

# Haytor View Community Primary School & Nursery

## Religious Education Policy



*Learning together - enjoying success - aiming high - celebrating difference – enriching community*

### OVERVIEW

The Devon and Torbay Agreed Syllabus 2019 asserts the importance and value of religious education (RE) for all pupils, with on-going benefits for an open, articulate and understanding society.

The following purpose statements underpin the syllabus, which is constructed to support pupils and teachers in fulfilling them:

- Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- In RE Children learn about religions and beliefs in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Children learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response and to agree or disagree respectfully.
- Teaching should equip Children with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and beliefs, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- RE should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and beliefs.
- Children should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence.
- Children should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

### Rationale

Religious Education is a compulsory subject and forms part of the National Curriculum to which every pupil should have access. It can provide the foundation for many people's lives and promote acceptance and understanding of other beliefs. Through the teaching of RE we aim to promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of all pupils. Both religious and non-religious world views are studied. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help children learn from religions as well as about religions. RE must be taught according to the Devon and Torbay Locally Agreed Syllabus.

A high quality religious education (RE) curriculum is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all maintained schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in Modern Britain.

As we are an inclusive community, we learn about a wide range of religions and world views fostering respect for others. Our children and their families can expect a religious education curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are intrinsic to the RE curriculum and should have a significant impact on learners.

Learners should be inspired by the subject and develop a wide range of higher-level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world. Our aims for teaching and learning in RE are that children develop an understanding of Christianity and a broad range of religions and world views.

## **Aims of Religious Education**

Religious Education is an important part of the school curriculum and is taught relevant to the child's stage of development and experience. The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

This should ensure that pupils:

1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews.
2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews.
3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

The overall aims should enable pupils to:

- Develop conceptual understanding of religion, religious beliefs and practices – in order that they can begin to engage in informed reflection and discussion about religions and religion.
- Develop an informed appreciation of religions – in order that they can explore religions with openness, interest and enjoyment.
- Value religious and cultural diversity – in order to enhance their social and cultural development and to contribute to a more just and civil society.
- Create meaning from their knowledge and understanding of religions – in order to enhance their spiritual and moral development.
- Develop an awareness of the richness of religions and their contributions to society and culture – in order that they can make increasingly mature judgements about the world in which they live.
- Recognise commonality and difference within and between religions – in order to develop respect, openness and curiosity.
- Develop a sensitive understanding of the significance of religious commitment and practice in the lives of individuals – in order that they might develop respect for individuals and their right to hold beliefs that are different from their own.
- Children will learn about religions and religion – to ensure that religious education provides breadth and balance in both content and approaches to learning so that they become religiously literate.
- Children will learn from religions and religion – to ensure that they are able to: a) create meaning, find relevance and develop personally from their engagement with religious education;
- b) explore human experience and questions by addressing values, ultimate questions and fundamental concerns about themselves and the world in which they live.
- We provide opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and ensure the planned progression built into the syllabus offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school. KS2 builds upon KS1, KS1 builds upon the Foundation Stage. In addition, certain skills and attitudes are encouraged e.g. learning to respect the skills of others, asking questions and listening to others, personal reflection on life and its values.
- Children with Special Educational Needs will access the R.E. study units at their own level by beginning with where the children are and developing their skills, knowledge and understanding at a rate that is challenging but appropriate for the individual child.
- The teaching and learning strategies within RE lessons will vary through reading and writing opportunities linked to the English curriculum as well having the opportunity to be creative in its broadest sense, including: thinking; doing; imagining; responding; speaking and listening; problem solving; as well as the creative and expressive arts.
- Teachers should ensure that their children have opportunities to encounter religions, faith and commitment through visits and visitors.
- Gifted and talented pupils will be offered differentiated opportunities, where appropriate, to extend their learning in order to reach their true potential.

- The children may use ICT to research and present their work. This will require discernment in their use of sources. Virtual tours of places of worship are used where actual visits are not possible.

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING ABOUT RELIGION AND WORLD VIEWS**

All schools have a duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views. As a result we should provide:

- A challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate framework.
- An assessment process which demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts.
- A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide.
- A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place.
- The opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development and contributes towards British values.

## **ARRANGEMENTS FOR CURRICULUM TIME FOR THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

The RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for Collective Worship.

Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, should be committed to the delivery of RE:

- FS & KS1: 36 hours (1 hour per week)
- KS2: 45 hours (1.25 hours per week)

### **Staff Development in the Teaching of Religious Education**

- To demonstrate the subject's comparable status with other core curriculum areas it should be a priority to build up staff expertise in RE specifically but not exclusively, working towards:
- All teaching staff and governors having an understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.
- Staff knowing how to create and maintain classrooms in which academic rigour is balanced with respect for different personal beliefs and identities.

