

Religious Education Policy

Date agreed by Governors: _____

Review date: _____

Governor signature: _____

Date of next Review: June 2018

General Introduction:

This policy supports the work of the school in promoting its mission statement, aims and values.

Mission statement:

St Michael's VC School endeavours to provide a happy, safe, caring and stimulating learning environment, based on Christian principles in which all members of the school community are valued as individuals and are encouraged to reach their full potential.

School aims:

At St Michael's we value every member of our school community and our aims are for every child, whatever their background or circumstances, to have the support they need to:

- Develop their understanding of the value of leading a healthy lifestyle
- Work and play in a secure and safe environment in which they are encouraged to develop moral values and mutual respect
- Experience an exciting curriculum which fosters their enthusiasm, develops an enquiring mind and enables every child to achieve his/her full potential
- Access an education for life which promotes British Values that enable all learners to become effective and reliable members of the wider community
- Foster ambition and expectation to carry through to adult life

To achieve these aims all learners, staff, parents and governors will work together to promote our **core values** of peace, courage and respect.

Aims and objectives:

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St. Michael's Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of some of the major world faiths, 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, (Hinduism, Islam, and Judaism). Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- to develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences.
- to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems around Britain.
- to develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition.
- to be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.
- to develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today.
- to develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgments about religious issues.
- to have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.
- to give children the language to express their own ideas and feelings about faith and to be confident to ask questions regarding faith issues.

The legal position of religious education:

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 school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. 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 the Bournemouth and Poole LEA's Agreed Syllabus and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The school also uses the Discovery RE scheme of work which is an enquiry-led approach to teaching RE. The ERA 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.

Teaching and learning style:

The school teaching and learning style in RE is based on the key principle that good teaching allows children 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.

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

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festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. To enrich children's learning, we organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

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.

We recognize 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.

Curriculum planning in religious education:

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Bournemouth LEA's Agreed Syllabus. The school also uses the Discovery RE scheme of work which is an enquiry-led approach to teaching RE. We 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.

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. The RE subject co-coordinator works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects especially at Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE Subject Leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis and with consultation with the teaching staff.

The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE Subject Leader.

Foundation Stage:

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the

religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects:

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 the Literacy Hour 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 letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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

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.

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 recognize 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.

Teaching religious education to children with special needs:

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 children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Assessment and recording:

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgments as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work we make a summary judgment about the work of each pupil. Children in Reception, Key Stage 1 and 2 will complete an annual assessment tasks related to Easter.

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 where there is a box of

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equipment for each unit of work. There is a set of Bibles for both key stages to use and a collection of religious artifacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books to support the children's individual research.

Monitoring and review:

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education.

Signed:

Date: