



ST. THOMAS OF CANTERBURY C OF E JUNIOR SCHOOL
"Realising the potential of every child within a caring, Christian community"

Religious Education Policy



Date of Amendment: May 2020

Review Date: May 2023



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Rationale

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School we aim to always create a positive and challenging learning environment that stimulates thought-provoking questioning to enable and prepare children for the wider-world. Religious Education (RE) enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. RE at our school both underpins and reflects the school vision mission statement and provokes Christian values. It is an integral part of our school day, both implicit and explicit. We believe that RE helps children to explore their own faith and the faith of others in a way that will lead to a religious and cultural harmony.

Intent

Following Chelmsford Diocesan guidance and consultation, we are developing a bespoke Scheme of Work which incorporates Understanding Christianity as a key resource. We aim to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, as well as address the fundamental questions of life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of the children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

Our intent for RE is that during the course of their time at the school children will:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences.
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain and the world.
 - Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition including developing personal awareness of their own attitudes and beliefs.
- Be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.
- Develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues.
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity of society.
- Promote rigorous theological enquiry.
- Promote and explore spirituality.
- Promote our school Character Education values.



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Implementation

Organisation

- RE is taught on a weekly basis with at least one hour allocated.
- Children are taught as a whole class and tasks are differentiated according to age and ability with three levels of challenge available for each main task with the aim of children learning to a 'Greater Depth' standard.
- All Christianity lessons are taught in accordance with the Chelmsford Diocesan Agreed Syllabus as agreed by the Governing Body, and we have begun to follow a bespoke scheme of work developed with close reference to the newly embedded resource 'Understanding Christianity'. Non-Christian units are based on the recommendations of the Chelmsford Diocesan Agreed Syllabus and the Essex Agreed Syllabus.
- RE topics are taught as a two year rolling programme, as specified in the school's curriculum maps and in accordance with the Chelmsford Diocesan guidance.
- Each Christianity unit is planned around one of eight core concepts: God, Creation, The Fall, People of God, Incarnation, Gospel, Salvation and Kingdom of God. Lessons seek to pass on building blocks of knowledge through exploration of a 'big question'. Each unit of work is spent exploring this big question in more detail with children comparing their answer at the beginning and end of a topic. Activities for children will fall within three elements; "Making sense of the text", 'Understanding the impact' and 'Making connections', with a view to promote deeper theological enquiry amongst children of all ages and abilities.

Differentiation and Inclusion

Teachers deliver the RE curriculum through a range of activities that take all abilities and needs into account. RE lessons include writing, discussions, pictorial representations, drama and other creative mediums to ensure all abilities are catered for. The activities are differentiated with levels of challenge marked C1/C2/C3 in the format that children are familiar with from other subject areas. Class teachers also have the freedom to further differentiate according to the needs of their individual pupils where required.

Parents are informed in the school's prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and/or collective worship as set out by the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act. 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 Governing Body. However, religious education and collective worship are central to the character and purpose of the school and withdrawal is discouraged wherever possible.



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Disability Equality Scheme

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Junior School we recognise our duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as outlined in our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. (December 2007). It is our aim that through specific and accurate planning, resource allocation, differentiated teaching and use of adult intervention and support (where necessary), that every child irrespective of disability, will have full access to the curriculum and feel and be enabled to participate actively in developing to their full potential their skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure that all ‘reasonable adjustments’ are made to help both children and adults with identified special needs and disabilities to participate in the learning and teaching of the RE curriculum.

Information and Involvement of Parents and the Community

- Community celebration of events such as Harvest, Christmas, Candlemas, Easter, Pentecost and other Eucharist services are conducted every year (one Eucharist service each half term)
- Parents are invited to join the school community and Year 6 at St Thomas of Canterbury Church for their final Leavers’ Eucharist in July.
- The school attends St Thomas of Canterbury Church each year to mark Education Sunday.
- Parents are sent a copy of the topics/themes covered every term in the ‘Parent Curriculum Guides’ which outlines the topics covered in RE amongst the rest of the curriculum.
- Visiting clergy and other religious leaders attend the school.
- St Thomas’ have a yearly charity focus which is promoted and chosen by the children. The school community actively raises money for charities and other worthy causes.

Resources

- The Chelmsford Diocese website is available online for the syllabus and suggested resources for the lessons.
- ‘Understanding Christianity’ is the main resource used by staff to support and plan their teaching of RE.
- The school library has a selection of books about world religions.
- There are a wide variety of Bibles in school, suitable for a range of ages and abilities.
- The school has some artefacts relating to Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.
- Many resources are now signposted and available online.



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Training

- INSET and staff professional development meetings (PDMs) occur throughout the year and when appropriate
- Courses run by the Diocese of Chelmsford are attended by the RE Subject Leader as appropriate.
- Meetings are held regularly with the RE Adviser and Diocesan Schools Adviser
- The school is part of a local cluster group supporting each other with the implementation of 'Understanding Christianity' and local moderation and assessment.

Contribution of Religious Education to Cross-Curricular Links

English

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We look for opportunities to use texts with religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening.

History

Where appropriate, the historical context of topics covered within RE are explored to further aid the understanding of pupils. Links are made to topics covered within history lessons and the historical religious beliefs of different people groups will often come up within class discussion.

Science

Autumn term in Upper School sees children exploring links between science and Christianity and considering whether scientific beliefs conflict with religious ones or compliment them. This involves learning more about scientific discoveries and the scientists who made them.

Information Technology

We use computing where appropriate in RE. The children find, select and analyse information using the internet. They use iPads and PCs to access a range of apps and programmes to enhance their learning. They are also able to access material on Espresso. IT is also used 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 diverse society.



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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 recognise 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.

Assessment and Recording

We assess children’s work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed with more detailed ‘next step’ marking being completed twice per half term. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the RE milestones; these are milestones for the end of Year 4 and Year 6 which are formally completed at the mid-year and end of year stage. By the end of the year each child will be assessed as either ‘working towards’, ‘working at’ or achieving ‘greater depth’ in RE against age related expectations (ARE).

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years or whenever new Church of England Education Office or Chelmsford Diocesan guidance is released.

*Policy reviewed: **May 2020***

*Next policy review date: **May 2023***