

ST. NICHOLAS C/E PRIMARY SCHOOL, HURST

Religious Education Policy

This policy is written in the spirit of our mission statement:

“Laying firm foundations to believe and achieve”

Our school Christian values: *Respect, Honesty, Courage and Kindness*



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| Document History |
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Agreed by the Governors on

Signed

(Chair of Governors)

Review date – Spring 2025

Learning and Achievement Committee

Purpose

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).

St Nicholas CE Primary School is a Voluntary Controlled school. We deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus – the Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. We use the Discovery RE programme and Understanding Christianity as our schemes of work, supplemented by other resources where appropriate.

Policy

The following documents should be read in conjunction with this policy:

Equal Opportunities Policy; Teaching and Learning Policy; SEN Policy; More Able Gifted and Talented Policy; Child Protection Policy;

By following Discovery RE and Understanding Christianity programmes at St Nicholas CE Primary School we intend that Religious Education will...

- Adopt an enquiry- based approach as recommended by Ofsted, beginning with the children's own life experience before moving into learning about and from religion.
- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs and the self; and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, worldviews and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses.
- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- Teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.

- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Nurture children's own spiritual development.

The Curriculum

Discovery RE and Understanding Christianity, bring together the skills of learning about and from religion, questioning, and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Each enquiry starts from the children's own life experiences using these as a bridge into the investigation of the religion being studied.

RE is taught as a discrete subject in each class with a 2 year rolling programme. Christianity is the majority religion studied in each year group and is at least 50% of curriculum time, in line with the RE Statement of Entitlement document 2019. Material chosen is drawn from major religions and worldviews, namely: Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Humanism in line with the Berkshire Agreed Syllabus.

Differentiation, G&T and SEN

Discovery RE is written as a universal core curriculum provision for all children. Inclusivity is part of its philosophy. Teachers will tailor each enquiry to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential.

Equal Opportunities

1. At St. Nicholas, we pride ourselves in treating all children fairly and equally. We recognise that there are children of widely differing abilities in all classes and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. This enables us to meet the needs of all children, including those who are More Able, Gifted and Talented, as well as those with Special Educational Needs (see MA, G and T and SEN policies).
2. We seek to provide equality of opportunity for all students and staff so that they can achieve their personal best and therefore promote a 'growth mindset' ethos.
3. We aim to promote a 'growth mindset' attitude to challenge.

Assessment and Reporting

Learning is assessed formatively through each lesson and summatively at the end of each unit of work. Children have opportunities to express their own thoughts and beliefs and empathise with believers of that religion or belief position. This stand-alone evidence is used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions and

annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in reaching a best-fit level. The information gained from this is used by class teachers to report on children's attainment in RE at the end of each academic year in the child's school report.

Monitoring

The RE co-ordinator monitors delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children and scrutiny of their written work to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision.

Evaluation of the programme's effectiveness is conducted on the basis of:

- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes.
- Staff meetings to review and share experience.
- Monitoring of assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.

External Provision

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. External contributors from the community, e.g. local clergy, local members/speakers from other religions etc make a valuable contribution to the RE programme as do visits to places of worship. Their input is carefully planned and monitored so as to fit into and complement the curriculum.

Teachers are always present during these sessions and remain responsible for the effective delivery of the RE programme.

The Learning Environment

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for each others' views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care. Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs.

Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should never feel obliged to discuss their own beliefs unless they feel comfortable doing so and can ensure that this will not influence or restrict the children's own expression. At St Nicholas CE Primary school we uphold the Christian ethos of the school whilst still respecting the beliefs and views of others.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher and/or RE Coordinator who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents will be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

As a school it is our duty to inform our local Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE) regarding the numbers of children being withdrawn.

Training and support for staff

All staff benefit from training in order to enhance their RE delivery skills. Opportunities are provided for staff to identify individual training needs and relevant support is provided. In addition to this, support for teaching and understanding RE issues is incorporated in our staff INSET programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies.

Appendices

Appendix 1 –
Rolling Programme for RE

References

This RE policy is informed by current national guidance:

RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010

RE: realising the potential Ofsted 2013

A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013

Commission on Religious Education Religion and World Views Report 2018

Discovery RE Programme Model RE Policy

Statement of Entitlement for RE 2019