

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

St Nicholas School aims to provide a broad and balanced curriculum which includes the opportunity for pupils to experience the religious aspects of life.

This policy makes reference to the following documents:

1. KAS 2012 - The (revised) Kent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2012, "A Creative Vision for Religious Education" (largely based on same for 2006)
2. The National Curriculum in England: New Framework. *Effective from September 2014* (although no specific mention or review of RE was made in this document)
3. National Curriculum for RE, non-statutory Framework, 2012
4. DfES Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education (Oct, 2004) - "Guidance in Religious Education and Collective Worship"

### THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK – a background

The Education Reform Act 1988, consolidated by the 1996 Education Act, requires that a broad and balanced curriculum "promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of the pupils ... and prepares such pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life".

The Education Reform Act 1988 also reinforces the requirements of the Education Act 1944, by extending the provision of RE in county and voluntary schools to all registered pupils. It also makes provision for parents to withdraw their children from RE and consolidates the rights of teachers who do not wish to participate in or conduct RE lessons. Importantly, the Education Reform Act 1988 requires that all county schools must teach RE in accordance with a locally agreed syllabus. The New Framework document, 2014, although making no comment as to curriculum content, does (by default) support local authority maintained schools (as opposed to academies and free schools) following the curriculum guidance of their locally agreed syllabus – KAS 2012 in our case.

The KAS 2012 "A Creative Vision for Religious Education" follows the recommendations contained in the national documents prior to 2012 (listed above). It states that schools should:-

- ❖ Use a National Curriculum format
- ❖ Includes targets to help with planning and assessment
- ❖ Contains detailed programmes of study
- ❖ Indicates specific units of work for each Key Stage
- ❖ Devotes most attention to Christianity at each Key Stage
- ❖ Includes a study of all the religions in 'Great Britain', including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism
- ❖ Includes a study of the moral dimension of religions within the Key Stages

The KAS 2012 adheres closely to all these requirements in order to help schools "promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through religious communication".

At St Nicholas School, KAS 2012 forms the basis of our RE Curriculum together with QCA documents "Religious Education: Planning, Teaching and Assessing the Curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties" and the 'Non-Statutory National Framework for RE (Oct 2004)' in that "Staff teaching RE are

encouraged to teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge their pupils abilities”.

The school Governing Body through its articles of Government is required to ensure that RE is provided for all pupils at the school in accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988:

- ❖ All registered pupils must be taught RE unless parents request otherwise
- ❖ Teaching of RE must not be confined to pupils of compulsory school age
- ❖ A reasonable time must be provided for the study of RE

## **OBJECTIVES**

The RE Curriculum at St. Nicholas School aims to:-

- ❖ Develop a recognition of each child’s uniqueness as a human being and an affirmation of their self worth
- ❖ Raise questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- ❖ Develop each child’s spirituality
- ❖ Awaken a desire to communicate and participate
- ❖ Give the opportunity to celebrate all that is best within children’s experience and to express joy at their achievements and those of other people
- ❖ Help each child to find an “inner strength” that will sustain them through disappointment, fear, frustration, sorrow and understanding of ultimate questions
- ❖ Enable pupils to live purposefully and positively as individuals and members of the community, appreciated the results of others to hold beliefs different from their own
- ❖ Enable pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions and beliefs in Great Britain
- ❖ Foster positive attitudes towards the influence religious beliefs, values and traditions of individuals, communities and cultures
- ❖ Inform, clarify and develop pupils own beliefs
- ❖ Provide teaching which is stimulating and diverse

Themes for work will be developed based on these guidelines.

## **CURRICULUM CONTENT**

As stated in the KAS (2012) “The central and most distinctive element in the RE Curriculum is pupils’ engagement with living world religions, so that they can both learn about them and learn from them”. This is reinforced in the ‘Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education’ which also identifies the development of the following four attitudes as essential to the RE Curriculum:-

- ❖ Self-Awareness
- ❖ Respect for All
- ❖ Open Mindedness
- ❖ Appreciation and Wonder

At St. Nicholas we seek to make this central to our teaching and learning.

Learning **About** Religions uses a common framework of six headings which guides the content of each theme of work:-

- ❖ Origins and Development
- ❖ Beliefs
- ❖ Moral Code
- ❖ Worship and Ceremony
- ❖ Authorities
- ❖ Community

Learning ***From Religions*** “seeks to encourage pupils to engage with RE content in such a way that they are willing and able to respond in a more personal way to what they are learning which can make a vital contribution to their Spiritual and Moral Development”.

## **PROGRAMMES OF STUDY**

### **FOUNDATION STAGE**

RE within the Foundation Stage is delivered within and through holistic encounters during adult led and child initiated play-based experiences. These opportunities are mostly found within:

- ❖ Personal, Social and Emotional Development
- ❖ Communication, Language and Literacy
- ❖ Knowledge and Understanding of the World
- ❖ Creative Development

**KEY STAGES 1 & 2** - The Curriculum for Key Stages 1 & 2 is organised on a six year cycle of themes, based on KAS and the National Curriculum.

