

Oldswinford Church of England Primary School

Religious Education



Approved by the Governing Body: (insert date)

Signed- Chair of Governors:

Review:

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SECTION ONE

Context

Oldswinford Church of England Primary School (OCEPS) is a voluntary controlled primary school within the diocese of Worcester. We are a much larger than average primary school averaging 420 pupils on roll. Children from Reception to Year 6 are taught in two classes in each year group. OCEPS is a popular school which is consistently over-subscribed.

“The pupils are polite, courteous, confident, articulate and keen to do their best. Children feel safe in school, and have great confidence in their teachers and other adults in school to help with any problems they have.” Ofsted January 2018.

Vision, Values & Ethos

We fully embrace our distinctive church school ethos and wholeheartedly promote the whole child and the fullness of life, as set out in our ethos, vision and values:

‘Believe, achieve and shine brighter together’

At Oldswinford Church of England Primary School we believe that there is a light which shines within each of us – a light that has been given to us by God, which we should use to help us achieve great things.

We believe it is our job to help that light to shine in all that we do and all that we try to do.

Believe

‘Everything is possible for one who believes’

Mark 9:23

As a Church of England school we offer all children an invitation into the Christian faith, a chance for them to develop spiritually as well as intellectually, socially and morally. We want children to believe in their own abilities, to persevere when things are tough and we encourage them to aim high and follow their dreams. We want them to have the confidence to stand up to injustices and to make wise choices.

Achieve

‘Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart’ Colossians 3:23

We have high aspirations for all our learners and believe that every child should have the chance to reach their potential. We recognise that achievements come in many guises and we look to celebrate each child’s individual talents. We want to ensure our children are prepared for the next steps in their learning journey and they have all the skills they need to flourish and be happy.

Shine brighter together

‘Let your light shine for others, so they may see your good works’

Matthew 5:16

We believe that we all belong to one big family and each of us has a special part to play. We understand the need for our children to be responsible citizens especially when caring about our world and the people around us. As individuals we are unique and special but together, with God, we can be exceptional.

Our vision and 7 key Christian values of love, respect, trust, courage, forgiveness, generosity and joy enable us to ‘believe, achieve and shine brighter together’.

Rationale

Religious education has a very important role in the education of every young person. Religion and belief has been and continues to be highly visible in public life locally, nationally and internationally. Without some knowledge of religion any understanding of the contemporary world be less than adequate. Religion has concerned itself with moral and social questions. It has also sought to address fundamental questions to do with what sustains human existence and what gives it value and purpose. Education needs to play its part in helping young people to consider such questions and by doing so help young people engage in their own personal search for meaning. Religious education plays a principle role in this. It does this by providing opportunities for personal reflection and by helping pupils to consider and express their views

Purpose and Principles

RE is central to the purpose of Oldswinford CofE Primary School because as a church school we see the Christian faith as being at the heart of everything we do, both together and as individuals. It helps us to explore and make sense of our lives and the purpose we have in the world.

It helps all children to develop an understanding of the place that religion plays in people's lives and how it has influenced history and the growth and development of society. RE enables pupils to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life. It is taught in such a way that pupils can explore, develop and affirm their own faith, beliefs and values and have respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others. It offers pupils time to think and respond to new and challenging ideas that are offered within a safe and non-judgemental environment. Every child's opinion matters and is accepted. It is not the practice of this school to preach to or seek to convert children. Values education permeates the RE curriculum at Oldswinford Church of England Primary School. In addition to this provision is made to consider the other principal world religions.

Aims of the Policy

The aims of Religious Education in church schools are:

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

(Statement of Entitlement Church of England Education Office June 2016)

The principle aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions addressed by religion and world views. It allows them to develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own. Children will:

I. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.

3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

Equal Opportunities and SEND

We believe:

- that the broad principles in this policy should be applied equally to all pupils, regardless of ability, gender, race or culture
- that there are certain non-negotiable standards of behaviour towards others for example; politeness, respect, kindness and thoughtfulness, that we expect all our pupils and school community to show to enable children to engage in learning
- that vulnerable children are entitled to particular consideration to ensure that they do not become targets for bullying or unkind comments. Staff should take additional care to reinforce the development of their self esteem in order that they can achieve their maximum potential.
- all children should be treated with respect and staff need to be sensitive to cultural differences.
- RE should be taught within a 'safe space' where children feel comfortable to share their ideas and opinions knowing they will be treated with dignity and respect.

Role and responsibilities

The role of the co-ordinator is to:

- to provide leadership and direction

- meet aims and objectives of the school and subject
- securing high standards of teaching and learning
- developing whole school policy and practice for RE
- move the school towards raising standards in RE
- support the role of teachers in RE
- evaluate progress and identify areas for development
- monitor RE across the school
- understand the contribution RE makes to the overall education of pupils.

