

Religious Education Policy 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'.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes:

“a major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument, and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world”. (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013).

This RE policy is informed by influential national and local guidance:

RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010

RE: realising the potential Ofsted 2013

A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013

Making a Difference? A review of Religious Education in Church of England Schools 2014

The Dorset Agreed Syllabus for RE 2016

Colehill First School supports the use of the Discovery RE and the Understanding Christianity programmes in combination to provide an aspiring scheme of work for RE that meets the requirements of our locally agreed syllabus.

Rationale/Aims for teaching RE

At Colehill First School we aim that Religious Education will:

- Adopt an enquiry-based approach as recommended by Ofsted, beginning with the children's own life experience and moving into learning about and from religion.
- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. 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 (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, wonder and mystery.
- Nurture children's own spiritual development.

RE contributes to other curriculum aims in particular to Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, British Values and Rights Respecting Values.

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.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of tolerance and 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.

RE is an important subject for its contribution to the schools development as a Rights Respecting School and for demonstrating British values.

The Learning Environment

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for each others' views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care

External contributors

External contributors from the community, e.g. local clergy, local members/speakers from other religions etc make a valuable contribution to the RE programme as do visits to places of worship. Their input is carefully planned and monitored so as to fit into and complement the programme.

Teachers are always present during these sessions and remain responsible for the effective delivery of the RE programme.

Approaches to teaching RE.

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning in line with the locally agreed syllabus through the combined Discovery RE and Understanding Christianity Programmes which take account of the need to offer breadth of content.

Every teacher is provided a grid outlining the enquiry units to be taught in each year group. Consideration has been given to which RE topics will be taught in the Wimborne Academy Trust Middle Schools to ensure continuity and opportunities for deeper learning as the pupil's continue their education beyond Colehill First School.

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

Each class teacher will determine how RE is to be timetabled across the year. It may be block taught, linked to topics or taught discretely. Time allocation will vary due to the possible cross-curricular nature of the curriculum.

Differentiation/SEN

Teachers will tailor each enquiry to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential.

Assessment and Recording of RE

Each Discovery RE enquiry unit has built-in assessment to ensure a record is made to track progress. Teachers assess the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This evidence is used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions and annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in reaching a best-fit level. There is an overview sheet for each enquiry on which to record the progress of the whole class. This supports the teacher's overview and facilitates subject leader monitoring and moderation.

Similarly, each Understanding Christianity enquiry provides an assessment grid to record the children's knowledge and understanding matched to the descriptor with the best-fit. Additionally, large A2 sized Floor books are used to document samples of the Christian learning in each class. A broad range of evidence is recorded in the book by means of collecting children's quotations, work samples, photographs and related art work. The Floor books are sent on with each class as they progress through the school. They provide the subject leader with a useful monitoring tool by documenting the deepening understanding of key Christian concepts which are revisited as the children get older.

Monitoring and evaluation

The RE leader monitors delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children and scrutiny of their written work to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision. The RE provision is evaluated from this information.

Withdrawal from RE lessons

At Colehill First School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the head teacher who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents will be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

As a school it is our duty to inform our local Standing Advisory Council on RE regarding the numbers of children being withdrawn.

Reviewed: January 201

Next Review date: January 2021