

Thurnham C E Infant School



Religious Education Policy

Member of Staff Responsible	Natalie Saunders
Position	RE Coordinator
Dated	September 2016
Date of next review	September 2017 or earlier if required for SIAMS

Mission Statement:

At Thurnham CE Infant School our Christian Values aim to encourage a sense of friendship, compassion, respect and truth in all children and provide the foundations for all that we do and achieve throughout the school. The driving force will be a passion to create a school where all children and all staff, without fear of discrimination, will be able to achieve success, feel safe, lead a healthy lifestyle and accomplish what may appear, at the outset, to be beyond reach. At Thurnham C.E infant School this will be achieved in an environment influenced by Christian values. Our vision is to make Thurnham CE Infant School outstanding.

The legal Position of Religious Education:

RE must be provided for all registered pupils at the school in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In Canterbury Diocese, the Diocesan Board of Education recommends that all Church schools follow the Diocesan Schemes of Work which are based on the Kent Locally Agreed Syllabus. This takes account of the 1996 Education Act which requires the syllabus to reflect that the religious traditions of Great Britain are **in the main Christian** whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. Religious Education is inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools [SIAMS])

Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS):

The school's self-evaluation, will seek to judge how well the distinctive Christian character and values ensure the development and achievement of the whole child. This will be undertaken by the members of the Church Steering Group on a termly basis.

The main focus of inspection is in the **outcomes**, i.e. the **impact** of provision rather than the provision itself. There are four key questions:

- How well does the school, through its distinctive Christian character, meet the needs of all learners?
- What is the impact of collective worship on the school community?
- How effective is the religious education?
- How effective are the leadership and management of the school as a church school

Right of withdrawal from Religious Education:

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in the children's learning. It is a major contributor to the ethos of our school. However, we fully recognize the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE on the grounds of conscience. We do encourage parents to contact the Headteacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school.

Rationale:

Religious Education will:-

- **Provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops students' knowledge of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **Encourage students to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are 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. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives

- **Enable students to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **Teach students to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **Prompt students 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**

The contribution Religious Education makes to other curriculum areas:

RE contributes to student's spiritual development by

- Discussing and reflecting on questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, good and evil, life after death, beliefs about God and humanity and values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- Learning about and reflecting on important concepts and experiences such as love, trust, forgiveness, obedience and sacrifice.
- Valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging.
- Considering how religions and beliefs regard the value and purpose of human beings, the importance of the environment and the significance of emotions such as love, anger, joy, jealousy, happiness and pain.
- Developing their own ideas and views on religious and spiritual issues.

RE contributes to moral development by

- By enabling students to value themselves and others.
- Exploring the influence of family, friends and other sources on moral choices.
- Considering what is of ultimate value both to students and people within religious traditions.
- Developing an understanding in religion of the key values and moral choices.
- Considering ethical issues especially justice which promotes racial and religious respect.
- Exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by teachings and guidance from religions and beliefs.
- Reflecting on the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

RE contributes to student's social development by

- Considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns.
- Reflecting on the importance of friendship and positive relationships.
- Investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions.

RE contributes to student's cultural development by

- Encountering people, stories, artefacts and resources from differing cultures.
- Promoting respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination.
- Challenging stereotypes of religion and beliefs.

Community Cohesion by

- Providing a key context in which to develop students' understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination in:
 - the school community
 - the community within which the school is located
 - The UK community
 - The Global community

RE and the use of language

RE can also make an important contribution to student's use of language by enabling them to:-

- Acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- Communicate their ideas with clarity.
- Listen and respond to the views and ideas of others.
- Be inspired by the power and beauty of language.
- Write in different styles such as poetry, diaries and extended writing.
- Highlight their own ideas and those of others.

RE and the use of ICT

RE can make an important contribution to student's use of ICT by:-

- Helping them make effective use of the internet and CD ROMs to investigate and learn from different religions beliefs, teachings and ideas.
- Use video and voice recording to communicate knowledge and own beliefs and views.
- Use multimedia and presentation software to communicate their own ideas and those within religions and beliefs.

Approaches to teaching Religious Education:

We use a variety of teaching and learning styles in Religious Education lessons. Our principal aim is to develop the children's knowledge, skills and understanding and we do this through a mixture of whole-class teaching and individual/group activities. Teachers draw attention to good examples of Religious Education as models for the other children and we encourage the children to evaluate their own work as well as the work of other children. Within lessons we give the children the opportunity both to share and challenge opinion, and they have the opportunity to use a wide range of resources.

Activities build upon the prior learning of the children. While there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding in each activity area, there is planned progression built into the scheme, so that the children are increasingly challenged as they move up through the school.

Skills

- Investigations - asking questions, information gathering, evidence and enquiry.
- Interpretation – understanding meaning and symbolism, religious language, suggested meaning.
- Reflection – feelings, relationships, experiences, ultimate questions, beliefs and practices.
- Empathy – consideration of thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes and beliefs of others – seeing through another's eyes.
- Evaluation – discuss and see both sides of the argument.