Policy Review and Evaluation

The policy will be reviewed every three years by all teaching staff and quality assured by the Head teacher and SLT.

Appendices will be added and updated, as appropriate, to reflect statutory changes and best current practice.

Section Two:

RE Curriculum

Our syllabus is designed to support teachers in developing and delivering excellence in RE. It responds to national calls for deepening pupils' knowledge about religions and for developing their 'religious literacy'. It does this by studying one religion at a time ('systematic' units), and then including 'thematic' units, which build on learning by comparing the religions, beliefs and practices studied.

The teaching and learning approach has three core elements which set the context for exploration of religion and belief:

- Making sense of the text
- Understanding the Impact
- Making connections

At Oldswinford we follow Dudley agreed syllabus the 'Understanding Christianity' scheme of work ensures that Christianity is taught with depth and knowledge, so that children can make their own decisions about faith.

Early Years Foundation Stage focus on Christianity but also celebrate key religious festivals from a range of religions.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 pupils are introduced to two religious traditions: Christianity and Islam. Pupils will also have an opportunity to explore other religions including Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism.

We have chosen to focus on Islam as our second main religion because :

- a) Islam is a major faith in the world and Britain.
- b) Islam has a large representation within the local area.

In addition, across the age range, pupils will develop understanding of the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. Islam and Judaism are the main focus for our work on other religions however Hinduism and Sikhism are covered within the Dudley Syllabus

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus effectively, the expectation is that there is a minimum allocation of five per cent of curriculum time for RE.

The Foundation Stage

The Foundation Stage consists of three prime areas and four specific areas of learning. These areas link with the characteristics of effective learning which run alongside. The children are taught through a combined adult led and child initiated teaching style based upon their development needs and interests.

RE sits within the areas of personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. The framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form respectful relationships. They will do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Children will have the opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.

Key Stage 1

Key Stage 1 should build on children's growing awareness of religion and religious life which they experienced in the Foundation Stage. Much of this should continue to be an attempt to encourage children to be curious about concrete examples of religious life and behaviour, for example, religious stories, artefacts, places of worship, festivals, prayer and beliefs.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2 pupils should build on the knowledge and skills which they gained in Key Stage 1. Much of Key Stage 2 should continue to encourage children to be curious about concrete examples of religious life and behaviour, for example, religious stories, artefacts, festivals, prayer and beliefs. During Key Stage 2 this knowledge should be extended to include more depth knowledge of Christianity and at least one other clearly identified religion. The material pupils engage with should be extended to include leaders of religion, holy books, religious ceremonies and the lives of individuals who have been influenced by faith.

Right of withdrawal

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of religious education. However, as a Church School, we believe RE is central to the life and identity of Oldswinford Church of England Primary School and think it makes an important contribution to the development of children regardless of their faith or background. For this reason, before exercising the right of withdrawal we would hope that all parents would wish to discuss the matter with the headteacher.

Organisation

RE is taught in whole class, mixed ability groups.

The following time allocation is recommended by SACRE:

Early Years Foundation Stage approximately 5% of total curriculum time

Key stage 1 ~ 36 hours per year

Key stage 2 ~ 45 hours per year

Teaching and Learning

At Oldswinford, we advocate the enquiry based approach to teaching RE, as recommended in the Dudley Agreed Syllabus. Essentially the children should be involved in a journey of discovery where the answer is not a given and where they have to do the thinking. They have to become familiar with the idea that often in RE they have to solve the mystery and asking the teacher doesn't really provide an answer. The views and opinions of all children are welcomed and valued and they are encouraged to respect those of others. Our RE scheme ensures that we provide challenging and robust curriculum, based on an accurate theological framework that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide. There are clear learning outcomes for all units of work, based on the appropriate expectations as set out in the RE syllabus. Our curriculum is based on the Understanding Christianity and Dudley Syllabus.

From the beginning of a unit, the key RE question that the children will be exploring is shared. Teachers should keep that key question clearly in mind as the lessons proceed and encourage the children to try and answer it. Children should be encouraged to be curious about concrete examples of religious life and behaviour, for example, religious stories, artefacts, festivals, prayer, faiths, beliefs and views in the wider world.

By probing into the religious material itself, teachers can encourage independent thought and reflection, encouraging young children into adopting the mental habit of looking beyond the literal story, ritual or ceremony and asking more challenging questions about its meaning or purpose. This is fundamental to what it means to make progress in RE.

Assessment

For each half term's unit of work, there is an assessment based on either Understanding Christianity or the Dudley Syllabus, which includes other religions. Teachers use formal and informal assessment, over a period of time, to gather evidence to inform and support their professional judgement about the attainment of each pupil. As a school we track pupil progress and attainment in RE half-termly. In addition to this, RE will form part of the pupils' annual report to parents.