



Where God's gifts begin their journey to gain, attain and grow into lifelong learners

Religious Education Policy

- a) Policy drawn up by the RE Team
- b) Date adopted: March 2007
- c) Reviewed: Spring 2010
- d) Reviewed: Spring 2012 (in light of syllabus changes)
- e) Reviewed: January 2014
- f) Review date: September 2015
- g) Reviewed Jan 2017 (in light of new syllabus)
- h) Ratified April 2018
- i) Review due: September 2018

Introduction

We believe that all children are a gift from God, that they are special and should be allowed to develop and grow in a nurturing environment, secure in the knowledge that they are cherished. It is our wish for all pupils that they leave St Francis with special memories and having achieved personal success, whilst being equipped to take their next steps in the journey of life.

We want to challenge all our children to reach their full potential spiritually, morally, socially and culturally and to develop relationships where all beliefs, differences and ways of life are respected; each child being recognised as a unique individual.

Our Christian beliefs and values inform everything we do and achieve at St Francis and we encourage our children, within an ethos of trust, to reflect on their own values and faith in a supportive environment.

St Francis Vision and Aims

The importance of Religious Education

We believe at St Francis, that Religious Education is not just an academic subject, but, lying at the very heart of the curriculum, has an important role in reflecting and conveying the distinctively Christian character of our school. This was highlighted in our Church School Inspection (2012):

“The excellent standard of teaching and learning and a strong emphasis on Christian values combine to ensure that pupils at the school receive a high quality, holistic education. The quality of teaching and learning in RE is very high with the result that pupils make very good progress across each Key Stage and attain above national expectations.”

At St Francis we believe the main aim of RE is to engage pupils with systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and world views address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as developing responses of their own.

The threefold aim elaborates on the main aim. These are

Know about and understand a range of religions and world views, 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 world views
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views, 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
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and world views, so that they can

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning and 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

Legal Requirements

RE must be provided for all our pupils (excluding Nursery children) and we must provide RE in accordance with our trust deed. RE is an entitlement for all pupils unless they have been withdrawn by their parents from some or all of the RE curriculum. It is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

Teaching and Learning

At St Francis we continually aim to develop an exciting & creative Religious Education curriculum which will promote children's interest and understanding of the subject and support our school's Christian ethos. We believe that practical, first-hand experience is the best way for children to learn and we seek to provide our children with real life experiences such as; visits to places of worship, talks from representatives of different faiths and handling and use of a range of religious artifacts. As well as the units of work, we hold Encounter Days which aim to give pupils a flavour of different religions, such as Hinduism and Sikhism. These days give opportunities for pupils of all ages to learn and work together, whilst gaining a deeper understanding of other religions not given a major focus in our particular RE curriculum.

Key Skills

Through our teaching we aim to stimulate curiosity, and develop children's sense of exploration and discovery for other religions, cultures and the wider world around them. We want children to understand that questions in RE are in the main contentious, and that worthwhile questions will not always be answered by facts alone. We aim to develop an environment where children are encouraged to ask questions, to look for alternative possibilities and to be open-minded and flexible in their thinking. We want children to think for themselves, become reflective learners, drawing their own conclusions and forming their own opinions.

There are three strands which run through all planning, teaching and learning. These are:

Believing (Religious beliefs, teachings, sources; questions about meaning, purpose and truth)

Expressing (Religious and spiritual forms of expression; questions about identity and diversity)

Living (Religious practices and ways of living; questions about values and commitment)

The Curriculum

We follow Swindon Agreed Syllabus (2016-2021) which is based on a syllabus provided by RE Today. There are Programmes of Study for Early Years, Key Stage One and Key Stage Two. Each unit of learning is based on a key question of enquiry. We have also introduced the resource 'Understanding Christianity.'

Early Years

RE is not statutory in Nursery. However, RE forms a valuable part of the educational experience children receive.

RE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum for all Reception age pupils, and will be taught according to the Agreed Syllabus. It sets out experiences, opportunities and appropriate topics for children and the suggestions made are good learning in themselves and connect directly to the EYFS seven areas of learning.

Key Stage One

In KS1, pupils will develop their knowledge and understandings of religions and world views, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They will use basic subject specific vocabulary as well as raise questions and begin to express

their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

There are nine end of key stage outcomes which pupils will work towards and teachers will use when planning in the long and medium term. These outcomes are related to specific content within the key question outlines/units of study.

Key Stage Two

In KS2, pupils will extend their knowledge and understandings of religions and world views, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They will be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary. They will be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, beliefs, values and human life. Pupils will learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views. Again, there are nine end of key stage outcomes.

Planning

Teachers will have the principle aim of RE at the forefront of their minds as they plan RE. There are 5 steps for RE planning which are

- Selecting a key question
- Selecting specific learning outcomes, appropriate to age and ability, which help decision making about what and how to teach
- Select specific unit content to help engaging teaching so that pupils can achieve
- Assessment: write pupil outcomes, specific to content being taught. Turn learning outcomes into pupil-friendly statements
- Develop engaging teaching and learning activities, opportunities and investigations which enable pupils to achieve

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Short term assessment opportunities include rich and challenging questioning; feedback (including formative marking, with opportunities for pupils to respond and improve their work) and effective self and peer assessment.

Medium term assessment opportunities give pupils the chance to demonstrate their achievement through more formal periodic assessment, typically towards the end of a unit of work. Here, assessing using the criteria for the unit can be used formatively to identify broad progress, strengths and areas for development as well as summatively to monitor progress towards expectations.

Recording and communicating to parents

Teachers report on pupils' progress in the annual report.

Special Educational Needs (refer to SEND Policy)

At St Francis we teach Religious Education to all our children, whatever their ability. When planning and teaching Religious Education we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. Where appropriate, we take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

The Role of Computer Science

Pupils should have the opportunities to support their work in RE by being taught to:

- find things out from a variety of sources, selecting information and developing an ability to question its accuracy, bias and plausibility
- develop ideas using Computer Science tools to amend and refine their work, enhancing its quality and accuracy
- review, modify and evaluate their work, reflecting critically on its quality, as it progresses

Equal Opportunities

Teachers have the responsibility of ensuring that all pupils irrespective of gender, ability (including Gifted and Talented children), ethnicity and social circumstances are able to access the RE curriculum and make all possible progress.

The Role of the RE Team

The role of the RE Team is;

- to be responsible for the planning and delivery of RE throughout the school; monitoring and reviewing planning, preparing and developing policies and schemes of work with teaching staff
- make regular reports to the School's Governing Body regarding the progress of teaching and learning in RE.
- to lead the implementation of the Agreed Syllabus
- to be responsible for the assessment of RE throughout the school; collecting and recording evidence of achievement, work scrutiny, monitoring of medium and weekly planning, lesson observations and feedback, discussions with pupils
- to manage the RE budget, purchasing and maintaining quality resources to support effective teaching of RE

- to plan and lead staff meetings as and when appropriate in conjunction with the Head Teacher
- keep staff updated with recent developments and current thinking in RE