdrawn by their parent(s) from RE, unless the child is lawfully receiving religious education elsewhere. If this is the case, the governing body must be satisfied that this will not interfere with the child's attendance at school. If a pupil is withdrawn from RE, parents will have the opportunity to revisit and reconsider this decision. The school will keep a record of all those withdrawn and for how many sessions.

5. How we teach RE

RE at Stepney Greencoat is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum and the school theologically rooted vision. As within all subjects, teachers plan and deliver lessons that are inclusive, engaging, and evidence-informed.

To meet the RE objectives, we follow the LDBS schemes of work.

6. The intent of the LDBS syllabus

To enable all children to become religiously literate.

To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness vision for Education (Church of England)

To offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:

i. Ability to be critical thinkers
ii. Ability to engage critically with texts
iii. Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions
iv. Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews
v. Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/ or philosophical convictions
vi. Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content

- Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences
- Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:

- The Christian vision of the school
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools Statement of Entitlement
- The Church of England's vision for Education every person deserves to live a 'life in all its fullness.'

7. Implementation of the LDBS syllabus:

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

Enquire: Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, Philosophy or Human/ Social Science.

Investigate/ Explore: What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go?
This 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to 'deepen' learning:

- Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
- Using challenging and controversial questions
- Extended pieces of writing
- Discussion which continually asks 'Have we gone deep enough yet?'
- Children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video etc.)
- Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues

Evaluate/ Communicate: What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/ practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

Reflect on/ Express: What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have

been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

8. Early Years Foundation Stage & KS1-2

EYFS
We follow the LDBS schemes of work for Nursery and Reception and Nursery. Lessons focus on topics such as 'celebrations' and 'creation'. Children become familiar with a wide range of Bible stories through drama, songs, discussion, creative activities and play.

Religious Education in Key Stage One
By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level. Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. Children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life. They will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own. Some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two
In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths. By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level. That they will be able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary. That they will have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life. We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two, to be able to express and justify their own views with confidence. We aim for them to be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts. We want our children to be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

9. Access to the curriculum

We recognise, through our adaptive planning system, that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts and knowledge and to flourish.

All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

10. Impact of the LDBS syllabus

- Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews (Religious literacy)
- Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points as a result of a rich and engaging RE curriculum
- Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions
- Children will be able to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices
- Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness

11. Environment and Resources

Religious education is funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, artefacts and online resources. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources are stored, easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks are available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which Religious Education can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking. We plan and organise the environment, with a range of tasks and activities that are adapted accordingly, to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of development and learning need. We promote both independent and collaborative working. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum. We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts. We value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors. We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with our parish and work collaboratively with the church and wider community.

12. Planning, assessment, recording, monitoring and evaluation

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is two thirds Christian and one third other major world faiths.

Before every unit, we assess children's knowledge to inform our planning, and then conduct another assessment at the end of the unit.

13. Standards and the quality of teaching and learning are monitored and evaluated in the following way:

- Formal and informal lesson observations
- Book look
- RE moderation meetings with other schools

14. Continued professional development:

The school leaders ensure all staff receive regular high-quality CPD in RE. This can be done in form of INSET, staff meetings or specific, targeted training for individual members of staff.

15. Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents/carers is essential to help children flourish. We welcome parents/carers to share their progress in RE and curriculum context as well as invite them in to share (after prior discussion on contents) their religious journey.

16. Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- To keep up to date with developments in the area of Religious Education through reading, attending LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools.
- To monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching and assessment of Religious Education across the school in collaboration with the leadership team.
- To support staff in the teaching of Religious Education across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation.
- To lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards.
- To plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective Religious Education teaching.
- To work closely with the senior leadership team to identify CPD needs of individuals, teams and the whole school.
- To regularly review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

Evaluation/Review

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every two years by the Governing Body.

Date of validation: _____

Signed: _____
Chair of Governors

Date of review: _____

Signed: _____
Chair of Governors