### **Teaching and Learning**

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle 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 enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum. Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions.

We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children, we also use virtual tours where visits are difficult to arrange.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

## **RE teaching is intended to develop these skills**

**Applying** – in RE this includes abilities such as:

- using RE learning in new situations
- making the association between religions and individual community, national and international life
- identifying key religious values and their connections with secular values.

**Discerning** – in RE this includes abilities such as:

- developing insight into personal experience and religion
- exploring the positive and negative aspects of religious and secular beliefs and ways of life • relating learning to life
- making thoughtful judgements about the personal value of religious beliefs and practices

**Analysing** – in RE this includes abilities such as:

- distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact
- distinguishing between the features of different religions
- recognising similarities and distinctiveness of religious ways of life

**Synthesising** – in RE this includes abilities such as:

- linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern
- connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole
- making links between religion and human experience, including the pupil's own experience

**Evaluating** – in RE this includes abilities such as:

- debating issues of religious significance with reference to experience, evidence and argument
- weighing the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience
- drawing conclusions which are balanced, and related to evidence, dialogue and experience

## **Developing attitudes**

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern should be promoted through all areas of school life. There are some attitudes that are fundamental to religious education in that they are prerequisites for entering fully into the study of religions, and learning from that experience. The following attitudes are to be fostered through the agreed syllabus:

**a) Curiosity and wonder** – in RE this includes:

- developing imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- developing their interest in and capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose
- exploring the nature of religious practices and teachings
- being willing to look carefully at 'the other' and be open to learning from it • following mysterious and profound lines of thinking through, to see where they lead.

**b) Commitment** – in RE this includes:

- understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values by which to live one's life
- willingness to develop a positive approach to life
- the ability to learn, while living with certainty and uncertainty.

**c) Fairness** – in RE this includes:

- listening to the views of others without prejudging one's response
- careful consideration of other views
- willingness to consider evidence, experience and argument
- readiness to look beyond surface impressions
- developing the courage to pursue fairness.

**d) Respect** – in RE this includes:

- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others
- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different from their own
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias
- recognising the rights of others to hold their own views
- avoidance of ridicule
- discerning between what is worthy of respect and what is not
- appreciation that religious convictions are often deeply felt.

**e) Self-understanding** – in RE this includes:

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas and a mature sense of self worth
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people
- developing the capacity to discern the personal relevance of religious questions
- deepening awareness of the role of belief and tradition in identity and culture.

**f) Open mindedness** – in RE this includes:

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions

- developing the confidence in one's own identity to appreciate the identity of others
- willingness to seek new truth through learning • openness to points of view different from one's own.

**g) Critical mindedness** – in RE this includes:

- a willingness to examine ideas, questions and disputes about religious and spiritual questions
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith
- the development of attitudes that distinguish between such things as superstition or prejudice and such things as conviction, personal commitment and faith
- the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious and spiritual questions.

**h) Enquiry** – in RE this includes:

- a desire to seek after the truth
- developing a personal interest in ultimate or metaphysical questions
- an ability to live with ambiguities and paradox
- the desire to search for the meaning of life
- being prepared to reconsider existing views critically
- being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself
- willingness to value insight and imagination as ways of perceiving reality.

## RE and British Values

From September 2014, school inspection in England explores and judges the contribution schools make to actively promoting British Values. RE can make a key educational contribution to pupils' explorations of British Values, and excellent teaching of RE can enable pupils to learn to think for themselves about them. Questions about whether social and moral values are best described as 'British Values' or seen as more universal human values will continue to be debated (not least in the RE classroom!), but for the purposes of teachers of RE, the subject offers opportunities to build an accurate knowledge-base about religions and beliefs in relation to values. This in turn supports children and young people so that they are able to move beyond attitudes of tolerance towards increasing respect, so that they can celebrate diversity.

Values education and moral development are a part of a school's holistic mission to contribute to the wellbeing of each pupil and of all people within our communities. The RE curriculum focuses learning in some of these areas, but pupils' moral development is a whole-school issue.

### Mutual tolerance

Schools do not accept intolerant attitudes to members of the community: attitudes which reject other people on the basis of race, faith, gender, sexual orientation or age are rightly challenged. A baseline for a fair community is that each person's right to 'be themselves' is to be accepted by all. Tolerance may not be enough: RE can challenge children and young people to be increasingly respectful and to celebrate diversity, but tolerance is a starting point. It is much better than intolerance.

