



St. Paul's C. of E. Primary School

March 2006

Policy for Religious Education

The Nature of Religious Education

Religious Education is an important area of the curriculum. It explores areas related to spiritual experiences such as celebration, awe and wonder, commitment, goodness and joy. It involves learning about particular religious traditions in our own country and those around the world. This focuses on Christianity as the main religion in our community, as well as other major world faiths. This school actively encourages empathy and mutual respect and children are encouraged to explore the cultures and religious beliefs of people other than themselves. Children are encouraged to exercise tolerance, and show consideration and appreciation of cultural and religious difference. They are supported to develop skills of critical appraisal in order to guard against bias, indoctrination, superstition and falsehood, and to have the ability to put forward their own views and share their own beliefs.

It is important to be aware of the difference between Religious Education and Religious Nurture. Nurture in any religion is principally the task of the parent and the faith community to which they belong (e.g., through the various means and methods established by the faith community). In school our role is to educate, to help children to understand the meaning and nature of religion and to equip them with the knowledge and attitudes necessary for them to be able to form their own opinions about religion at their own individual level of understanding. Teachers must not attempt to transfer their own opinions and beliefs to their students.

The school policy reflects the consensus of opinion of the whole teaching staff. It has been reviewed through staff discussion and was agreed by the governing body at theirmeeting.

The implementation of this policy is the responsibility of all staff.

Aim Statement

“Everyone working together to create a caring Christian learning environment which inspires each child to celebrate their unique potential and become a responsible, considerate, involved and happy member of God’s World”

The Legal Requirements

Religious Education is not included in the National Curriculum but it is a statutory requirement as part of the basic curriculum. In October 2004 a ‘Non Statutory Framework for RE’ was published, offering guidance to schools on what should be taught as part of the RE

curriculum. This is a helpful document but it is not compulsory. All schools are required to follow the guidelines outlined in the Local Agreed Syllabus. Our school follows the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus. As part of their Agreed Syllabus, Warwickshire provides 'Units of Work' and these form the major part of our scheme of work for Religious Education. Teachers are encouraged to adapt and supplement the units to match the needs of the pupils. All children are legally required to attend RE lessons, unless parents specifically withdraw them on religious grounds.

Aims in the Teaching of Religious Education

The Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education states the following aims of religious education:

- To develop awareness of the spiritual and moral dimensions of life-experiences, identify questions and issues which they raise, and respond in a variety of ways to them;
- To develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and value systems represented in Great Britain;
- To develop understanding of what it might mean to be committed to a religious tradition;
- To reflect on their own experiences, beliefs and values and develop personal responses to ultimate questions in the light of their studies;
- To have confidence in their own viewpoint whilst engaging in open and honest enquiry; respecting the right of others to hold beliefs different from their own in a religiously diverse society.

Each of these aims contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural education of pupils.

Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, 2002

There are three aspects in the structure of the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for RE:

Aspect One: Awareness of life experiences

Aspect Two: Knowledge and Understanding of Religious Traditions

Aspect Three: Exploring, Reflecting and Responding

The Units select specific Areas of Study to focus on within each of the three aspects.

Warwickshire Statutory Requirements for Religious Education:

Foundation Stage

Schools are required:

- To provide all registered pupils with RE. In Warwickshire this includes the reception year of the Foundation Stage. There is no requirement to follow a programme of study for RE in Reception.
- To teach RE within the context of the *Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage* (QCA, 2000).

- To select explicit religious material from the Christian tradition and two others. This should not exceed two traditions in any one unit.

Key Stage 1

Schools are required:

- To address Aspects One and Two and their respective Areas of Study, ensuring coverage of two-thirds of the elements in each Area of Study.
- To employ Aspect Three throughout.
- To ensure that in each unit of work all three aspects are employed and linked.
- To draw religious content from the Christian and Muslim traditions and one other of the school's choice.
- To 'encounter' the three remaining traditions on one occasion
- To report on pupils' attainment.
- To ensure RE receives at least 5% of curriculum time.

