

R.E. POLICY FORNCETT C.E.V.A. PRIMARY SCHOOL

Introduction

Religious education is an entitlement for all pupils and its place in the school curriculum is an acknowledgement of the important role which beliefs and values play in people's lives, regardless of particular religious commitments. It is also an acknowledgement that religious beliefs and practices play a key part in the lives of many people worldwide today as they have done throughout history. As a curriculum area Religious Education offers pupils an opportunity to develop a better understanding of themselves, the people around them and the world in which they live.

Forncett is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School. In Aided schools Religious Education is the responsibility of the school governors. The governing body of our school has adopted the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus (2012). Additional ideas, information and guidance suited to the particular needs of a church school are sought from the Diocese. A close link with the church community is encouraged so that pupils can see Christian life, worship and commitments at first hand and we make a point of marking the celebrations of the Christian year.

We recognise that our pupils come from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds and celebrate this diversity. The religious education programme seeks to be sensitive to the home background of each child; it is not the function of religious education to promote or disparage particular religious views.

Our expectation is that the whole school community should behave in a way that is consistent with our philosophy and principles; in this respect heightening the children's awareness of Christian behaviour and relationships is an integral part of the daily life of the school. Examples of this may be practical i.e. children cooperating in a group task, sharing equipment, helping younger children to put their shoes and coats on; or showing their awareness of the emotional needs of others i.e. involving a solitary child in their group, comforting a child who has fallen over, recognising and celebrating the achievement of others

The Aims of Religious Education at Forncett Primary

Within the framework of the Education Acts and the New Agreed Syllabus, our aims in Religious Education are:

- to enable each child to explore the human experiences people share and the questions of meaning and purpose which arise from those experiences;
- to enable pupils to know about and understand the beliefs and practices of some of the great religions of the world, particularly those in Norfolk and the U.K. Among these, Christianity has a particular place, and is taught in each year of the primary phase;
- to promote respect, sensitivity and cultural awareness by teaching about the religions represented in the region and the country;
- to affirm each child in his/her own family tradition, religious or secular;
- to provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The Norfolk Agreed Syllabus gives more details of the importance of Religious Education in the curriculum and selects two main aims for its programmes of study and attainment targets:

- learning about religion and belief
- learning from religion and belief

Time allocation

The DfE recommendation of thirty six hours per year for Religious Education at key stage one, and forty five hours at key stage two; is endorsed by the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus, 2005. Religious Education time does not include collective worship, even where an assembly complements or provides a starting point for curricular work.

The time allocated at Forncett School is 36 hours per year at key stage one, and forty five hours per year at key stage two. The equivalent of approximately thirty minutes per week of teacher-directed time is provided for Foundation stage pupils, who must receive Religious Education according to the Agreed Syllabus but for whom there is no time recommendation in the documents referred to above. Religious Education may be delivered over the course of a few days or a week in blocked units if this is considered to allow for more effective teaching and learning.

The Requirements of the Newer Norfolk Agreed Syllabus (2012)

At Forncett our Religious Education is based on the 'new' Norfolk Agreed Syllabus. The agreed syllabus sets out programmes of study for the foundation stage, key stage one and key stage two, beginning each with a focus statement summarising what Religious Education will look like at that key stage.

Programme of Study for the Foundation Stage

During the foundation stage children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects, and by visiting places of worship. Children listen to and talk about religious stories. They are introduced to specialist words and use their senses in exploring religious beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of, and wonder at, the world in which they live.

Programme of Study for Key Stage One

Throughout key stage one, children investigate Christianity and are introduced to at least one other principal religion. They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious material. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and beliefs for some children and their families. Pupils ask relevant questions and use their imagination to develop a sense of wonder about the world. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

Programme of Study for Key Stage Two

Throughout key stage two children learn about Christianity and other religions, recognising the impact of religion and belief both locally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions, and the importance of dialogue between people of different beliefs. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and in valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas clearly, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others, in the light of their learning in Religious Education.

The programmes of study develop continuity and progression in Religious Education. They detail requirements for 'Learning about religion and belief' and 'Learning from religion and belief' for each key stage. The 'Breadth of Study' section explains which religions and areas of study should be covered and outlines a wide range of experiences and opportunities which should characterise teaching and learning.

The New Agreed Syllabus also sets out attainment targets for religious education and gives level descriptions by which pupils' progress may be assessed.

Scheme of work

Religious education planning is based around themes involving a key enquiry question. In Reception and Key Stage One, Christianity and Judaism are the principal religions studied. Other religions are touched on as appropriate. Key Stage Two pupils learn about Christianity throughout the key stage, and study Hinduism as a principal religion in years three and four, and Islam in years five and six. They also touch on the other principal religions and beliefs by the end of key stage two. Topics may focus on a single religion or be based around a life experience theme, drawing on children's own thoughts and ideas as well as those of several faiths. Teachers create lessons using an RE Enquiry approach and materials which support Norfolk's New Agreed Syllabus teaching objectives.

