

Policy for Religious Education

Sir Robert Geffery's School – a School for Enthusiasts

Where we 'live life in its fullness' (John 10.10) knowing that God is our Strength and with His help we will be the best we can.

Our aim is to provide a living Christian school environment where we strive for each child to develop a passion for learning and a sense of excitement in their own achievement and that of others.

Our vision is that our school will provide its children and staff with:

- Christian values and beliefs that are expressed through a loving, caring and safe environment
- The ability to think critically, the courage to question injustice, and a willingness to take the lead, and to look out for others.
- A family atmosphere that encourages a sense of belonging and results in the whole school working as a team
- A nurturing and growth of both self confidence and self esteem
- Broad and balanced experiences that prepare for 21st century sustainable living
- A sense of pride in the school and many opportunities to celebrate effort, success and achievement
- The promotion of respect for oneself, others and the environment
- An ability to strive for excellence
- A lasting love, enthusiasm and zest for learning through experiencing an exciting curriculum
- A fully inclusive school where each individual is highly valued and encouraged to reach their full potential
- Opportunities that encourage independence, cooperation, self discipline and an active global perspective

Sir Robert Geffery's School is a Voluntary Aided School rooted in its historic foundation and strengthened by its Church of England character. The school is proud to carry on the vision of Sir Robert Geffery, born in the parish of Landrake, who died three hundred years ago, leaving money in trust for the education of the children of Landrake and surrounding areas. He appointed the Worshipful Company of Ironmongers as Trustees. The school continues to welcome the support and involvement of the Ironmongers' Company which has overseen the Trust since its foundation and which appoints the Foundation Governors. Proud of our tradition, we at the school, like Sir Robert Geffery, have a forward looking vision.

The school lies within the Diocese of Truro and enjoys strong links with the village church of St. Michael. The Christian values are central to the life and ethos and are vital to the realisation of the aims of the school.

Sir Robert Geffery's School recognises that every child is unique and special, and sets out to ensure that each fulfils their true potential. The school respects ethnic, cultural and religious diversity and actively promotes good personal relationships.

We strongly believe that to achieve our aims, we must build and maintain a strong working partnership between parents, governors, school and community.

Religious Education at Sir Robert Geffery's School

Sir Robert Geffery's is a Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, and as such the Governors, in consultation with the Headteacher, have decided to follow the advice for the Diocese and adopt the current Cornwall Agreed Religious Education Syllabus enhanced by 'Understanding Christianity' and 'RE Today' resources and schemes.

Introduction

The importance of religious education to the curriculum

Religious education is about the distinctive ways in which human beings express their understanding and experiences of life. It provides pupils with opportunities to reflect upon human experiences that give rise to fundamental questions of life and death and to consider values and commitments. This is done in the context of some of the world's living faiths. It provides an opportunity to study Christianity and the principal religions of Britain. The subject contributes to the development of the pupils' own beliefs and values and a sense of identity. The subject promotes attitudes and values necessary for responsible citizenship in a democratic and pluralistic society. Religious education engenders respect for the beliefs and values of others. It does not promote a religion or particular set of beliefs. This kind of nurturing is the privilege of the home and faith communities to which pupils belong. The religious education taught in our school is based on Cornwall's Agreed Syllabus (published 2020).

In Religious Education at Sir Robert Geffery's School we aim that pupils might:-

- Acquire and develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and its impact on our local community, and on our society today
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of some of the other principle religious traditions represented in Great Britain today
- Develop a sense of respect for religious traditions, beliefs and practice.
- Grow in their spiritual development
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery
- Develop skills and attitudes which will support their personal, moral, social and cultural development (See locally agreed for specific skills and attitudes)
- Explore some questions of meaning and consider how the world's religions have responded to them.
- Think about their own beliefs and values in the light of the beliefs of others, both religious and non religious, and the values of the school community.
- Encourage a reflective approach to living.
- To provide pupils with opportunities to reflect upon their experiences of life.
- Adapt and apply the models provided by the REsearchers to support critical and reflective thinking when learning about and learning from religion.

Expectations

In line with the new National Curriculum, the performance of the majority of pupils should be meeting the expectations for their year groups and in line with their writing and reading levels.

The aims of religious education and how these contribute to the school's aims

The school aims to:

- encourage a reflective approach to thinking and living;
- enable the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the principal religions of Britain;

- provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their experiences of life;
- contribute to the development of their own beliefs and values.

In addition to these aims, we expect pupils to develop attitudes such as a willingness to explore the religious and spiritual experiences of humanity and a commitment to searching with an open mind

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

- Religious education is taught nearly every week at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 for about one hour.
- The pupils spend the majority of curriculum time studying Christianity, as that is what is well represented in our own community.
- At Key Stage 1 pupils learn about the principal religions of Britain by studying a relevant aspect of one of the religions in every unit of work. In this way, pupils are introduced to the wider concept of religion and to the richness and diversity of world faiths. At KS1 Islam and Judaism are studied.
- At Key Stage 2 pupils study discretely Judaism, Islam and Hinduism alongside Christianity.
- There is a suitable balance between expecting pupils to express their own ideas through speaking and listening and to record what they have learned through writing, illustrations and diagrams.
- Teachers provide stimulating and challenging experiences that enable pupils to gain enjoyment from their studies.
- Regular opportunities for visits to places of interest and visitors to school are regular features of the curriculum. In this way, pupils have first-hand experiences of the religious traditions.
- The learning questions identified in the units of work cover the full entitlement for pupils.
- In both key stages an RE week occurs twice a year to raise the profile and enrich the RE curriculum.

