



# **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

This policy has been written taking into account our school's ethos, vision and values.

As a school we take pride in our own core values of Respect, Resourceful, Responsible, Reflective and Resilience. These core values are promoted and celebrated where possible and underpin our school ethos. We also believe in promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by providing positive experiences within the curriculum and through the local community.

This policy will be implemented in conjunction with Policies for Equality and Inclusion, Health and Safety.

## **INTRODUCTION**

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

The national curriculum states the legal requirement that:

**'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:**

- **promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and**
- **prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.**

**All state schools ... must teach religious education ... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online'.**

(National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4)

Although there is not a National Curriculum for RE, all maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum requirements to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes RE. All maintained schools therefore have a statutory duty to teach RE.

The school is now working with scheme of work 'Discovery' entirely in accordance with the 2011 Poole Agreed Religious Syllabus for religious education Enquire Within.

The Dorset Curriculum Policy states that schools should:

"Develop an ethos and a curriculum which reflects and values cultural diversity and turns it to an advantage in enriching students' experience and understanding of the world in which they live".

To this end each of the modules starts from the pupils' own experience and progresses through schemes of work, building their individual knowledge. It involves the promotion of the spiritual, moral and cultural aspects of the individual.

## **MAIN PRINCIPLES**

The main principles of religious education within the school are that:

- It makes no assumption about the teacher's, pupil's, personal faith stance;
- It does not wish to persuade towards, or away from, a particular belief;
- It is available for all pupils regardless of their faith background;
- The planning and organisation takes into account different faith and family background;
- The teacher is an educator to help pupils to evaluate a range of different beliefs, experiences and practices.

## **AIMS**

The central aims of religious education in the school are to help children:

- Provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purposes of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human;
- Develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and secular world views such as Humanism or Atheism. It aims to develop pupils' awareness and understanding of beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression and helps them understand how these can contribute to people's identity, sense of belonging, values and commitments;
- Encourage pupils to develop their own sense of identity and belonging, to enable them to flourish individually within their communities, to act with personal responsibility and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community;
- Enable pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions whilst exploring their own beliefs, those of the family from which they come and questions of meaning;
- To promote opportunities to share, explore and value religious and non-religious belief and in this way seeks to make a major contribution to pupils' spiritual and philosophical development;
- Offer opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, encouraging pupils to develop the ability to be still, to think deeply, to reflect and to appreciate times of stillness and silence;
- Challenge pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, values, belief, faith and ethics, as informed by religious and secular world views, and to effectively communicate their responses;
- Take an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables them to develop respect, sensitivity and empathy for others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to challenge prejudice, discrimination and racism.

## **APPROACHES TO AND ORGANISATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, debate, dance and drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, photographs, and the use of periods of stillness and quiet reflection. The wider community will be used/involved as and when appropriate either by inviting members into the school and/or visits by the children to local religious communities. The above will be combined with opportunities to take part in different types of collective worship and experience common religious festivals. We also use story, cultural and religious foods to enhance and support the pupils' learning.

## **SKILLS AND ABILITIES**

At Hamworthy Park Junior School we believe that religious education has a major contribution to make to children's learning, especially in terms of their spiritual awareness. Important skills we seek to develop include reflection, empathy (to begin to understand another's point of view), communication (through art and music as well as writing and speaking) and enquiry. Important attitudes include developing respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness and self-esteem. Much of the work in religious education begins with the children's own experiences and emphasises how special and unique they are.

## **RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL**

Parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their child from religious education on the grounds of conscience. We strongly encourage parents to contact the Head teacher / Religious Co-ordinator / Chair of Governors if they have any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at the school.

## **SUMMARY**

We hope that religious education in Hamworthy Park Junior School is an exciting and relevant activity for our children to share in. We regard it as a particular area of the curriculum where values and school ethos "come alive" in the classroom. We are aiming at help our children develop respect and sensitivity for all people to understand more of the importance of religion in today's world.