Teaching and Learning Styles

Ofsted reports suggest the range of teaching and learning strategies in religious education is often too narrow, with overuse of stories and a limited range of drawn and written tasks.

At Forncett we are focussing our efforts on the pedagogy which supports Enquiry based learning in R.E. (as recommended as best practice in Norfolk and beyond), which uses varied and active ways of working, including art and drama, debating, visits, film and use of the internet. In particular, we recognise the importance of teaching the two attainment targets of the agreed syllabus, (learning about religion and belief, and learning from religion and belief) in a balanced way, and our schemes of work are designed to encourage this. We seek out cross-curricular links in children's learning. Our school ethos is founded upon Christian principles, and an awareness of Christian behaviour and relationships is not confined to lessons in religious education, but is an integral part of the daily life of the school.

Use of ICT

Children are being given increasing opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capacity where appropriate in religious education. Use of the Internet for virtual visits to places of worship, digital cameras and interactive whiteboards have all helped children to develop their learning in and enjoyment of religious education.

At Forncett, teachers are encouraged to use a religious education gateway site: www.reonline.org.uk as a basic resource for their own and children's needs. The subject leader has the on-going task of compiling details of other useful websites for information on religions, pictures of ceremonies and artefacts, and also sites run by different religious communities.

Resources

Good resources are essential to fulfil the teaching requirements of the New Agreed syllabus. New units are being devised as provision is reviewed in light of the New Agreed Syllabus. At Fornsett, resources will be listed against each unit being taught, and this will result in effective choices being made about the purchase of new books, artefacts, videos and CD ROMS. Resources will be stored in separate topic boxes. Lists in the boxes will encourage staff to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

Professional Development for Staff

The school acknowledges that no teacher can be an instant expert in six religions but is committed to ensuring that the staff involved in delivering religious education are well supported and equipped.

Visits and Visitors

Visits and visitors can provide powerful learning experiences for both teacher and pupils. All visits and visitors are organised by the teacher concerned, following the Norfolk 'Educational Visits and Journeys – procedures and guidance' material. We are fortunate in being situated next to St. Peter's church, and this is used as a valuable resource when appropriate.

Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

Whole school policy with regard to inclusion applies equally to religious education. Also, teachers should be aware that some children have additional experience of a religion through family practice and may show greater ability and understanding than they do generally.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

It is important to note that children's work in religious education can be assessed; we are not assessing degrees of spirituality but rather their knowledge, skills and understanding. It is important that their progress is acknowledged, just as it is in any other subject. We are also required by law to report to parents on pupil's progress and attainment in religious education. The New Agreed Syllabus provides descriptions of levels of attainment to use as a basis for reporting.

At the end of each year, from Y1 onwards, we aim to make specific, individual, accurate comments on a child's progress, based on formative assessment and monitoring of work in relation to the religious education syllabus's attainment targets. Children's outcomes are tracked on our school tracking system and information about their performance is shared with parents in the annual report.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The subject is led by a named teacher and staff assist to ensure work is completed. The teachers' role includes the monitoring and evaluation of this policy and in furthering assessment and the monitoring of teaching and learning standards in the classroom.

Contributions to SMSC Development & links with Collective Worship

Please refer to the SMSC & Collective Worship policies for more details.

These are areas of a child's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. At Forncett, religious education should play a part in:

- developing an awareness of a 'spiritual' dimension to life (personal beliefs, the search for meaning and purpose, the sense of awe and wonder) and in offering opportunities to discuss this area in a structured way. (SPIRITUAL)
- providing a forum for children to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by. (MORAL)
- encouraging interest in, and an understanding of, others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of community. (SOCIAL)
- evaluating the influence of Christianity on daily life in Britain, on the pattern of the year, on public occasions, festivals and ceremonies, architecture, laws, art, music, drama and literature and in considering other cultural and religious expressions in British society, evaluating the riches that diversity offers. (CULTURAL)

Provision for Withdrawal from Religious Education

Two provisions of law need to be noted:

- 1) Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from religious education in accordance with the Education Act 1944, sections 25(4) and 30, which was re-enacted in 1988. Reasons for withdrawal do not have to be given and the school **must** enable parents to exercise this legal entitlement. The school brochure advises parents of the current provision for religious education. They are asked to contact the headteacher if they wish to withdraw their child. It is hoped that, in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached, and arrangements for supervision made.
- 2) Teachers may withdraw from religious education. Their classes, however, are legally entitled to religious education. The headteacher is responsible for alternative provision for pupils. Staff are not required to give reasons for withdrawal. Currently no member of staff exercises this right.

Religious Education and Collective Worship

In law, religious education and collective worship are distinct. Religious education is part of the school curriculum; it has to be delivered appropriately for pupils of different ages and abilities. It cannot be delivered during collective worship. However, during collective worship at Forncett, stories from the Bible, Christian and other traditions are told and enjoyed, festival days and celebrations are often mentioned, and we enjoy assemblies led by members of the religious community. These complement and bring depth to our religious education programme. A separate policy is available for collective worship.

Reviewed: October 2016

Next Review Date: December 2017

Signed **Date**