

# Policy for Religious Education

## with Appendix for Time Allocation and Curriculum

### Our School Vision

As a school with a Christian setting we aim to be:

A Loving community: As part of a community sustained by Christian Values, all members of our school will achieve their own potential, and with love and respect will encourage each other to do the same.

A Learning community: Following a high quality curriculum with high expectations, enriched in every way by the Christian Ethos, our children will grow in knowledge, skills and a sense of awe and wonder, the joy of learning, appreciation of the natural world and an ability to question and reflect a habit of excited exploration.

A Flourishing community: Grounded with a deep understanding of the worth and the unique value of everyone as a child of God, suffused by Christian values and equipped with knowledge, a love of life, moral strength and spiritual depth, our children will be prepared to joyfully take their place in the world with a sense of meaning and purpose.

### Rationale

The Blake School is a Church of England Primary School and so, within this Christian environment, we aim to provide Religious Education (RE) in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school. From this perspective of our foundation, we aim to enable children to develop spiritual understanding, to begin to comprehend what it means to be a person of faith, and to accept and value those whose commitments, values and ways of life are different from their own.

The following aims are based on this rationale and upon the aims set out in "*The Evaluation Schedule for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools*" SIAMS (Feb 2013)

### Aims

1. To provide high quality enjoyable RE which fully addresses both **learning about** and **learning from** religion.
2. To contribute significantly to the **distinctively Christian values** of the school and the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
3. To provide opportunities for the children to engage seriously with and develop their understanding of the **person and teachings of Jesus Christ** and the Christian faith as a living faith.
4. To encourage pupils **to learn from different religions**, beliefs, values and traditions, while exploring and learning how to express their own beliefs, questions of meaning, identity and sense of belonging.

5. To encourage a clear and **widely shared common vision** where the individual contribution is valued and where all feel included.

## Objectives

1. To provide a broad and balanced RE curriculum for the benefit of all our pupils irrespective of background.
2. To present high quality Religious Education in enjoyable ways which excite the children's curiosity, imagination and involvement and which engage them in meaningful discussion, debate and questioning.
3. To promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and make links with the Christian values of the school through a wide variety of means including the creative arts and other appropriate areas of the curriculum.
4. To promote the distinctive Christian nature of The Blake School with an understanding and appreciation of some other major world faiths.
5. To encourage a reflective approach to life and enable the children to appreciate the contribution that religious and spiritual ideas and concepts can make to their personal search for meaning and purpose in life.
6. To help children understand the importance of religious experience and recognise ways in which these experiences have been interpreted and expressed through a variety of religious traditions.
7. To actively promote the values of truth, justice, respect for all and care of the environment and enable children to combat prejudice and intolerance.
8. To study and develop a depth of knowledge and understanding of the life and work of Jesus Christ and the Christian faith and its relevance today.
9. To study Judaism in depth including its foundation to Christianity.
10. To study some aspects of Islam and develop an awareness of some other major world religions when appropriate; children from faith backgrounds (including Christianity) will be encouraged to share their experiences, knowledge and traditions.
11. To encourage the understanding of and respect for diversity and difference within the Church and other faith communities.

## Learning and Teaching

RE at The Blake School utilises a broad range of learning and teaching strategies.

Questioning is at the heart of RE both from the teachers' use of Key Questions as well as the encouragement of children raising their own questions and ideas. The title of each unit is always written in the form of a question to engage and develop a sense of enquiry right from the start. RE is deliberately taught through these challenging questions in order to facilitate both academic and personal development. This 'Big Question' is launched at the start of the topic and aspects are explored in subsequent lessons in order to build upon the children's learning and understanding. This supports and encourages the children to take their own viewpoint and ask their own questions in response to the 'Big Question'.

As stated in our Whole School Medium Term Plan, each lesson should-

1. **Engage** - a question to capture pupil interest
2. **Explore & Enquire (AT1)** - unpack the religious theme /concept

**3. Evaluate (AT2 Impersonal)** – look back on all that has been learned to inform an opinion

**4. Reflect (AT2 Personal)** – how is this understanding going to affect me personally in my everyday life?

### **Promoting Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Religious Education at The Blake School provides opportunities for:

- *spiritual development* through enriching and encouraging the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their "inmost being" and of the wonder of the environment;
- *moral development* through helping pupils consider, respond and make reasoned and informed choices relating to areas of right and wrong, moral conflict, concern for others and the will to do what is right;
- *social development* through helping pupils develop their sense of identity and belonging;
- *cultural development* through fostering pupils' awareness and understanding of beliefs, practices, life-styles and values in their own society and in the wider world.

