



## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

September 2014

Signed.....COG  
.....HEAD

Next review July 2017

# Religious Education Policy

## The legal position with regard to the teaching of RE at Chesterton School

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

Chesterton is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The Governors, in consultation with the Head teacher, have decided, following advice from the diocese, to adopt the Pan Berkshire Agreed Syllabus which is built around the concept of 'Big Questions'.

## Values and Aims

In Religious Education at Chesterton School we aim that Religious Education will:-

- **provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- **enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **teach pupils to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- **Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery**

## Objectives

### Learning

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the

rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own by Learning about Religions and Learning from Religion.

These two areas of learning, with their associated statements, set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum and are taken from The Creative Learning Journey which supports our creative, skills based curriculum.

#### Learning about Religions

- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

#### Learning from Religion

- give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the questions of meaning within religion.

### **The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion**

#### ***Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development***

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

#### ***Personal development and well-being***

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

#### ***Community cohesion***

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance.

**The school community** – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

**The community within which the school is located** – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

**The UK community** – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

**The global community** – RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

## **Teaching and Planning**

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. Units of work are planned using the Pan Berkshire Agreed Syllabus and taught in blocked groups of lessons. Pupils learn from and about religion while considering Big Questions which relate to 'belonging, behaving and believing'.

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

## **Assessment, Recording and Monitoring of RE**

In line with the school policy on assessment and recording:

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. At four points in the year each teacher will assess three examples of work to show the range of attainment across the class and include them in the Class Portfolio for that year. These assessments will be used by both the Curriculum and RE co-ordinator to track pupil progress through the school to ensure that all pupils are making good progress.

Teaching, learning and assessment in RE is monitored in line with other foundation subjects, by the Curriculum and subject co-ordinators and governors via classroom portfolios, work book scrutiny and teaching and learning observations according to the Whole School Monitoring Schedule.

## **Right of Withdrawal**

Parents have the right to withdraw their child/ren from part or all of the RE curriculum. Any concerns about the subject should be discussed with the Head Teacher. This information is also made available in the School Prospectus.