

# **Religious Education Policy Statement**

## **Introduction**

This policy statement reflects a range of views expressed in a variety of different material devoted to this area of the curriculum, including the Durham County Local Education Authority Policy Statement on Religious Education and the Durham County Agreed Syllabus. It also combines the views of the staff within our school. Religious Education is an integral part of the school's ethos. Not only does it provide an opportunity for gaining knowledge and understanding of religion, it also contributes to the children's spiritual, cultural, moral, emotional, intellectual and social development. In addition to planned Religious Education and Collective Worship sessions, teachers take advantage of impromptu situations to discuss moral, social and spiritual issues concerned with developing an understanding of the world and its people.

## **Definition**

Religious Education necessitates the delivery of a programme of study, which enables the development of concepts, skills and attitudes. Whilst it may be included as part of a theme, and can contribute to cross curricular skills, themes and dimensions, it is also necessary to teach it discretely as some aspects of it are specifically concerned with the development of religious understanding. Children should be given the opportunity to investigate the spiritual side of human endeavour, to interpret the nature of reality, and to grow in understanding themselves and their relationship to their world.

Although our children should explore other religions of the world, they should be given especially the opportunity of gaining a sound knowledge and understanding of Christianity, that religion which has the greatest influence upon most of their environment and culture.

This document refers to the Programmes of Study, Attainment Targets and Contents as described in the Durham County Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education.

## **Scope**

This policy statement relates to all children within our school, including those who are pre-National Curriculum. The practice will offer equal access and opportunity for all pupils appropriate to their needs, irrespective of race, creed or gender, enabling provision for all, whilst being aware of individual capability. Modification to the curriculum should be made when required, but this should not affect the overall provision. All pupils, including those with special needs, but excluding those

legally withdrawn, will have the opportunity to participate in Religious Education throughout their attendance at Escomb School.

For those children legally withdrawn from Religious Education opportunity is provided for alternative study, acceptable to their own beliefs.

### **Rationale**

Religious Education gives pupils opportunity to:

- share their own feelings and experiences in a variety of ways
- learn to listen to and appreciate the point of view of others
- reflect on religious ideas in a personal search for meaning
- explore their own values and the values of others
- appreciate silence and the value of stillness
- ask ultimate questions about life, beliefs about God, the self, the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- learn and develop skills and concepts
- explore different faiths and beliefs
- study and reflect upon religion

RE provokes **challenging questions** about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self, the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

RE develops pupils' **knowledge and understanding** of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and world views that offer answers to the questions above. RE offers pupils the opportunity to examine the significance of religion in relation to themselves and others, as they consider how religion and beliefs have an impact on individuals and groups in local, national and global contexts.

RE offers opportunities for **personal reflection and spiritual** development. It encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or not) in the light of what they learn, examine issues of religious beliefs and faith, and consider their own responses to questions raised. RE encourages empathy and enables pupils to develop their own sense of identity and belonging.

RE encourages **respect for all**, including those with differing faiths and beliefs, as pupils develop understanding and appreciation of our diverse society and world. RE helps to challenge prejudice, discrimination and racism.

### **Entitlement**

All pupils, excepting those legally withdrawn, will study aspects of Religious Education.

5% of the curriculum timetable should be apportioned to Religious Education, which in practice is approximately 1 hour per week and an educational visit at Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 1 it is approximately 30 minutes per week.

The teaching of Religion should not be restricted only to the time allocated but integrated within the whole curriculum using opportunities as they arise to discuss issues related to the RE curriculum.

In line with the Durham Agreed Syllabus and the LEA policy, the Religious Education curriculum should be planned using an investigative approach which will develop:

- Knowledge and understanding of religions.
- Personal reflection.
- Opportunities for critical thinking.

In termly plans children will be able to:

- Develop a range progressive skills and attitudes.
- Work on individual, pair, group and whole class activities.
- Study, explore and investigate the living practices, teaching and traditions and basic patterns in religion, leading to spiritual and moral development.
- Reflect on and relate to religious ideas, views and perceptions to personal understanding and life experience, leading towards spiritual and moral growth.
- Develop an appropriate body of knowledge, which can be related to personal and life experience.
- Enjoy a rich and varied learning experience supported by a range and variety of resources to stimulate interest, promote learning opportunities and enable them to achieve to their full potential.

Through the study of Religion there are opportunities to develop a range of study skills, which whilst not exclusive to religious education, they are essential for pupils to develop in this curricular area.

These are skills of:

Investigation  
Interpretation  
Evaluation  
Exercising Critical Judgement and Analysis.  
Enquiry  
Reflection

Throughout the RE learning experiences opportunities should be taken to raise awareness to the part religion plays in forming attitudes of believers and the effect belief has on daily life.

In observing the views and perceptions of believers pupils should be given the opportunity to examine and explore their own values and attitudes as an individual and as a member of society.

### **Legal Requirements**

(see the Agreed Syllabus page 3 for the list of Legal Requirements and more detail - set out in the Education Act 1988 and confirmed by the Education Acts of 1996 and School Standards and the Framework Act 1998).

In summary the Agreed Syllabus and therefore the school's Religious Education curriculum:

- Religious Education has equal standing with National Curriculum Subjects
- Taught to all pupils unless legally withdrawn
- Should be taught in accordance with Agreed Syllabus
- Should reflect the fact that religious traditions are in the main Christian

- Should be non denominational
- Headteacher should ensure sufficient resources are available
- Curriculum should promote spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development.

### Aims

To develop knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practises within religions.

To develop the skills of critical thinking, evaluation, analysis, reflection in relation to the material which they have been learning about.

To provide pupils with accurate factual information as a means of developing a deeper understanding of religion as opposed to uninformed bias and prejudice.

To enable pupils to develop a reflective approach to life, to make sense of the world about them and how they relate to it.

To enable pupils to appreciate a religious understanding of life and what it means to be religiously committed.

To seek to stimulate pupils in a life long interest in religious matters and issues.

To enable pupils to be aware of and understand contemporary religious matters and issues in the context of the media and everyday life.

To seek to encourage and foster a set of core attitudes and values:-

- an enquiring and responsive approach to life generally and in particular to the fundamental and religious questions which it presents
- a personal, intellectual and moral integrity
- a sensitive but critical approach towards religious beliefs, practices and institutions
- a respect for the world in which they live
- an awareness of, a concern for and a readiness to respond to the needs of others

We aim to help each child to progress through the programmes of study, achieve

the appropriate attainment targets and satisfactorily cope with assessment tasks when encountered, as outlined within the context of the National Curriculum. (see Agreed Syllabus for Aims in Religious Education)

### **Appendix**

We acknowledge the school's responsibility to provide the necessary resources in terms of materials, space, books and other equipment and to undertake in-service training, in order to create the necessary contexts and to provide the teaching style appropriate to each learner.

Curriculum guidelines and a scheme of work have been produced to complement this policy statement. To show how the aims are to be put into practice and how the aspects of Religious Education are to be delivered. These should show the breadth, balance, coherence and relevance of RE and also ensure continuity and progression throughout the school.

This policy statement is open to regular review and amendment according to the considerations of the "annual" curriculum development plan. This statement will be reviewed by the teaching staff and Governing Body as necessary.