### **Progress and Assessment**

- RE is assessed for both Attainment Target 1 and 2 (See appendix) which covers both learning from and learning about religion. Activities present in our planning ensure assessment of both of these targets.
- Assessment in RE is not the assessment of children's beliefs but rather their progress in relation to the two Attainment Targets.
- Assessment for Learning strategies are used to move children's learning on both within a lesson and to inform future lessons
- Children regularly self-assess and reflect on their own learning and progress of thinking, particularly in response to the big question of the topic. This includes an individual initial reflection at the beginning of a topic and a final reflection at the end, with children being encouraged to give reasons for these responses, and reflect on how their responses may have changed across a topic.

### **Rights of Withdrawal**

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RE curriculum. We endeavour through our inclusive policy to ensure that parents would not find it necessary to exercise their right to withdraw their child from RE. The school will ensure that appropriate provision is made for children who are withdrawn from RE with particular emphasis placed on preserving the child's dignity.

### **Collective Worship**

Although Collective Worship and RE are independent of each other, the RE units of work are taken into account, when appropriate, in the planning of the whole school and department collective acts of worship. For further information, please see The Blake School Collective Worship policy.

## Appendix 1 - Religious Education time allocation and curriculum

*The Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus (2015) states (page 7):*

- "Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time Education except those withdrawn at their parents request";
- "In Voluntary Aided Schools with a religious character, Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Trust Deed of the school or with the beliefs or denomination specified in the designation of the school to reflect the religious character of the foundation";
- "The locally Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact that "religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain".

*This policy for RE and the resultant Scheme of Work for RE is in line with the statutory requirements for RE, namely:*

- *Education Act (2002);*
- *School Standards & Framework Act (1988) and*
- *Locally Agreed Syllabus.*

*For The Blake School, this local syllabus is 'The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education Oxfordshire 2015 (Oxfordshire County Council)'. Guidance has also been incorporated from both the National Society Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education (SIAMS Evaluation Schedule 2012) and Excellence and Distinctiveness -Guidance on RE in Church of England schools (Oct 2005) pub.by The Church of England with the National Society.*

The time allocation which *The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2015)* recommends for RE is a minimum of 5% of curriculum time, which is:

Key Stage 1: minimum 36 hrs per year

Key Stage 2: minimum 45 hrs per year

However, in the document *Excellence and Distinctiveness (2005)* the recommendation is that the time allocation should be more in order to give RE the importance it should have to "ensure that RE in church schools is of the highest quality and reflects its distinctive Christian character." And the National Society SIAMS Evaluation Schedule gives a time allocation of 5-10%. Therefore, the discrete teaching time allocated to RE is at least an hour per week per class.

In addition, there is also an annual whole school RE and Art week where RE is taught through all curriculum subjects as far as possible. It also naturally expands into the creative curriculum and during Christian festivals there is always a further emphasis on RE throughout the school.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning strategies.

There are 2 Attainment Targets:

**Learning about Religion (AT 1):** includes enquiry into the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression;

**Learning from Religion (AT 2):** is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of learning about religion.

## **Foundation Stage**

Although RE is not explicitly mentioned as part of the Goals in the Foundation Stage, teachers are required to deliver RE specific to the local Agreed Syllabus. In Oxfordshire, this means that children receive their entitlement in RE through a range of activities with a specific RE focus relating to the Early Learning Goals. The breadth of study includes Religions and beliefs, Themes and Experiences & Opportunities. Religious content is drawn primarily from Christianity and then from other religions represented by the pupils. In particular, the children explore the Christian festivals of Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

**The Blake School long term plans for KS1 & KS2 RE** fulfil the statutory guidelines in terms of content as follows:

1. In line with the National Society Statement Of Entitlement for R.E June 2016 (and therefore SIAMS). Christianity has a central role in the RE curriculum, taking up at least 2/3 of the time available;

As required by the Agreed Syllabus for Oxfordshire, long term plans are based on the Framework questions for KS1 and KS2.

### **KS1 framework questions**

- What do people believe about God, humanity and the natural world?
- What makes some stories special in religion?
- How and why are celebrations important in religion?
- How and why do symbols express religious meaning?
- What makes some teachers and leaders special for religious people?
- What do we get out of belonging to different groups and how do we show that we belong?
- What makes me special?

### **KS 2 framework questions**

- How do people's beliefs about and attitudes towards God, the universe and humanity act as a guide through life?
- What do different sacred texts teach about life and how do they influence people differently?
- In what different ways do people worship and what difference does this make in their lives?
- What makes some occasions in life significant and how and why are these recognised and celebrated?
- How are religious and spiritual ideas expressed and why is literal language not adequate?
- What is it about key religious figures that makes them inspirational for religious believers?
- How should people's religious and other beliefs, values and attitudes influence their personal lives and is it possible to live up to this?
- How do religious families and communities practice their faith and how is this seen in local communities?

- How do religions and beliefs influence the way people respond to global issues such as human rights, social justice and the environment?