Attitudes to Foster

- Open-mindedness
- Tolerance – recognising the right of others to hold different views and beliefs from our own
- Respect – for self and others
- Sensitivity – an awareness of others thoughts and feelings
- Appreciation – for the diversity of different cultures, beliefs and customs
- Commitment – developing a set of values by which to live.

The Role of the Teacher

- To organise and plan suitable activities which meet the needs and experiences of individuals and the New Rochester Scheme.
- To promote high standards of achievement and attainment in RE
- To provide opportunities for explanation by the teacher. Discussion between the teacher and pupils and between pupils themselves.
- To consider opportunities for cross-curricular work, to show the relevance of RE in the broader framework. e.g. within CLJ sessions
- To promote RE positively.

The Learning Environment - To support learning in RE

- There should be an availability of interesting and stimulating resource material i.e. books, posters, videos DVDs, websites, artefacts, visits and visitors etc., related to work in hand. We should endeavor to provide authentic artefacts.
- An atmosphere where children feel able to express their own thoughts and feelings, and where they are encouraged to ask questions.
- There is regular access to Holy Cross Church which is used as a Primary resource during the year. The vicar visits the school to discuss and demonstrate aspects of the Christian Church.

RE is taught through a range of religions and beliefs and key themes.

Differentiation and Special Needs:

At Thurnham CE Infant School we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious Education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our Religious Education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the attainment levels for Religious Education; allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Religious Education. Where children are to participate in activities outside our school, for example, a Religious Education event at another school, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

School Organisation:

“RE must be taught to all registered pupils (unless withdrawn by their parents). This is a statutory requirement. In this respect it is different from National Curriculum subjects. It must therefore be taught in the Foundation Stage within the Areas of Learning, through the EYFS curriculum.”

In accordance with the structure of the Kent Agreed Syllabus students study:

Foundation Stage – Children cover the following aspect from the Development Matters Document - 'They know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions'

Introducing Christianity as the 'heritage religion' of the country and the one that most influences schools and community life and building on religions represented among the pupils.

KS1 - Christianity in the main and in addition,

Year 1 – Judaism

Year 2 – Hinduism

Time Allocation

We follow the recommendation of the Kent Agreed Syllabus which requires a minimum 5% curriculum time for RE, which amounts to one hour a week at Key Stage One. (This is in addition to time for worship).

Christian Values:

All staff aim to communicate and exemplify our six Christian values and beliefs that are focused upon in each of the six terms a year. These values are:

- **Kindness**
- **Trust**
- **Sharing**
- **Respect**
- **Love**
- **Friendship**

Assessment, Recording and Reporting:

Teachers assess children's work in Religious Education by making assessments as they contribute to discussion and work produced creatively or in Religious Education books. Progress made by children is judged against the learning objectives for the lesson. This informs future planning. Each session has assessment activities. These are related to the key stage statements of attainment. Children are assessed against the level descriptors twice a year. These records enable the teacher to make an annual assessment of progress for each child, as part of the child's annual report to parents. This information is passed on to the next teacher at the end of each year.

RE has not been subject to the recent changes in assessment. SIAMs inspectors will still expect to see levelling of RE which is informed by the 8 level descriptors (Up to level 5 in Primary). These are broad brush strokes and should not be sublevelled. Age expected for the end of KS1 is Level 2 and end of Key stage 2 is Level 4. This will be subject to change at some point but the Kent Agreed Syllabus is not due to be reviewed until 2016. (Canterbury Diocese 2015)

Monitoring standards of teaching and learning:

This will be in accordance with the school's monitoring policy. Specific monitoring activities will be set out in the RE Coordinator's Action Plan and the RE Co-ordinator's/Lead Governors monitoring forms and reports which will be shared with the Full Governing Body, Church Steering Group members and Staff.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development:

The teaching of Religious Education offers opportunities to support the social development of our children through the way they are expected to work with each other in lessons. Grouping allows children to work together and gives them the chance to discuss their ideas and experiences. Their work in general enables them to develop a respect for other children's levels of ability and opinion, and encourages them to co-operate across a range of activities and experiences. Children learn to respect and work with each other, and develop a better understanding of themselves and of each other.

Health and Safety:

Due account will be taken of health and safety guidelines and appropriate risk assessments for out of school visits. These will be the responsibility of the Year Group leader in charge or in the case of whole school activities the RE coordinator.

We encourage the children to consider their own safety and the safety of others at all times.

Equal Opportunities:

Every child will have the opportunity of equal access to R.E., unless parents exercise their right of withdrawal.

Responsibilities for RE within the school: (including school self-evaluation)

Headteacher: Mr Christopher James

RE subject Leader: Miss Natalie Saunders

Link governor: Mrs Juliet Mee

Church Steering Group: Mr Christopher James, Reverend John Corbyn, Mrs Juliet Mee, Miss Natalie Saunders, Mr John Wale, Mrs Sue Jackson and Mrs Moira Shaw