**KEY STAGES 3 & 4** - At Key Stages 3 & 4 RE is generally delivered as a discreet subject following a cycle of themes.

**POST 16 (FE)** – It is a requirement that 16-19 year old students in maintained schools should study RE. At St. Nicholas the post-16 group follow a three year cycle of topics based on KAS and delivered within their Curriculum.

### **INCLUSION**

Following the advice of Non-Statutory National Framework for RE (Oct 2004) “for pupils whose attainment falls significantly below the expected levels at a particular Key Stage, a much greater degree of differentiation will be necessary. In these circumstances teachers may need to use the content of the programme of study as a resource or to provide a context in planning learning appropriate to the age and requirements of the pupils”.

At St. Nicholas we acknowledge that each child will have a different level of spiritual awareness and this together with their experience of life is central to the development of each theme of work. Development will therefore be based on the following guidelines:

- ❖ Their feelings about their family
- ❖ What it means to be a friend
- ❖ Caring for themselves and others
- ❖ Their need to feel loved
- ❖ Their need to belong
- ❖ Exploring life through their senses, tasting special foods, smelling incense, listening to music
- ❖ Exploring life through their feelings, being sad and happy, being angry and gentle, responses to colour and sound

- ❖ Celebrating special events, personal achievements, family occasions, religious festivals
- ❖ Enhancing a sense of wonder, observing natural patterns, contemplating the vast, concentrating on the very small in nature
- ❖ Developing their inner space, accepting themselves, understanding the need for personal space, appreciation of being still

### **CURRICULUM PLANNING**

RE planning will meet statutory requirements by clearly showing when RE appears on the timetable, although this may not be a regular discrete session. We will plan to make use of visits as much as possible and the Cathedral will be a cultural aspect of RE throughout the school. Use should also be made of the Education Centre at the Cathedral, which can be visited on a regular basis.

### **WITHDRAWING BY PARENTS**

RE is the only subject in the curriculum from which parents can request their child be withdrawn. The school will make all efforts to communicate with parents in order to lead them towards informed requirements. As RE will often be taught as part of cross-curricular work, it is not possible for children to be withdrawn from every occasion that issues relating to religion arise. All these points should be carefully raised with parents, and the limits to which the school can be expected to accommodate parental wishes explained.

### **RESOURCES AND STAFFING**

The School Governing Body appoints an RE Co-ordinator to develop the subject and help other teachers with the planning and delivery of a balanced RE curriculum based on the Kent Agreed Syllabus. It must provide the RE Co-ordinator with appropriate training and resources, and ensures that the school produces a Curriculum plan for RE which is commensurate with the Kent Agreed Syllabus. The School Governing Body ensures there is up-to-date documentation about RE in the school for teachers, governors and parents.

Teachers will be using the KAS for RE 2012 as a major resource when planning their programmes. Detailed information supporting the teaching of RE can be found in KAS 2012 whilst the QCA document "Religious Education" 2004 provides guidelines for planning, developing and implementing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties.

The school has a collection of religious artefacts for all of the major world religions, available for use in the classroom. The Resource cupboard contains information on these religions and accompanying teaching aids, including artefacts, music, books, videos and photographs.

The focus of RE teaching will be on practical activities and experiences as part of class groups, departments and whole school activities. Where appropriate, ICT will be used to support learning and curriculum access.

### **ASSESSMENT PROCEDURES**

RE will be assessed under the agreed policy for all areas of the curriculum. On-going assessments are the responsibility of the class teachers, who will use a variety of strategies including observations, photographs and pieces of work produced by the pupils, as is appropriate to the level of achievement of the pupil.

### **LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY**

It is planned that the RE curriculum will be delivered by a range of visits to appropriate places of religious worship and by a programme of visitors to the school, who will show and talk about aspects of faith communities.

Strong links have been established with St. Mary Bredin, our local Church, with celebrations taking place there at least bi-terminally, to mark special events in the calendar such as Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter. In addition, the Vicar, or their chosen representative, will be invited to attend assemblies or be part of informal occasions.

## **MONITORING AND REVIEW**

This policy will be monitored on a yearly basis by the Curriculum Co-ordinator to keep up to date with any adjustments to statutory legislation or curriculum and any changes will go via the Governing Body when necessary.

## **EQUALITY, SAFEGUARDING AND EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES STATEMENT**

St Nicholas School, in all policies and procedures, will promote equality of opportunity for students and staff from all social, cultural and economic backgrounds and ensure freedom from discrimination on the basis of membership of any group, including gender, sexual orientation, family circumstances, ethnic or national origin, disability (physical or mental), religious or political beliefs.

St Nicholas School aims to:

- Provide equal opportunity for all
- To foster good relations, and create effective partnership with all sections of the community
- To take no action which discriminates unlawfully in service delivery, commissioning and employment
- To provide an environment free from fear and discrimination, where diversity, respect and dignity are valued.

All aspects of Safeguarding will be embedded into the life of the school and be adhered to and be the responsibility of all staff.

## **LINKS TO OTHER POLICIES**

Community Cohesion  
Safeguarding  
Collective Worship  
Geography,  
History,  
PSHE  
Equality and Diversity  
Bereavement and Loss

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