



‘Soar on wings like eagles,
Run and not grow weary,
Walk and not be faint’ Isaiah 40:31

Religious Education Policy

Coombe Bissett Primary School is a Church of England Aided School within the Diocese of Salisbury.

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but 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 registered pupils’.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes:

“a major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument, and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world”. (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013).

According to the 2011 Statement of Entitlement to RE in C of E schools the aims of Religious Education in church schools are:

- To enable pupils to encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today
- To enable pupils to learn about the other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents
- To develop understanding of religious faith as the search for and expression of truth
- To contribute to the development of pupils’ own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs

Also in the government Guidance on promoting British Values (2014):

- To teach children the British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

By its effective teaching of Religious Education (RE), the school aims to teach pupils to understand the nature, meaning and importance of Christianity and the other major world religions. Along with this, within the whole curriculum, there will be more opportunity to explore the meaning and purpose of life, and raise awareness of those aspects of human experience, which give rise to fundamental questions about beliefs and values. Religious Education **does not** seek to urge religious beliefs on pupils nor compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another.

In our Religious Education teaching we will reflect the aims of the School and in all of our work we will encourage children to develop attitudes which reflect the Christian faith and also dispel any racial or religious prejudice. However RE alone cannot achieve these aims; they are part of a whole school ethos.

1 Key Principles

To ensure high quality RE we provide a balance of three disciplines:

- Theology (Believing – looking at where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other);
- Philosophy (Thinking – finding out how and whether things make sense);
- Human/Social Sciences (Living – exploring the diverse ways in which people practise their beliefs, the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies).

Each discipline supports the development of religious literacy – helping children hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.

2 Aims

Religious Education has two core aims:

- To help pupils come to a knowledge and understanding of religion, its beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life, and ways of expressing meaning. Through enquiry into Christianity and other principal world Religions and Beliefs, focusing on the influence of beliefs on people's lives and actions. Also developing knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.
- To contribute to pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Through enabling pupils to explore deeper questions of meaning and purpose in life. By providing a clear focus for pupils to reflect upon and respond to their own beliefs and experiences in light of their learning about religion.

3 Teaching and learning style

Through the teaching of Religious Education children develop their ability to investigate, express, interpret, reflect, empathise, apply, discern, analyse, synthesise and evaluate. It also encourages the development of Self-awareness, Respect for all, Open-mindedness, Appreciation and Wonder and Critical Awareness.

We develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, reflection and attitudes of the children through the locally agreed Wiltshire syllabus.

Religious Education is an important part of the whole education of the child and threads throughout the curriculum, e.g. Class Circle Time is used to explore moral issues such as an understanding of right and wrong.

Religious Education is taught to all pupils unless any parent exercises their right for their child to be withdrawn. In this case arrangements will need to be made with the Head Teacher.

Religious Education is taught through a mixture of whole-class teaching and individual/group activities. Within lessons, we give children the opportunity both to work on their own and to collaborate with others, listening to other children's ideas and treating these with respect.

Religious Education is also taught through mixed-year group workshops as part of whole school projects. This provides younger children with the opportunity to learn from and with older children. It also provides older children with the opportunity to model good quality learning and consolidate their understanding through supporting younger children.

In all classes there are children of differing ability. We recognise this fact and provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies:

- setting common tasks that are open-ended and can have a variety of results;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty where it may not be necessary that all children complete all tasks;
- grouping children by ability and setting different tasks for each group;
- providing a range of challenges through the provision of different resources;
- using additional adults to support the work of individual children or small groups.

A variety of learning methods will be used for Religious Education but, for the most part, there will be active involvement by the pupils, as this gives a sense of achievement and increased learning potential.

Active learning might involve role-play, drama, craft, cooking, dance, art, research, model-making, discussion of a video, debate, brainstorming, using artefacts, listening to people of faith, and visiting local places of worship. Obviously, there are certain precautions and codes of behaviour for the use of some of these methods e.g. using artefacts. Sacred objects are handled respectfully by pupils and staff, observing protocols as appropriate.

4 Teaching and Learning

We follow the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus.