### Respectful attitudes

In the RE curriculum attention focuses on developing mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs, promoting an understanding of what a society gains from diversity. Pupils will learn about diversity in

religions and worldviews, and will be challenged to respect other persons who see the world differently to themselves. Recognition and celebration of human diversity in many forms can flourish where pupils understand different faiths and beliefs, and are challenged to be broad-minded and open-hearted.

## Democracy

In RE pupils learn the significance of each person's ideas and experiences through methods of discussion. In debating the fundamental questions of life, pupils learn to respect a range of perspectives. This contributes to learning about democracy, examining the idea that we all share a responsibility to use our voice and influence for the wellbeing of others.

## The rule of law

In RE pupils examine different examples of codes for human life, including commandments, rules or precepts offered by different religious communities. They learn to appreciate how individuals choose between good and evil, right and wrong, and they learn to apply these ideas to their own communities. They learn that fairness requires that the law apply equally to all, irrespective – for example – of a person's status or wealth. They have the opportunity to examine the idea that the 'rule of law' focuses specifically on the relationship between citizens (or subjects) and the state, and to how far this reflects or runs counter to wider moral codes and precepts.

## Individual liberty

In RE, pupils consider questions about identity, belonging and diversity, learning what it means to live a life free from constraints. They study examples of pioneers of human freedom, including those from within different religions, so that they can examine tensions between the value of a stable society and the value of change for human development.

# SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT

The 'spiritual' should not be confused with 'religious'. Spiritual development refers to the aspects of the child's spirit which are enhanced by school life and learning, and may describe the 'spirit' of determination, sharing or open-mindedness. Spiritual development describes the ideal spirit of the school. RE can support this by promoting:

- **self-awareness:** offering opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own views and how they have been formed, as well as the views of others
- **curiosity:** encouraging pupils' capacity for critical questioning, such as by keeping big questions in a 'question box' or as part of a wall display, and allowing time and space where these questions can be addressed to show that they are important
- **collaboration:** utilising lesson techniques which engender group collaboration and communication such as Community of Enquiry/P4C, circle time, debates, Socratic Circles or group investigations
- **reflection:** providing a space to reflect on pupils' own values and views, as well as those of others, and to consider the impact of these values
- **resilience:** promoting a spirit of open enquiry into emotive or complicated questions, in order to learn how to cope with difficult ideas when they arise in the future
- **response:** exploring ways in which pupils can express their responses to demanding or controversial issues
- **values:** promoting an ethos of fairness and mutual respect in the classroom and compassion and generosity in pupils through exploring inspiring examples of these qualities in others
- **appreciation:** encouraging pupils' ability to respond with wonder and excitement by exploring some of the marvels and mysteries of the natural world, of human ingenuity, and examples of the capacity of humans to love, create, organise and overcome adversity

## MORAL DEVELOPMENT

Moral development is about exploring and developing pupils' own moral outlook and understanding of right and wrong. It is also about learning to navigate the fact of moral diversity in the world. RE is extremely well-suited to exploring social and personal morality in significant ways:

1. **Valuing others:** in exploring the views of others, young people are well-prepared in RE to appreciate the uniqueness of all humans and their moral value, and to act in the world and towards others accordingly.  
**In the classroom:** we offer activities which enable teamwork and trust and require empathy. Welcome speakers or visit places of worship to learn from people of different backgrounds; explore case studies centring on forgiveness, generosity and other beneficial social moral values; use puppets, toys or persona dolls with younger children to develop their sense of moral connection with others.
2. **Moral character development:** RE offers a safe space where pupils can learn from their mistakes, appreciate ideas of right and wrong, continue to strive after setbacks, take the initiative, act responsibly and demonstrate resilience. RE should present pupils with the challenge of responding in real and concrete ways to some of moral questions they face. **In the classroom:** we encourage your pupils to take part in whole-school endeavours to enlarge their characters. Involve them in establishing appropriate moral codes for classroom, school and the wider community. Suggest participation on the school council or the school play, in sport, music and debates, to contribute to charity events or take part in mentoring or 'buddy' schemes.
3. **Moral diversity:** activities in RE lessons should help pupils feel confident when taking part in debates about moral issues. Debates and discussions should prepare pupils for the fact that there will always be disagreement on matters of morality and their right of expression is balanced by a responsibility to listen to the views of others. **In the classroom:** we choose age-appropriate topics which allow exploration of different moral outlooks such as religious texts about right and wrong, codes for living, treatment of animals and the environment, gender roles in religion, religious views of homosexuality, and so on.

## SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Social development refers to the ways young people are shaped in schools with an eye on the sort of society we wish to create in the future. Developing children and young people socially means giving them the opportunities to explore and understand social situations and contexts they may encounter in school or outside. In the RE classroom, such social situations may include exploring:

- **shared values:** opportunities to consider values which are or should be part of society, such as those associated with right and wrong, treatment of others or diversity
- **idealised concepts:** topics which require reflection on the abstract concepts our society is built on, such as justice, fairness, honesty and truth, and specific examples of how they affect our common life, such as in relation to how people treat each other in the classroom and school, issues of poverty and wealth, crime and punishment
- **moral sources:** a chance to reflect on *where* ideas about how we should behave come from, whether religious or non-religious texts, teachings or traditions, in order to more fully understand social and behavioural norms
- **influences:** opportunities to explore and reflect on the great influence on individuals of family, friends, the media and wider society, in order to understand how our behaviour is affected for good or ill
- **social insight:** a chance to acquire insight into significant social and political issues which affect individuals, groups and the nation, such as how churches and gurdwaras may contribute practically to needs in their local communities, or how some religious and nonreligious charities fight to change government policies where they are unjust
- **role models:** teachers should model the sort of behaviour we expect of our children and young people, and RE should explore role models, from the famous like Desmond Tutu, to the many local examples in the school and its community



- **experiential learning:** pupils should have opportunities to embody for themselves expected behavioural and social norms, whether through class discussions, group work and ongoing behaviour expectations, or through special events such as school visits or drama workshops

## CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

There are two meanings associated with 'cultural' development, and RE embodies both of them. Firstly the term refers to the pupils' own home culture and background, whether religious or not, and secondly the term describes our national culture. Schooling should prepare all young people to participate in Britain's wider cultural life, whatever their own background. Cultural development could be evident in RE in two major ways:

1. **Own culture:** RE is the perfect subject in which to explore Britain's rich diversity of religious, ethnic and geographical cultures. Although all children share Britain's common life, cultural diversity is part of that life and no child should feel their cultural background is a barrier to participation. Some common RE activities which promote children's understanding of communities and cultural groups, including their own, could include the following: **In the classroom:** we explore food, festivals, music, art, architecture and other forms of religious and cultural expression. Where possible, visit areas with a strong cultural flavour to observe shops, cafés, people and houses. Some parents may be willing to come and talk about their home culture, or send personal artefacts to school with their children such as books, photos or clothes. Students who belong to a particular cultural group should be encouraged to share their experiences in class discussion, give a talk or even an assembly.
2. **Wider culture:** schooling is a preparation for adult life in terms of behaviour and expectations as well as in achieving qualifications. This wider cultural education prepares children for adulthood.

**In the classroom:** cultural education is found whenever children make sense of the world around them and explore why we act the way we do. We provide opportunities for participation in classroom and whole-school events, including art, music, drama, sport, activism and serving others; explore what it is like to encounter difficulties in learning and relationships, and be open about the sorts of behaviours that are expected.

## The Foundation Stage

It is important in the foundation stage to give children a broad, enquiry based experience of RE in a range of contexts, including outdoor play. Early years learning environments should feature RE scenarios based on experience in the real world, such as in role play. We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In reception class, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage Curriculum, we relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

## Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, 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 other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

We also teach and promote British Values through religious education. These are reinforced in the following ways: democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance.

## Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

## **Withdrawal from RE Learning**

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from R.E. Where parents are wishing to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that the parents first meet with the Phase Leader or Head Teacher to discuss their concerns.

If the matter cannot be resolved, parents need to apply to the Governing Body in writing to withdraw their child from RE lessons. The Governing body will make arrangements with the Head Teacher for the child(ren) to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.

We are mindful that everyone holds different beliefs and this is taken into consideration in RE lessons.

## **Assessment**

Assessing RE is an integral part of teaching and learning and central to good practice. It should be process orientated reviewing the way that techniques and skills are applied purposefully by pupils to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding and skills that they have developed during a particular unit. As assessment is part of the learning process it is essential that pupils are closely involved.

Teachers will use assessments to form a judgement as to whether each child has reached the targets for each key question in their year group. Evidence of work will be highlighted in children's books, on photographs, videos and notes on discussions with children etc. This will demonstrate achievement of objectives.

## **Monitoring and Review**

Monitoring will support the self-evaluation process identifying areas of strength as well as those for development. The Phase Leader is responsible for the monitoring of this policy within their phase.

Areas for development will be incorporated into the School Development Plan as necessary.

Through monitoring the Phase Leader will:

- Ensure that there is clear progression throughout the Phase
- Analyse assessment data and pupil progress
- Identify any training needs and offer extra support and guidance to staff when it is appropriate
- Ensure that there are suitable resources to help with the teaching and learning of RE