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St Berteline's C of E Aided Primary School

Religious Education Policy

The importance of Religious Education

To a church school, religious education and collective worship should be seen as part of an integrated experience, with collective worship acting as an expression of what is taught in many RE lessons. Pupils gain a religious education in its fullest sense in a church school through good, well-planned and well organised collective worship, through the example of Christian teachers and through the quality of RE teaching.

The Way Ahead, para 4.14

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

Religious Education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

(Religious Education the non-statutory national framework.)

Religious Education makes a distinctive contribution to pupils' learning by enabling them to reflect upon themselves as whole people, experiencing life through the body, the mind and the spirit. The purpose of Religious Education is to help pupils understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

(Cheshire Agreed Syllabus 'Encounter and Response')

Introduction

St Berteline's was founded as part of the Diocesan response to Church of England Education in Runcorn. It is one of three sister schools, along with All Saints and St Mary's. The school takes children predominantly from the local catchment area but we also have a few children whose families choose to travel some distance to bring their child to a Church of England school.

Our commitment at the school is to create an atmosphere which encourages children and adults to grow as Christians, i.e. someone who can claim Jesus Christ is God. We are concerned, like parents, about the total development of each child, physically, academically, morally and spiritually and we strive to surround the children with Christian values, so that they grow up in the love of Christ.

At St Berteline's the spiritual and moral development of our children underpins all aspects of our school life and it is not limited to the teaching of Religious Education. We have a separate Spirituality Policy focussing on spiritual development as well as a policy on Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural education at St Berteline's.

We believe that Christian principles are caught as much as taught and we therefore take great care to demonstrate Christian love within our school through the many different relationships we share. Worship, tolerance, respect for others, concern for the less fortunate, forgiveness, thankfulness and friendship surround each child and we hope that this will prepare each child to go out into God's world with understanding and compassion.

Legal Requirements

As St Berteline's is a Church of England Aided school, Religious Education must be taught in accordance with the Trust Deed and should reflect the rites, practices and beliefs of the Church of England. The Governing Body is responsible for the subject in the school. This is delegated to the Headteacher and the Religious Education subject co-ordinator on a daily basis. Following the Diocese of Chester Guidelines for Religious Education, the majority of work in Religious Education will be based on the Christian faith with other major world religions featuring regularly in our work.

Religious Education will be allocated not less than 5% of the timetable. In KS1 this amounts to approximately 90 minutes per week totalling 72 hours over the year. In KS2, children should be taught Religious Education for approximately 140 minutes per week totalling 90 hours over the year. At Saint Berteline's Church of England school, the staff ensure coverage by block planning units of work for each half term. Provision is made for mixed year classes.

Withdrawals

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum. In this event, the school will undertake responsibility for the supervision of withdrawn pupils with regard to health and safety, alternative work will be provided. However it must be stressed that children will encounter Christian religious practices throughout the whole day at St Berteline's school and so it would be impossible to exempt the children from the Christian ethos which underpins the whole of our school life.

Aims

The purpose of teaching Religious Education in school is:

- to show children that Christianity is about following the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is relevant to their daily lives.
- to extend children's ability to reflect upon themselves as whole people, experiencing life through body, mind and spirit.
- to help understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Principles

We aim through our teaching:

- to provide a course of Religious Education within the framework of the *Diocese of Chester Religious Education Scheme of Work* appropriate to the educational needs of the children in our school, at their different stages of development.
- to contribute to the spiritual, social, moral and cultural development of the school as a caring community and the pupils as individuals.
- to assist and encourage experience of Christian life and worship.
- to encourage an understanding and appreciation of the rich diversity of religious belief and practice in society today through study of major world religions.

We aim to encourage children in our school:

- to grow in awareness of others through learning activities involving sharing and co-operation and to develop trust and respect for others.
- to formulate their own sense of purpose in life and to embark upon a personal search for a faith by which to live.
- to learn something of the religious experiences of others.
- to develop their own beliefs, values and ideals in the light of their experiences.
- to develop respect for other people, their beliefs and their life-styles.
- to develop an enquiring attitude towards religion and to explore activities of prayer and worship.

Implementation

- In the main, Religious Education will be taught as a discrete subject although the approach may vary. For example in KS1 it may be more appropriate to integrate some areas of the Religious Study programme into a general topic with a thematic approach. Nevertheless, there will be discrete RE learning objectives.
- Religious Education in school is organized using a whole school overview plan.
- Wherever possible all children will learn from first hand experience or primary source material as well as through the use of outside speakers with relevant experience and audio-visual aids. Visits to places of worship, drama workshops and visiting theatre companies also support the work of Religious Education in school.
- Religious Education will be taught throughout the school beginning in the Foundation Stage.
- Religious Education is mainly delivered by the class teacher with teaching supported by clergy from local churches and visiting speakers.
- Whole school assemblies and worship further support children's learning.
- Religious Education may be taught in a 'whole class' setting, but with flexibility to allow for discussion, questioning and reflection in small groups and individually.
- Visits to places of worship and the use of artefacts will be used to enhance children's understanding of different religions.

Please note the following statement on behalf of the Chester Diocesan Board of Education.

“In all church schools, collective worship and the whole ethos are based on the teachings of the Church of England. This makes our schools distinctively Christian.

However, within this Christian environment, it is entirely appropriate and necessary in today’s world, that respect for the great world faiths is fostered in Religious Education. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other faiths which is consistent with the school’s loyalty to its Christian foundation. This approach provides learners with a greater understanding of the world and society in which they are growing up. Children are able to see the faith of others in relation to their own.

We seek to build up harmonious relations within communities, promoting inclusion for all and combating the evils of racism.

In order to successfully achieve our aims, we believe it is appropriate for children to have supervised visits to places of worship of different faiths and also to hear from adherents of those faiths about their beliefs. Such events must always be under the supervision of members of staff ensuring that such events are only to provide information.”

PLANNING

Long term planning

Long term plans for the teaching of RE reflect the broad overview of content as laid out in the Diocesan Scheme of Work as well as the new ‘Understanding Christianity’ materials produced by the Church of England Education Department and RE Today Services. We have organised St Bertelme’s Scheme of Work around twelve themes which are planned over a two year cycle. At the beginning of each academic year the teachers plan the sequence of the themes for the year. These are whole school themes which have detailed learning objectives. The teachers will differentiate the work planned for their particular age group of children thus enabling progression.

When teaching about Christianity, there are a set of key Christian concepts which underpin all of our teaching and learning. These are listed below:

- Christian Community (Church)
- God’s Love (creation, peace, grace, agape)
- Incarnation (logos)
- Good News (gospel)
- Discipleship (covenant)
- Kingdom of God (temptation, forgiveness, salvation)
- Reconciliation with God
- Redemption
- Resurrection (eternal life, hope)
- Salvation
- Sin (repentance)
- Trinity

The same Christian concepts are used as the foundation stones for much of our worship. NB: More details of these Key Christian Concepts can be found in the supplementary guidance prepared by the Diocese.

Medium Term Planning

Medium term planning is clearly progressive throughout the school with regards to the theme being studied. We ensure that RE objectives/levels/outcomes are developmental throughout the key stages (see Scheme of Work). There is always an emphasis on in depth learning that is skill driven being balanced with acquired knowledge.

In addition, we always try to base our RE learning on a quality stimulus, eg a visit or other first hand experience. Opportunities for creative expression are given. Pupils are encouraged to develop an understanding of beliefs and values of others whilst at the same time being empowered to apply the ideas to their own lives and develop their own values and beliefs.

Short Term Planning

Lessons are well structured and are centred around a planned theme. Each lesson will have a learning objective. Lessons engage pupils with RE material giving them opportunity to enquire into RE led questions, eg Who was Jesus?

Special Educational Needs

Children with special educational needs will work alongside the other children in their group, as in other curriculum areas. We aim to meet the full entitlement of every child in our school. To optimize inclusion the children's differing needs for learning will be addressed through differentiated activities. Individual Support Plans may support individual children who are identified as having special educational needs or disabilities. These will specify differentiated learning, teaching and assessment. (See separate SEND school policy)

Single Equality Duty

Religious Education as an essential part of the curriculum should be relevant, worthwhile and accessible to all. It should express that all pupils are loved and valued by God as part of creation. We aim to help the children in our school to respect themselves and to be sensitive to the needs of others. (For further details see our Single Equality Duty Policy 2012).

Resources

Resources are stored in the storeroom near the library and further resources, such as DVDs are in the staffroom.

Features of Progression

Progress in RE can be characterised by:

- acquiring wider and more detailed knowledge of religious beliefs and practices.
- deepening understanding of the meaning of stories, symbols, events and practices.
- more fluent and competent use of religious language and terminology.

- increased levels in skills of responding to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitment.

As they move through key stages 1 and 2 children progress:

from:	to:
using everyday language	increasingly precise use of religious vocabulary
personal knowledge of a few areas of RE	understanding a wider range of areas and the links between them.
unstructured exploration	more systematic investigation of questions
identifying what is of value and concern to themselves or others.	asking questions and suggesting answers to moral and religious questions.

Assessment, Reporting and Record Keeping

- Assessment opportunities are linked to the key concepts and are built in as a natural part of the learning process. The staff appreciate that assessment of progress in RE should be undertaken with great sensitivity, based upon the teacher's observations of the children in class or group discussions, activities carried out or recorded work. Assessments are usually carried out at the end of a unit of work but opportunities may arise within lessons. Particular note is taken where a child's achievement differs markedly from that of the rest of the class and this is recorded (on the whole child individual tracking system).
- Assessments will inform future planning, reporting to parents and curriculum monitoring by the co-ordinator and the Headteacher.
- Summative reports to parents will be made at the end of the year. (Summer Term).
- Portfolios of RE evidence for each year group are maintained. This evidence is assessed, levelled and used to moderate our judgements in relation to individual attainment. However, it must be stressed that it is impossible to encapture evidence of certain elements of RE attainment since the very nature of the subject involves personal and intrinsic response which may not or cannot necessarily be quantified or recorded.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- The Headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation.
- From time to time the Governors will be involved in the observation of RE and monitoring of lessons.
- The co-ordinator will assist the Headteacher by monitoring long term and medium term plans.
- The co-ordinator will manage resources.
- The co-ordinator will endeavour to keep up to date with information, initiatives and developments in Religious Education and disseminate this as appropriate.
- The co-ordinator will attend Diocesan training to improve the quality of RE teaching and learning in the school.
- The co-ordinator will be aware of staff development needs and encourage continuing professional development.
- The co-ordinator will facilitate the sharing of good practice.

- The co-ordinator will be responsible for drawing up an action plan for Religious Education. This will be an annual plan and should be informed by this policy.

References

Diocese of Chester new Scheme of Work

Understanding Christianity

A Guide to Effective Planning & Assessment for Teaching Aspects of Christianity in Church Schools.
(Chester Diocese).

St Berteline's C of E Primary School Spirituality Policy

St Berteline's C of E Primary School Spiritual, Moral, Social, Cultural Education Policy

St Berteline's C of E Primary School Inclusion Policy

St Berteline's C of E Primary School Equality & Diversity Policy