Key Stage 2

Schools are required:

- To address Aspects One and Two and their respective Areas of Study, ensuring coverage of all the elements in each Area of Study.
- To employ Aspect Three throughout.
- To ensure that in each unit of work all three aspects are employed and linked.
- To draw religious content from the Christian, Hindu and Sikh traditions and one other of the school's choice.
- To 'encounter' the two remaining traditions on at least two occasions.
- To report on pupils' attainment.
- To ensure RE receives at least 5% of curriculum time.

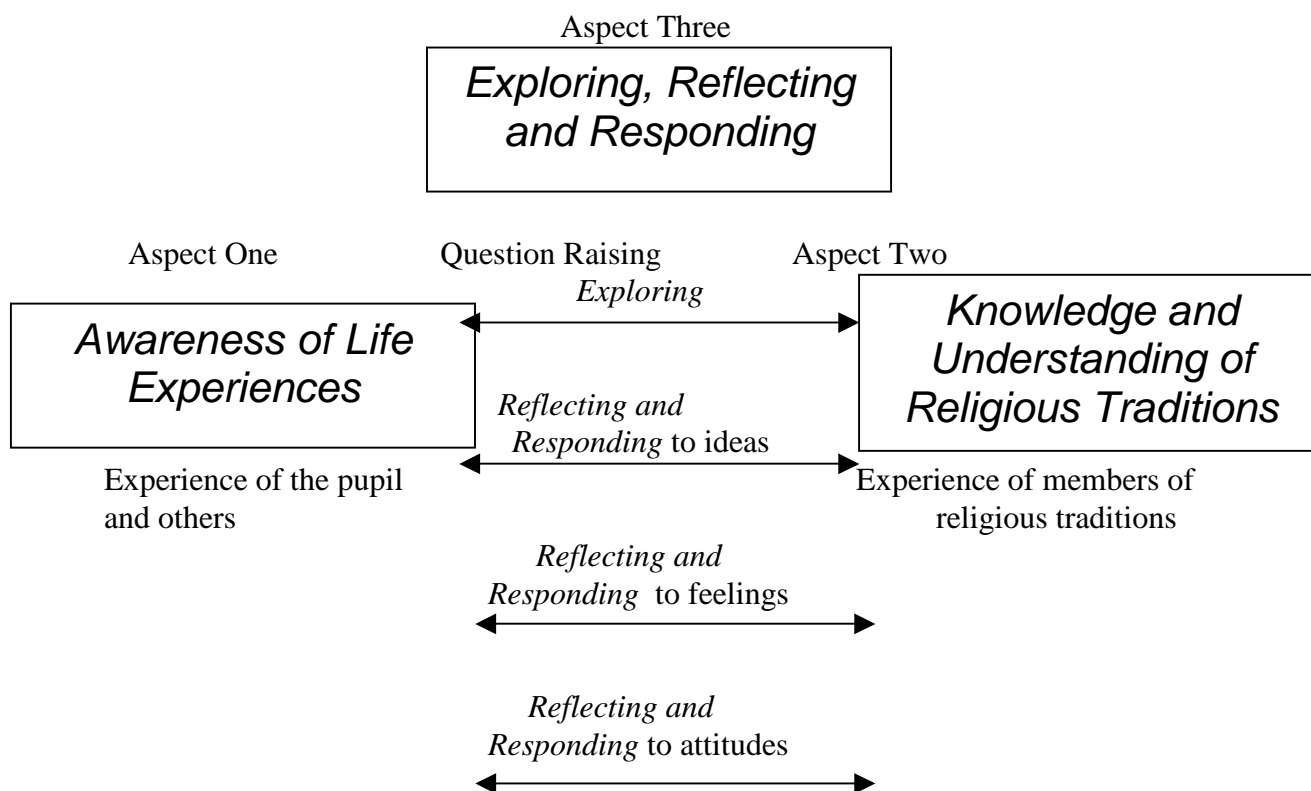
Implementation - Learning and Teaching Approaches

The RE Curriculum should include opportunities for children to learn through:

- Experiencing visits to places of worship to understand their special purpose.
- Seeing how periods of stillness and silence are used by some people in worship or meditation.
- Engaging through their sense with buildings, imagery, movement, music and artefacts to begin to understand ways in which light, colour, pattern, sound, tastes and smells contribute to worship.
- Sharing their own experience of worship, where appropriate, and that of others, of aspects of worship or meditation such as prayer, praise or offering, recognising that these are important experiences for some people.
- Being introduced to some of the purposes for which people pray or meditate.
- Beginning to consider what people mean when they say 'God'.

