



Bluecoat C of E Primary School, Great Torrington



Religious Education Policy (January 2016 - Draft)



RATIONALE

Great Torrington Bluecoat C of E Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School. We aim to provide Religious Education in accordance with the provision of the Trust Deed of the school. We support all our children to develop spiritual understanding and wellbeing. We help them to understand what it means to be a person of faith and to accept and value those whose commitments, values and ways of life that are different from their own. As a Church of England School, our provision is based within the context of a distinctly Christian ethos.

AIMS

Religious Education in our school aims to help children investigate and reflect on fundamental questions about our world. We seek to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world faiths. Pupils reflect on what it means to have a faith and begin to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We seek to help them learn from religions as well as about religions.

OBJECTIVES

To help children:

- 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;
- develop global awareness, have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity of our society.

GUIDELINES

Our school curriculum for RE meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that RE 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 head teacher. 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 Devon's Agreed Syllabus and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.

Learning about Religion

- a) Religious belief and teaching
- b) Religious practice
- c) Religious language and expression

Learning from Religion

- a) Identity and experience
- b) Questions of meaning
- c) Values and Commitment

Teaching and learning

- As Bluecoat School is a C of E Controlled School at least two thirds of the provision for RE across the school is dedicated to the study of Christianity.
- A minimum of 5% of curriculum time is dedicated to the study of religious education. This is richly augmented by a focus on RE as part of our integrated topic work.
- Provision for RE is intricately linked to our four Key Drivers. E.g. through use of the Creative Arts to portray religious expression and understanding the importance of faith in the Real World.
- Pupils are provided with as much first-hand experience of the principal religions as possible and artefacts and authentic resources are used wherever possible.
- Where religious artefacts are used, they are treated with the respect they would be given if they were being used in their actual setting for worship.
- When teaching RE, the school does not seek commitment by the pupils to a particular religion. Teachers should not assume that pupils are members of any faith community. They avoid phrases such as “When you go to church...” and use statements such as “When Christians/Jews go to church/synagogue...” The integrity of pupils is respected and they are never asked or expected to believe the claims of a specific religion.
- Sacred literature is treated with respect. For example, biblical material is presented as the sacred text of the believing community to whom it is the Word of God. Biblical stories are used to identify what they teach believers about God and his relationships with people.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore the themes they perceive in the story.
- The experiences and views that pupils bring from home and faith communities are always valued.
- Pupils have the opportunity to develop oral skills, communicate their ideas and develop their reading and writing skills, together with the acquisition of appropriate religious language and vocabulary
- Pupils are encouraged to consider and acknowledge the basis of their own beliefs, values and assumptions and develop respect and tolerance for the beliefs and cultures of others. They are encouraged to consider the impact of religious beliefs and value systems on lives of different children, women and men
- Pupils reflect on their feelings, perceptions and impressions, in the classroom and elsewhere, through stillness and silence, through discussion, and through recording personal reflections in a variety of creative ways. They are able to experience situations which will encourage empathy, confidence and self-esteem and develop imagination and curiosity.

- Pupils visit the local places of worship whenever possible and invite visitors into school. In this way, pupils have first-hand experiences of religious traditions.
- Pupils take ownership of their learning. Assessment and recording systems are robust, reflecting our focus on effective feedback and taking place in line with our teaching and learning policy

LINKS TO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Religious education makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The scheme of work identifies opportunities for pupils to explore their own feelings and beliefs, to study the beliefs and values of others, to empathise with others, to ask puzzling questions and explore the responses from the faith communities.

Personal, social and health education

There are links with PSHE when religious education explores self-awareness, inner feelings and emotions, and personal relationships. Those areas developing a respect for the beliefs and values of others also make a major contribution. The use of appropriate teaching and learning styles contributes to this. Group work provides opportunities for collaboration. Discussions are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Religious education differs from PSHE in that it explicitly explores how the principal religions address the issues explored.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES AND MEETING INDIVIDUAL NEEDS

All the RE in the school will ensure an understanding of the following principles within the context of a Christian ethos:

- People have different lifestyles, beliefs and values but share a common humanity
- All people have a right to their own beliefs
- Respect should be shown to those of faith and those of no faith
- The diversity of roles of both men and women in religion should be explored
- No one should be discriminated against because of code of dress, diet or religious observance
- A global perspective is necessary as the experiences of a faith community in Britain may be different from those of the same faith elsewhere
- Faith and culture are not one and the same and should be explored as separate concepts
- Within any faith community there are different traditions, customs and practices
- Stereotypes should be challenged and material explored for bias
- Language used is not sexist or racist
- Good practice in RE will challenge discrimination and practice

INCLUSION

At Bluecoat School we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Parents will be informed of the interconnected nature of the curriculum at Bluecoat School and advised that elements of RE provision are an intricate part of our provision across subject areas. Through our RE teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive 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. For further details see relevant policies.