



Norton St Nicholas CofE (VA) Primary School

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The policy for RE

Religious Education is a subject that lies at the heart of our curriculum and is recognised as such by the whole school community. We understand that it is an opportunity for pupils to engage in the classroom with the Christian faith upon which the school was originally built, and which forms such an important part of its life today. We also value the opportunities it provides for pupils to explore other world views and religions which impact on people's lives. We believe RE should be based firmly on two key principles: firstly, that the RE should be of the highest standard, always striving for excellence, it should reflect our school's distinctive Christian character and give pre-eminence to the teaching of Christianity. We strive to be a school where:

- RE is a high priority for the leadership team and for the governing body, well-resourced and in which the standards of teaching, learning and achievement are at the highest level.
- staff liaise closely with the Subject Leader and attend courses where possible to extend their expertise.
- RE work is regularly displayed, often linked to the church's year, and the RE section on our website is a source of useful information and an interesting record of what the children achieve.
- pupils are helped to understand the purpose of RE, to talk confidently about their beliefs and ideas things they have learnt and to take their knowledge and enthusiasm with them to the secondary school.
- close links with the church community are encouraged so pupils can see Christian life, worship and commitments at first hand
- we recognise that our pupils come from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds and welcome this diversity. The RE programme seeks to be sensitive to the home background of each child; it is not the function of RE to promote or disparage particular religious views.

The RE curriculum

Norton St. Nicholas is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School and RE is the responsibility of school governors. The governors have adopted the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE 2012 in line with Diocesan recommendations and supplement this with the Diocese of St. Albans' Units of work on Christianity. This is to ensure that Christianity plays the central role in the curriculum as required in a VA school. Appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is given, also in keeping with Agreed Syllabus. In this way our pupils gain both an in-depth view of Christianity and a positive awareness of other faiths.

Governors and local churches play an important role in supporting and enriching our RE curriculum. One Foundation Governor, the parish priest, acts as a link with the RE Subject leader and helps develop and monitor what happens in RE. This enables us to prepare for and follow-up the denominational inspection of our RE which, in line with other VA schools, takes place every few years. Our most recent report (2008) is available from the school, Diocese of Albans or on the National Society (National Society for Promoting Religious Education) website.

The aims of RE at Norton St. Nicholas Primary

We agree that RE in church schools should help pupils to:

- think theologically and explore the great questions of life and death, meaning and purpose;
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief;
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenge of Jesus' teaching in a pluralist and post-modern society;
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text;
- recognise that faith is not based on a positive balance of probabilities but on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world;
- respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living;
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious;
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions;
- become active citizens, fully involved with their neighbour;
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world;
- understand how religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

The Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus gives details of the importance of RE in the curriculum as seen from a national perspective. The syllabus is built around two Attainment Targets: 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'

Time allocation

Our policy is to provide at least 5% curriculum time for RE. This works out at about 75 minutes per week at Key Stage 2 and 70 minutes per week at Key Stage 1. Approximately 30 minutes a week of teacher-directed time is provided for reception pupils, who must receive RE according to the Agreed Syllabus but for whom there is no time recommendation in the documents above.

This does not include collective worship time, even where an assembly complements or provides a starting point for curricular work.

The programmes of study in the Agreed Syllabus develop continuity and progression in RE. It details requirements for 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion' 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 Agreed Syllabus also sets out attainment targets for RE and gives level descriptions by which pupils' progress may be assessed.

Norton St. Nicholas scheme of work

The school follows the Hertfordshire Scheme of Work for RE; this is based on the Agreed Syllabus. Additional Christianity units, taken from the St Albans' Diocese Additional Units publication, are added to ensure the RE taught meets the 5% timing and 2/3 Christianity expectations for a VA school.

The scheme of work is available from the Subject Leader and shows which areas of the Agreed Syllabus are covered / adapted. The Agreed Syllabus is also available for inspection in school.

Teaching and learning styles

We are using increasingly varied and active ways of working which include art and drama, debating, visits, posters, photos, videos and interactive displays. In particular, we recognise the importance of teaching the two attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus (learning about religion and learning from religion) in a balanced way, and our new schemes of work are written to encourage this.

Matching work to pupils' needs

Whole school policy with regard to special needs and differentiation applies to religious education and the INCO will give advice on adapting work. However, teachers should be aware that some children have additional experience of a religion through family practice and may show greater ability and understanding as a result.

Assessment, recording and reporting

Our pupils' work in RE is assessed. We are not assessing degrees of spirituality but their knowledge, skills and understanding and we believe it is important that their progress is acknowledged, just as in any other subject. We are also required by law to report on pupils' progress and attainment in religious education to parents. The Agreed Syllabus provides descriptions of levels of attainment which we use as a basis for reporting.

Staff bring pupils' work to religious education briefings periodically. This has helped staff clarify their understanding of what makes for quality learning in religious education. The subject leader has a bank of examples, designed to help judge attainment and progress. Through annual reports to parents we aim to make specific, individual, accurate comments on a child's progress, based on the monitoring of work in relation to the religious education attainment targets. We transfer this information to the receiving school when pupils leave.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice and, in particular, monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom.

The Subject leader and the RE Foundation governor complete a series of evaluative tasks including observing lessons, interviewing pupils, visiting classrooms and sampling/scrutiny of children's work.

Visits and visitors

Visits and visitors provide powerful learning experiences for both teacher and pupils and are actively encouraged.

Professional development for staff

The school is committed to ensuring all staff are well equipped to teach RE and acknowledges that no teacher can be an instant expert in six religions. The subject leader has developed several strategies for supporting staff who need to develop subject knowledge, skills and personal confidence in teaching RE. Introductory reading material, videos and web-based resources, team-teaching, after school briefings and sessions with another teacher are available to supplement local authority and Diocesan courses.

Written: June 2012

Reviewed: March 2016

Next Review Date: July 2017

This policy has been reviewed and has been assessed as being compliant with the requirements of the Equality Act 2010

Appendix 1

Provision for withdrawal from religious education

- ◆ 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 Head teacher if they wish to withdraw their child. It is hoped that, in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached and arrangements for alternative religious education or supervision made.
- ◆ Teachers in this school do not withdraw from teaching RE, but PPA cover teachers and the subject leaders may cover the teaching of particular classes as appropriate in different years.

Appendix 2

RE and its relationship to Collective worship

In law, RE and collective worship are distinct. RE 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 Norton St. Nicholas, 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 religious communities. These complement and bring depth to our RE programme. A separate policy is available for collective worship.

Appendix 3

Contribution to spiritual, moral, social, cultural development

These are areas of a pupil's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. RE 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
- ◆ providing a forum for pupils to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and moral values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by
- ◆ encouraging social awareness e.g. an understanding of others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of 'community'
- ◆ 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