

## Religious Education (RE) Policy

This policy is a whole school policy including EYFS

### 1 Aims and objectives

**1.1** Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Springmead School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths and belief systems, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions and belief systems. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

**1.2** The aims of religious education are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions, belief 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 to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

### 2 The legal position of religious education

**2.1** 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 this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the Principals. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the Principals. 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 complies with the Education Reform Act which states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the 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**

**3.1** 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.

**3.2** Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and the local rector comes into school to talk to the children. We also benefit hugely from having a school chaplain who delivers assemblies and supports RE in school.

**3.3** 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 discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

**3.4** We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and 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 common 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);
- grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.
- Using extended questioning.

### **4 Curriculum planning in religious education**

**4.1** We plan our religious education curriculum to ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure

that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school using a wide variety of resources to plan their curriculum.

- 4.2 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. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.
- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term and included learning objectives. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.
- 4.4 **All subjects** contribute to many aspects of the themed curriculum of which music plays an important part.

The class teacher uses the detailed medium term plans or daily plans for each lesson in which they annotate and adjust based upon ongoing assessment.

## 5 **Foundation Stage**

- 5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.
- 5.2 As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the early Years Foundation Stage which underpin the curriculum planning for children of this age. Nursery children experience R.E through the EYFS.

## 6 **Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects**

### 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, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

### 6.2 **Information and communication technology (ICT)**

We use ICT where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

### 6.3 **Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship**

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. The school's The Springmead Way alongside the Virtues Program ties in closely with the R.E program.

## **6.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Through teaching 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.

## **6.5 Where appropriate R.E is taught through our Themes. For example, Elizabethans - dissolution of the monasteries**

## **7 Teaching religious education to children with special needs and disabilities**

### **7.1** In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of individual children.

## **8 Assessment and recording**

The attainment targets for religious education set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that children and young people of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of Key Stages One and Two. As with the National Curriculum subjects, the attainment targets consist of level descriptions of increasing difficulty. Each describes the types and range of performance that children and young people working at that level should characteristically demonstrate, for both attainment targets (AT1 and AT2).

The two attainment targets are of equal importance and are reflected in teachers' planning, schemes of work and assessment for learning.

**AT1 – Learning about religion:** involves enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature and characteristics of religion, focusing on

- beliefs, teachings and sources
- practices and ways of life
- expressing meaning.

It includes skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation, using specialist vocabulary, of ultimate questions, ethical issues and key concepts in religion such as belief, deity, worship, authority and commitment.

**AT2 – Learning from religion:** promotes a reflective approach to learning about religion. It develops skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of religious ideas, particularly around

- questions of identity, diversity and belonging
- meaning, purpose and truth
- values and commitments.

Learning from religion plays a vital role in promoting children's and young people's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## 8.1 Assessment and Recording

8.2 Teachers assess the children's work in RE both by making informal judgements as they observe them during lessons and by doing formal assessments of their work. We have clear expectations of what the pupils will know, understand and be able to do at the end of each key stage.

8.3 Teachers record the achievements of pupils in RE and report these achievements to parents each year.

8.4 We do not set formal tests in RE. The assessments that we make of pupil achievement do not imply that a pupil has 'passed' or 'failed'

## 9 Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store. There is a collection of religious artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books, videos, DVD's and computer software to support the children's individual research. The teachers keep various resources updated.

## 10 The contribution of Religious Studies

**10.1 Religious education helps children and young people to enjoy and achieve by:**

- providing children and young people with varied and inspired learning opportunities closely linked with the wider community and world of work

- providing a rigorous, challenging, good quality syllabus that enables children and young people to learn about themselves, developing their self-esteem through exploring religion and the big questions of life
- encountering living faith through visits and visitors and being given opportunities to ask their own questions
- creating an inclusive curriculum that includes and inspires everyone, including children and young people with learning difficulties and physical disabilities.

## **10.2 Religious education helps children and young people to make a positive contribution by:**

- promoting community cohesion, challenging prejudice and discrimination and raising awareness of how inter-faith co-operation can support the common good
- enabling children and young people to explore the concept of community and their role within it, including responsibility for the environment
- encouraging children and young people to evaluate the roles of rules and the meaning of being 'law abiding'
- giving opportunities to consider the nature of being human and the positive common bond found in shared human experience
- putting the young person's personal views at the heart of planning and delivering a curriculum through the search for personal meaning
- promoting an understanding that there are often no right answers, through developing open-mindedness and a willingness to adjust or amend views; and helping to develop the ability to disagree respectfully and stand up for themselves.

## **10.3 Religious education encourages children and young people to be healthy through:**

- exploring what it means to respect the whole body while reflecting on religious belief in creation
- investigating healthy living through religious teachings about food, drink and caring for the environment; consideration of appropriate attitudes to sexual relationships
- encouraging a healthy mind through activities such as learning to be still, meditation, reasoned debate
- encouraging positive self-image by encouraging personal reflection

## **10.3 Religious education helps children and young people to stay safe by:**

- reflecting on and evaluating rules that guide individuals within communities and support the vulnerable
- helping children and young people to consider who it is safe to follow and consider the influence of role model
- reflecting on the value of security gained from family life and from rituals

- encouraging children and young people to take responsibility for who and what they are.

## **10.4 Religious education helps children and young people achieve economic well-being by:**

- studying the responses of faith to money, wealth and responsibility
- giving opportunities to consider critically the meaning of economic well-being
- experiencing a modern world class curriculum that will allow them to grow and develop into individuals prepared for working life, able to flourish in the work place

## **11.0 Monitoring and review**

The role of subject leaders is to:

- provide a strategic lead for the subject with the aim of improving standards;
- offer support and advice to colleagues on the subject;
- monitor pupil progress in that subject area across the school through observations and discussion with staff and children; also through leveling and scrutinizing work review the way the subject is taught at the school and plan for improvement;
- understand current standards in the subject across the school and how this compares to expected targets;
- plan how we are going to improve standards in conjunction with staff and principals;
- provide efficient resource management for the subject;
- review the curriculum plans for the subject and ensure that there is coverage of the National Curriculum, where we feel it is appropriate, and that progression is planned into schemes of work;
- to keep up to date with the developments in the subject at both national and local level;
- keep detailed information on their subject in a subject leader file;
- work with the principal to produce a development plan for the subject which links the whole school objectives.

The school gives subject leaders non-contact time, so that they can carry out the necessary duties involved with their role.

This policy is the principal's responsibility and its effectiveness is reviewed annually.

**Signed:**

**Date:**