Approaches to the Teaching and Learning of RE

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills including the use of Bloom's Taxonomy to underpin the learning objectives, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

The development and use of the RE-searchers characters:

Ask it all Ava - Ava likes talking to religious people about what they believe and do. She listens carefully to those she interviews in order to learn how people's backgrounds, families, communities and traditions shape their lives. She compares these answers with her own, those of other believers and those of religious traditions in general.

Debate it all Derek - Derek is interested in what is true and what is right. He asks himself and others Big Questions such as: 'Is there a God?', 'What happens after we die?' and 'What is good and evil?' He likes to think on his own and with others about where religions agree and disagree to decide which views he agrees with (if any) and always seeks to give good reasons and provide evidence for his beliefs.

Have a go Hugo - Hugo likes to take part in religious activities. He does this in order to try to understand religious people and to see what it feels like to join in. He believes that feelings are more important than beliefs when trying to understand religious people. He is interested in what people feel to be true in their hearts rather than what they believe to be true in their heads. He wants to know or imagine what it feels like to be religious and to be able to sympathise with those that are.

See the story Suzie - Suzie likes to compare stories and different versions of the same story. She likes to develop her own interpretation of these stories and explore her own responses and reactions. Suzie likes to engage with the characters, the storyline and different interpretations of the same story. She suggests ways in which religious people's lives might be affected by the way they understand the religious stories.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities to the school. With this in mind:

- Pupils are provided with as much first-hand experience of the principal religions as possible and artefacts and authentic resources are used wherever possible.
- Where religious artefacts are used, they are treated with the respect they would be given if they were being used in their actual setting for worship.
- Religious education is taught with the following principles in mind:

The role of the school is not to seek commitment by the pupils to a particular religion. Teachers should not use the first person (avoid "I think that ..."). Teachers should not assume that pupils are members of any faith community. Therefore, teachers should not use the second person in the context of describing what a pupil does or believes (avoid "When you go to church ..." rather - "When Christians/Jews go to church/synagogue ..."). The integrity of pupils is respected and they are never asked or expected to believe the claims of the Bible.

- Biblical material is presented as the sacred text of a believing community which regards it as the Word of God.
- Biblical stories are used to identify what they teach believers about God and his relationship with people.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore the themes they perceive in the story.
- The experiences and views that pupils bring from home and faith communities are always valued.

We utilise metacognitive approaches to support the communication of thoughts, ideas and the understanding of religion. By encouraging and enabling pupils to reflect on the success and quality of their own thinking/learning, pupils will be encouraged to take greater responsibility for it. When the learning relates to their own worldview, such critical analysis will need to be conducted sensitively and respectfully within a safe environment or where necessary not at all. Where this self-reflexive questioning elicits philosophical questions surrounding the nature of truth and how it is attained, our readiness for learning in RE; the nature of Religion and the appropriateness of our pedagogical methodologies in RE, these should be pursued in so far that that they support the delivery of the curriculum and the achievement of goals stated in this document.

In addition to this the RE curriculum should look to make links with the school's commitment to outdoor learning and the study and development of values championed by the school.

Assessment and Recording

- Annual reports for all pupils are completed once per year based on assessments carried out after each unit of work. Reports include teacher assessment based on attainment, effort and progress within RE. Learning outcomes and assessment activities are identified in each unit of work in the scheme.
- Work in religious education is assessed in accordance with the school assessment policy.

WINDOWS, MIRRORS AND DOORS

This is used as a way to self reflect and to develop the use of the skills and knowledge gained

Organisation

Within KS2 pupils are taught by an RE subject specialist teacher, whereas in KS1 content is delivered by the class teacher. All activities are based on the scheme of work. Teachers organise activities so that pupils of all ages work as a whole class, in small groups and individually over time

Teachers need to differentiate materials to prepare to meet the needs for individual children for each unit of work rather than for each lesson. Teachers should seek guidance from the subject leader if required in relation to this.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

At Sir Robert Geffery's School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties they may have about the policy, provision and practice of religious education.

Learning Resources

Learning resources (including Bibles) are kept in classrooms. All books, fiction and non-fiction are kept in the library.

The Reverend Laura will support lessons and provide extra resources when necessary, alongside those clergy in the Diocesan team for the area.

ICT: Some units of work will expect that the pupils present their work using ICT. Where this is the case teachers should ensure that all pupils complete it because it forms part of their entitlement in relation to ICT.

The school has a wide range of outdoor spaces available, which should, where appropriate, be used to support the teaching of R.E. and promote the Christian values championed by the school, alongside the aims as stated in this document.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious education makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The scheme of work identifies opportunities for pupils to explore their own feelings and beliefs, to study the beliefs and values of others, to empathise with others, to ask puzzling questions and explore the responses from the faith communities.

Personal, Social and Health Education

There are links with PSHE when religious education explores self-awareness, inner feelings and emotions, and personal relationships. Those areas developing a respect for the beliefs and values of others also make a major contribution. The use of appropriate teaching and learning styles contributes to this. Group work provides opportunities for collaboration. Discussions are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Religious education differs from PSHE in that it explicitly explores how the principal religions address the issues.

How the subject is monitored and evaluated

All teachers are responsible for monitoring standards under the direction of the Headteacher.

Monitoring activities are planned across the year in line with the school's monitoring programme.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme. The subject leader is responsible for reporting to the governors' curriculum committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

- ◆ **THIS DOCUMENT IS a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for RELIGIOUS EDUCATION at Sir Robert Geffery's School.**
- ◆ **IT WAS DEVELOPED during the Spring Term of 2021 through a process of consultation with teaching staff.**
- ◆ **IT WAS APPROVED by the Pupil and Curriculum Committee on 29th April 2021**