The 'Bridging' Process

It is an essential aspect of the planning and teaching of RE to link the three aspects of RE. This is called the 'bridging' process. Teachers start the RE unit of work with a concept the children experience in their everyday lives e.g. a special meal, wearing a uniform, important people in their lives. This forms the foundation for the religious concept and the two are linked together e.g. a special meal at home is linked to the Communion Meal, the wearing of school uniform is linked to the 5Ks of Sikhism. The religious concept is further developed as the unit progresses and concludes with the teacher returning to the child's own experience and developing a spiritual response to the learning.



Resources

We have built up an extensive collection of artefacts and books related to the six major world religions. These are used for teaching aids and to prompt and enhance the children's learning. These will continue to be developed over the next few years, with an emphasis on the development of artefacts related to Judaism and Buddhism. In recent years several book packs related to aspects of RE have been added to our school library collection and are available for the children and staff to borrow.

Visits/Visitors

Wherever possible, meaningful visits to places of worship and the invitation of people from different religions into school are planned as part of the RE curriculum. Year One have visited the Sikh gurdwara and Sikh and Jewish visitors have done talks to various children on aspects of their religious beliefs. All children visit St Paul's Church regularly and the vicar Father Mick Vincent and the church children's worker do regular talks and presentations in assembly times and individual class lessons. Members of staff attended a meeting at a Buddhist Retreat to

further develop their understanding of Buddhist practices, teachings and meditation. The frequency and variety of planned visits in RE need to be developed further.

ICT

Where possible ICT is used as a vehicle for teaching and learning in RE. Staff make use of their interactive whiteboards and tablet computers to explore aspects of religion using Power Point presentations, DVDs, CD ROMs and the Internet. Virtual tours of places of worship are used where actual visits are not possible. Children are able to use computers in the ICT suite to conduct their own research and knowledge development around the different religions.

Creativity and a Cross-Curricular Approach

Exploring RE through the creative arts is an area which is currently being developed within our school. Children use the mediums of art, drama, dance and music to respond to what they have learned and further develop their understanding. Where possible, RE is linked to other areas of the curriculum, such as history, geography, PSHE, literacy and mathematics. An 'RE Through Arts' week is currently being planned and is due to take place in the summer term of 2006. This will involve the whole school exploring their RE units through the creative mediums.

Spirituality

The children are encouraged to respond to what they have learned in RE through a time of stilling and reflection. Each class has a reflection area to prompt quiet consideration and response. These usually include a candle, some Christian symbols and pictures/photographs. Children are also encouraged to reflect upon assembly themes and stories in the same way. The nature of the response is left to the child.

Children's Work

Work in RE is not always in written form. It may include discussion, drama, dance, music or art. Work from Religious Education lessons is displayed at times within school. This encourages the children to understand that this aspect of school life is as equally important as other areas of the curriculum.

Assessment

Recording and reporting on children's work is in accordance with the school policy. Attitude and attainment in RE is reported in the report to parents at the end of the academic year. It includes a comment on knowledge and understanding and on skills in RE. Current assessment procedures in RE involve a termly assessment on a standard format for all foundation subjects. Children's names are moved around between three categories (above average, average and below average) as units are completed and attainment is considered. These documents are consulted when an overall judgement is reported in the report to parents. Teachers have the 8-level grid provided by Warwickshire to inform their assessments.

Current assessment procedures in RE need to be monitored and evaluated to ensure they are in keeping with the guidelines of the Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus.

This policy was agreed at the _____ meeting of the Governing Body and will be reviewed in

Background documentation:-

S.A.C.R.E. Report
Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus & units of work
Non-Statutory Framework for Religious Education.