



# Religious Education Policy

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## **Introduction**

Religious Education (RE) is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states ‘Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils’.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes “a major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned arguments and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world”. (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013).

## **The Aim of Religious Education**

The aim of teaching Religious Education is to support and challenge pupils to reflect upon, develop and affirm their own beliefs, values, and attitudes and those of others through an exploration of shared human experiences and to understand the place and significance of religion in the contemporary world. The scheme of work, which is in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus, is relevant, exciting, thought-provoking, and accessible to all children.

## **The Implementation of the Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education**

The School’s programme of study for RE is in accordance with The Cornwall Agreed RE Syllabus - Cornwall Kernewek 2020. We have invested in a programme for Religious Education called Jigsaw RE. Jigsaw RE is a comprehensive scheme of work for the whole school from nursery through to Year 6. Jigsaw RE supports children’s SMSC, British Values anti-radicalisation, critical thinking, growth mindset and personal development.

## **The aims of our RE, using the Jigsaw RE Scheme of Work**

Jigsaw RE meets the requirements of our locally agreed syllabus and is aligned to the non-statutory guidance.

By following Jigsaw RE at Beacon we intend that Religious Education will:-

- 1 Adopt an enquiry- based approach as recommended by Ofsted, beginning with the children’s own life experience before moving into learning about and from religion.
- 2 Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. It develops pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- 3 Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional, and social ethics; and to express their responses.
- 4 Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- 5 Teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- 6 Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity, and compassion.
- 7 Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.

8 Nurture children's own spiritual development.

### **The Spiritual Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Children**

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires schools to 'promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils at the school and in society' (paragraph 1:2) through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum. Religious Education plays an important role, along with all other curriculum areas in promoting the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of children.

What children learn about others and themselves in RE and across the curriculum they can apply in their daily lives.

### **The Approach to Religious Education**

At Beacon Academy we are going to take a scholarly approach to RE and teach our children to be Theologians. The knowledge and learning we provide will support children to discuss religious ideas and make connections in their own lives. Discussions will support children to explore and reflect on their own views and opinions and compare these to the views of others. Children will reflect on local values and how these compare within Cornwall, the UK and Globally.

At Beacon Academy, we believe that there should be no presumptions made as to the religious backgrounds and beliefs and values of the children. All staff are expected to work together to achieve our aims, guided by our vision statement. We value the religious background of all members of the school community and hope that this will encourage individuals to share their own experiences with others freely.

All religions and their communities are treated with dignity, respect and sensitivity and we value the links that can be made between home, school, and a faith community. We acknowledge that each religion studied can contribute to the education of all our pupils.

We promote teaching in Religious Education that stresses open enquiry, the answering of 'big questions' and first-hand experiences wherever possible for both staff and children. The syllabus is implemented in school by means of a highly sensory approach, where children may look at and handle religious artefacts, hear religious music, or taste food which forms part of various religious traditions. Work in Religious Education builds on the pupils' own experiences and uses contemporary issues to stimulate discussion.

### **The Content of the Religious Education Programme**

The content of Religious Education draws on the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus 2020 and is set out in modules devised by the RE lead. The following world religions are studied.

- Christianity (taught through Understanding Christianity)
- Sanatana Dharma
- Judaism
- Islam
- Sikhism

### **Time Allocation**

At Beacon we will be blocking RE. Children will be delving into an enquiry every afternoon over one week. This will take place every half term, resulting in every year having looked at 6 enquiries in total. All pupils receive 6 hours of Religious Education per enquiry.

Over the whole year, class teachers must ensure that all children have equal access to the required

amount of Religious Education curriculum time.

### **Teaching and Resources**

Learning in Religious Education can be through direct teaching to the class or small groups: by providing direct hands-on experience with RE resources, such as photographs or artefacts; by teacher prepared materials such as worksheets; through stories, poetry, drama; debate and discussions; outdoor learning; music and art; through trips and visitors. A range of reference materials for Religious Education are available comprising, books, curriculum resources, online materials, and website links. Opportunities are carefully planned out to incorporate visits to places of worship in KS2 residential. There are also posters and artefact boxes.

### **SEND Provision**

Jigsaw RE is written as a universal core curriculum provision for all children. Inclusivity is part of its core philosophy. Teachers will add to and adapt the planning, where applicable, to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential.

To further help teachers adapt the teaching, for children in KS1 and KS2, each enquiry has exemplars for those children working towards the learning objective, at the expected level for this age group and those working beyond the expected level of achievement.

At Beacon you can find further information on our inclusive strategies to support pupils with SEND in RE on our website.

### **Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues**

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs.

Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should never feel obliged to discuss their own beliefs unless they feel comfortable doing so and can ensure that this will not influence or restrict the children's own expression.

### **Links with other curriculum areas and policies**

Religious Education has links with other areas of the curriculum including English, Geography, Music, Dance, History and Art. It is also linked to the way in which the school organises its Collective Worship.

For example, during the variety of forms of collective worship there will be time given for the members of the school community to reflect; there will be opportunities for spiritual development, a particular Religious Education theme may be developed; class teachers may use their year-group theme as part of an act of worship in the classroom; the overall framework for Religious Education may be used in planning collective worship for the whole school; and visitors from one of the religions being studied may take part or be involved in a whole school assembly. Religious Education also provides opportunities for teaching the following cross-curricular dimensions—Equal Opportunities, British Values, Personal, Social and Health Education, Child Protection Policy, Prevent Strategy.

### **Withdrawal from Religious Education**

It is recognised that parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education – in its entirety or in part. If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from Religious Education, then arrangements are made for that child to be withdrawn during Religious Education lessons by the class teacher in consultation with the Headteacher.

### **The Religious Education Subject Leader**

The Subject Leader for RE receives any written materials or information which arrives in school and is responsible for the development of Religious Education as a subject throughout the school. They are responsible for helping staff to plan Religious Education for a particular class; monitoring planning and content taught in Religious Education lessons by spending time in classrooms and reviewing children's work, as well as open discussions with pupils. The Subject Leader is also responsible for the purchase and storage of all RE resources.

Members of staff, as well as the Subject Leader are encouraged to attend courses, training, Hub meetings and other RE conferences such as LTRE when possible. Feedback will be given to staff on any new information and updates to support CPD, and work closely with the SLT to agree any actions needed.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RE curriculum is monitored and evaluated termly, through lesson observations, planning scrutiny, work scrutiny and conversations with children, staff, and pupils. This process is led by the Subject Leader but all staff and the RE Governor will take part.

The effectiveness of any training for Religious Education provided within the school, or by an external agency, is evaluated either by means of a written evaluation sheet, to be completed by staff after a course, or by verbal feedback at staff meeting.

Throughout the year, the staff cohort are encouraged to feedback information and ideas to the RE Leader. This may include evaluative comments as to how a particular curriculum unit is progressing, and the work that the children are undertaking.

### **Assessment**

Teachers are eager to ensure children are progressing with their learning throughout their RE. Therefore, each enquiry has a compulsory built-in assessment. This task is the formal opportunity for teacher assessment of the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This stand-alone evidence will be used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions, recorded work and annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in assessing whether a child is working at the expected level or towards or beyond it. Children are assessed over three aspects of learning:

- A personal resonance with or reflection on the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- Knowledge and understanding of the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- Evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question

These are tracked throughout the planning stage so that teachers can utilise the appropriate evidence accordingly. In line with non-statutory guidance issued by the RE Council in 2013, descriptors of these aspects utilise age-related expectations of working towards, working at the expected attainment and working beyond.