

St Lawrence C of E (Aided) Junior School

Religious Education Policy

Introduction

As a voluntary aided Church of England school the RE syllabus is determined by the governing body in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. The governors of St Lawrence adopted the Guidelines for Religious Education 2003, laid down by the Diocese of Guildford.

Aims and Objectives

1. RE enables pupils

- **To know about and understand beliefs, teachings & sources, practices & ways of life and ways of expressing meaning by**
 - gaining a secure knowledge and understanding of the beliefs, practices and traditions of Christianity, starting from an Anglican perspective
 - using and understanding religious vocabulary
 - developing understanding of the Big Story as portrayed in the Bible and understood and used by Christians and Jews
 - developing familiarity with some key characters and stories from other sacred texts including Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism.
- **to express ideas and insights into questions of identity, diversity & belonging, meaning, purpose & truth and values & commitments by**
 - learning how religious belief and practice has an impact on lifestyle choices
 - comparing the beliefs and practices of different faiths and finding commonality and difference
 - encouraging questioning and rigorous debate about ethical issues (right and wrong) and religious viewpoints
 - formulating personal opinions and beliefs based on experience, understanding and religious knowledge

2. RE contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by helping them to develop:

- their own beliefs, values and sense of self-worth
- respect for other peoples' faith and viewpoint
- appreciation of their own and others' contributions to society and the world
- a sense of responsibility for themselves and others

Organisation of the curriculum

The RE curriculum follows the Diocesan Guidelines (2015) where work is set out in units. There is a legal requirement for RE to hold a distinctive place in the school curriculum, having equal standing with other core subjects. Consequently children at St Lawrence receive at least one and a quarter hours of RE teaching per week, that is, 45 hours per year. This may be in individual lessons or blocked to provide a longer focus on RE. All children participate in at least two RE days

each year, for example, Easter Pause Day and a Christian values-based Summer RE Day. RE may also be taught through cross-curricular activities. Every child undertakes a reflective activity each week which is linked to the weekly assembly theme and provides an opportunity for pupils to develop a personal point of view.

During their time at St Lawrence, children spend no less than 70% of RE teaching time devoted to Christianity and no more than 30% on other faiths. This split is organised as follows across the year groups:

- Year 3 study Christianity (31 lessons) and Judaism (12 lessons)
- Year 4 study Christianity (31 lessons) and Hinduism/Sikhism (12 lessons)
- Year 5 study Christianity (31 lessons) and Islam (12 lessons)
- Year 6 study Christianity (25 lessons), Hinduism (6 lessons), Buddhism, (5 lessons) and a Biblical perspective on relationships and transition (7 lessons)

Teaching and learning style

Teaching strategies employed in RE lessons are varied to suit the wide range of learning styles and abilities of our pupils. The lessons are designed to provide lively, engaging experiences which do not always rely on reading/writing ability to succeed. Creative expression through drama, art, debate, examining artefacts, music, games and role play enable all children to demonstrate and develop increasingly complex thinking skills, which are at the heart of RE teaching and learning.

When it is appropriate, visitors are invited to school to share their faith experiences and show artefacts. Each year group undertakes a trip to a place of worship and pupils are encouraged to use their senses to experience some of the mystery associated with worship within a faith.

Resources

RE resources are maintained and monitored by the RE subject leader who budgets and orders any further stock required. Artefact boxes for the main religions studied are available as are many books and DVDs. The internet provides a huge resource for RE teaching and is more heavily drawn upon in the St Lawrence classroom than are text books.

The Diocesan Education Centre located at Guildford Cathedral provides a diverse range of RE resources which may be borrowed by the school. The RE subject leader arranges this when necessary and these are particularly useful for designated RE Days.

Planning and monitoring

A curriculum overview and medium term plans are drawn up by the RE subject leader in accordance with the Diocesan guidelines and in conjunction with class teachers. Individual lesson plans give learning intentions and success criteria, to ensure sufficient challenge/support is built into each lesson. Plans include a wide variety of learning experiences and aim to instil knowledge and challenge and develop thinking skills.

Planning is monitored and reviewed annually by the subject leader who is also responsible for ensuring criteria set by the Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools are monitored and met. The subject leader attends termly meetings with other subject leaders at the Diocesan Education Centre to remain up to date with developments and share good practice.

Attitudes, Skills and Progression

RE aims to give children knowledge of the key beliefs and practices of their own and other faiths and of people of no faith. It encourages children to develop positive attitudes to the beliefs and values of others and to formulate their own personal perspective on faith. This is done by nurturing and encouraging self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness and a sense of awe and wonder.

A renewed focus on the acquisition of knowledge is incorporated in the new guidelines. Without this progression is limited. Once knowledge is secure, progression in RE depends upon the development of a range of thinking skills applied to RE. They ensure that teachers move pupils on from knowledge accumulation and work that is merely descriptive to higher level thinking skills. These can be summarised as follows:

- reflection – reflecting on feelings, relationships, experience and belief
- empathy – identifying with the thoughts, feelings, experiences and values of others
- investigation – asking questions, demonstrating curiosity, gathering information
- interpretation – drawing meaning from artefacts, works of art, music and symbols
- evaluation – debating issues by weighing up evidence and argument
- analysis – distinguishing opinion and fact, comparing and contrasting features of religions
- synthesis – linking features of religions to provide coherence
- application – applying religious belief and practice to real life in the community, the nation and the world
- expression – explaining concepts, rituals and practice and expressing religious views through a variety of media.

Differentiation and Inclusion

All RE lessons are planned to enable all children to participate and contribute in an ability-appropriate way, recognising that written recording of thoughts and feelings can inhibit the expression of certain children. With this in mind, a creative approach is employed to ensure no child is unable to explore the issues relating to the lesson and express their response in an appropriate way. Adult support is given to those with Special Educational Needs when necessary. All lessons are planned to challenge the more able by extending their thinking along the lines described in the paragraph above.

Assessment

Assessment for learning takes place during class discussions or small group work by careful open-ended questioning by the teacher, who records findings by dating the 'I Can Statements' (objectives linked to Learning Intentions). These objective sheets are stuck in the front of RE books. Children are often encouraged to self-assess and peer assess and to choose the level of challenge that meets their need.

The Right to Withdraw

It is hoped that all children will participate in the RE curriculum at St Lawrence. However, it is an established right of parents to withdraw their child from RE under the 1988 Education Reform Act. If you wish to exercise this right, please refer to the Head Teacher.

Reviewed: February 2018
Review Date: February 2021