



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) POLICY

### Aims and Objectives

- to create a happy, caring, stimulating and safe environment which enables children to enjoy the learning process, be active and independent learners, developing both self-esteem and confidence.
- to encourage and expect high standards in all we do and to give each child equal opportunities to experience success at their own level of ability.
- to provide a broad, balanced, enriched and creative curriculum which allows children to develop intellectually, physically, socially and emotionally.
- to nurture respect for spiritual, moral and cultural values, tolerance of other religions, races and ways of life, consideration for the needs and feelings of others.
- to welcome and encourage the interest and participation of parents, governors, and other members of the community in the school so that children appreciate they are part of a wider community beyond the school and to support community cohesion.

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. It makes its own contribution to the school curriculum in terms of knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes, as well as sharing common ground with other subjects in contributing to the spiritual, moral and social development of pupils and preparing them for adult life. At Holbrook School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths and we address the fundamental questions in life. We help children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. They are given the opportunity to reflect on what it means to have a faith and develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help children to learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

### The legal position of religious education

The statutory requirements for religious education were set out in the 1944 Education act and then amended in the Education Act 1988 and restated in the Education act 1998. These requirements apply to all maintained schools. The statutory requirements state that:

- religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in reception class who are less than five years old
- parents have the right to withdraw their child from religious education lessons
- the subject should be taught according to an agreed syllabus in all County maintained and voluntary controlled schools



- religious education should be non-denominational
- the agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking into account of the teaching and practice of other religions represented in Great Britain
- the religious education syllabus is distinct from collective worship

Our school RE curriculum is based on the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus September 2003 and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.

### **Teaching and learning**

Our key principle is that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching allows children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their own spiritual development through reflection and discussion of a wide range of issues affecting the individual and his/her place in the world. Children are encouraged to think about their own views and values in relation to topics studied in RE.

Children build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali etc. to develop their religious thinking. Visits to local places of worship are encouraged and representatives of local religious groups are invited to come into school and talk with the children.

Children are encouraged to research into religious topics. They study particular faiths and compare the religious views of different faiths. Children discuss religious and moral issues as a whole class, working in groups or individually. Sometimes they may prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

At Holbrook we recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the task to the ability of the child. This can be achieved in a variety of ways:

- setting common tasks which are open ended and can have a variety of outcomes
- grouping children by ability and possibly setting different tasks for each ability group
- providing resources of different complexity
- using classroom support staff to work with individuals and groups

### **Curriculum planning**

We plan our religious education in accordance with the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus and using the QCA scheme of work, allocating 5% of curriculum time to RE. Units may be taught in weekly lessons or blocked on a ½ termly basis. We make sure that the topics studied build upon prior learning. We ensure that children have opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and that the planned progression offers the children increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Curriculum planning in RE is developed in three phases.

1. The long-term plan maps out the religious education topics studied in each term for every year group. Where appropriate we teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, for example the Year 4s study Hinduism alongside their Geography topic on comparing their locality and local community to one in India
2. Our medium –term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE Co-ordinator will keep and review these plans on a regular basis
3. The class teacher writes his/her own plans for each lesson listing the specific learning objectives for that lesson or series of lessons. These individual lesson plans are saved electronically for future year groups.

## **Foundation Stage**

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In the reception classes religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we link the religious education aspect of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for reception children.

### **Religious education and other subjects**

Religious education contributes to the teaching of English by promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children develop their skills of writing by writing letters, descriptive passages, character studies etc. Children are encouraged to research topics and present their findings. Some of the texts that are used in literacy may have religious themes, which encourages discussion.

Occasionally, where appropriate, ICT is used in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the Internet and CD ROMs. They also may use ICT to improve the presentation of their work.

We teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of each other and other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be a positive and valuable member of our society. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong. We endeavour to enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

### **Special Educational Needs**

At Holbrook we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced curriculum to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable children to make progress. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. We support children with specific learning difficulties in a number of ways. Children may work in mixed ability groups and can therefore be supported by their peers. Teaching materials, teaching styles, differentiated work and classroom support staff can also be considered, so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively.

We enable children to have access to a full range of activities. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a church, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all children.

## Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. Some work is marked and we may comment as necessary. We make termly judgements and note these down. We use these judgements as a basis for assessing the progress of each child at the end of each year and for passing information on to parents and the next class teacher.

The RE Co-ordinator keeps a selection of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates the level of achievement in RE in each year of the school.

## Resources

The RE co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring the amount, effectiveness and suitability of resources. Resources are kept in a central store room where there is a box of equipment for several units of work. There is a collection of artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education and the school library has a small supply of RE topic books to support the children's individual research. Individual year groups also use the West Sussex library service when necessary to borrow topic loan books for their RE units of work.

The school also has 3 collections of religious stories and bibles for use by the children at different stages in the school. They are stored with designated teachers in the appropriate year groups so they are easily accessible to the children and teachers.

- Reception & Year 1 Stories Jesus Told by Nick Butterworth and Mick Inkpen – this book is an introduction to religious stories with a message and moral which are thoughtfully written and suitable for our younger children.
- Year 2 – 4 The Lion Children's Bible – an easily accessible bible with illustrations which is a good introduction to many of the stories from the New and Old Testament.
- Year 5 – 6 The Lion Graphic Bible – this has more detail of the Old and New Testament stories in a comic strip format with excellent illustrations to maintain the interest of our older children.

## Monitoring and review

The RE Co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in RE. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE and for being informed about current developments in the subject. A small amount of time is allocated for non-contact time in order for the co-ordinator to observe lessons, monitor work and purchase resource.

Policy Reviewed: October 2008

H Mayo

**Reviewed:**

**Governor Signature:** ..... **Date** .....

**Next Review Due:** .....