Teaching and Learning about Christianity

Christianity is the major religion which is studied in our school. At least two thirds of our RE teaching will be about Christianity. Understanding Christianity as a living religion is the foundation of pupils' Religious Education in schools. It is important that this draws on the richness and diversity of Christian experience in the breadth of its Anglican and other denominational forms, and in the variety of worldwide forms. The encounter must be an open one which stems from and instils respect for different views and interpretations and in which real dialogue and education takes place. Pupils will be enabled to deepen their understanding of God as encountered and taught by Christians.

Teaching and learning about other faiths and world views

Church schools have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and world views. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also be able to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own beliefs and practices. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice.

The Foundation Stage

We develop the skills, knowledge and understanding that enable our Early Years children to make sense of their world as an integral part of the school's work. We relate the development of the children's P.S.E.D and Understanding the world to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. These underpin the curriculum planning for children in Reception year. This learning also supports work in Religious Education. We use the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus as a framework for the teaching of RE in Reception Year. RE is timetabled, planned for and taught each week.

We provide a range of experiences that encourage exploration, observation, critical thinking and discussion. These activities, indoors and outdoors, develop the children's interest, curiosity, awe and wonder of the world around them.

5 Organisation

- We deliver RE in line with the locally agreed Wiltshire syllabus and in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school.
- We have developed a whole school subject plan for RE.
- RE is an important part of the whole education of the child and threads throughout the curriculum.
- RE is allocated at least 5 - 10% of curriculum time.
- RE is taught to all pupils.
- RE is sometimes taught in the form of whole school RE Days which cover a unit of work in a creative and engaging way, allowing for a deeper understanding to be explored.

6 Teaching Religious Education to Children with Special Educational Needs

At our school we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious Education forms part of the school 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 progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in the learning of Religious Education. Children participate in activities outside of the classroom, e.g. visits to Coombe Bissett Church and Salisbury Cathedral.

7 Assessment and Recording

Three elements underpin our assessment:

Making Sense of Beliefs and Texts

- identifying and making sense of religious and non-religious beliefs and concepts;
- understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions;
- recognising how and why sources of authority (such as texts) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation.

Understanding the Impact

- examining how and why people put their beliefs into practice in diverse ways, within their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.

Making Connections

- evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the beliefs and practices studied;
- allowing pupils to challenge ideas studied, and the ideas studied to challenge pupils' own thinking;
- discerning possible connections between these and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

'I can' statements are identified for each unit. These are used by the teacher and the children to review their learning journey. All children are encouraged to self-evaluate their learning. Learning can be recorded and observed in a wide variety of ways, e.g. writing, art, drama, discussions, presentations. Photographs may also be used for those areas where tangible evidence is more difficult to obtain.

Formal assessment occurs three times a year identifying which children are: working towards the expected standard; working at the expected standard or working at greater depth.

8 Resources

Our school has a wide range of resources to support the teaching of Religious Education across the school. To support our delivery of RE we use resources such as Discovery RE, The Emmanuel Project, Picturing Islam, Twinkl, Espresso, BBC and Oak National Academy units of work. Resources are stored in the RE boxes.

9 Legal Status

The Governors of Coombe Bissett VA CE Primary School are responsible for the Religious Education policy of the school. The policy is drawn up by the Religious Education Leader and Religious Education Link Governor before being commended by staff and the Christian Ethos Group to the Full Governing Body. The Religious Education policy for the school follows the guidelines set out in the agreed syllabus for Wiltshire and those of the Diocesan Board of Education. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their child from religious education. The school would require a written request and a discussion with the Headteacher to make appropriate arrangements for supervision.

10 Monitoring and Review

The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in Religious Education is the responsibility of the Religious Education subject leader, the Religious Education Link Governor and Christian Ethos Group, and the Head Teacher. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The subject is reviewed annually and actions for improvement will be incorporated into the School Development Plan. The RE Policy is reviewed every two years.

Reviewed: October 2021

Commended by the Christian Ethos Group: 4/10/21

Ratified by FGB: Term 2 2021