

Religious Education Policy

Our school values:

Zest for learning and a love of life

Embracing the future with hope and confidence

Seeing heaven in the moment

Imagining the journey in another's footsteps; nurturing understanding, respecting all

Everyone knowing that they are treasured and loved as a unique child of God

Our school values underpin all of our RE teaching and these values are embedded in all the experiences we strive to give the children. Children are spiritual beings who often think deeply and hold serious convictions.

We regard it as a privilege to work with young people to ponder the more profound questions of life and faith. In our school, spirituality is seen in joyful singing and dance, and in silent meditation and prayer. As a Church School we seek to nurture in the heart and minds of our children the knowledge and love of God. We provide them with an experience of Christian Community which will influence and shape the rest of their lives.

The provision of Religious Education at HTPD

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'.

HTPD is a Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School.

As a church school we deliver RE as an academic subject in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus, Guidelines for Religious Education, The Church of England, Diocese of Guildford. These guidelines whilst being focused in the majority on Christianity, include regular opportunities for teaching of other faiths. This is always approached in an inclusive and respectful manner.

Whilst we believe passionately that RE and Collective Worship are central to the life of HTPD and in very many respects are inextricably connected, naturally complementing and enriching one another, they should however be managed separately.

The Aims of Religious Education

The RE curriculum strives to be rich and creative, providing a whole range of opportunities for pupils to think about religion and belief, investigate and connect ideas and then have the ability to reflect and evaluate all they have shared and learnt.

We aim to:

- **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. RE develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development. We endeavour to foster:

“Zest for learning and a love of life”

- **encourage children to explore their own beliefs** (whether those children 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.
- **enable children to develop their sense of identity and belonging**, which will help them to flourish within their communities and as citizens in a multicultural and diverse society. In so doing we esteem every individual and instil our ethos of:

“Everyone knowing that they are treasured and loved as a unique child of God.”

- **teach children to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, which will help them to challenge prejudice.
- **prompt children to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. We encourage empathy, generosity and compassion. Through RE and across our wider curriculum we encourage children to:

“Imagine the journey in another's footsteps; nurturing understanding, respecting all.”

- **provide children with opportunities to think theologically**, inspiring in them a sense of awe, wonder and mystery, thereby:

“Seeing Heaven in the moment”

- **help children find reasons for hope in a troubled world**, understanding how religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition; in so doing we enable children to:

“Embrace the future with hope and confidence”

The teaching of Religious Education

Some of the RE lessons at HTPD are taught through a cross curricular topic based approach, other units are taught as discrete RE lessons, and some fit in with the religious calendar.

The scheme of work is based on the curriculum provided by the Guildford Diocese Board of Education, as well as on our internal school planning and provision.

We endeavour to underpin each RE topic by 'big questions' that provide a high level of challenge for children. The scheme is designed to ensure clear and obvious progression in what is taught and learnt.

RE lessons are generally taught on a weekly basis but there are many times where a topic is based around a whole week's work or may well be a day's worth of activities. For example, children might spend 2 days on a project learning about Christian places of worship, visiting 3 very different churches, identifying some of the similarities and differences and starting to make sense of why people express their faith in different ways. At Christmas and Easter each year group is involved in projects covering several days, looking at different aspects of these key Christian festivals.

Different religions are taught throughout the primary curriculum and are studied in more depth in Key Stage 2. Obviously visitors, trips and artefacts play a fundamental role in these topics.

All work is planned to ensure very good coverage with careful planning to challenge all abilities. The scheme of work pays particular attention to clearly defined Learning Outcomes which continue to challenge and encourage children to investigate and evaluate their learning.

All children from Year 2-Year 6 have been given their own Bibles which they use regularly in lessons. This initiative has been a great success, with the children continually developing skills to handle the text, gaining a clearer picture of chronology and most importantly really enjoying reading and discussing the Bible narrative.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active and creative subject we employ a variety of teaching methods. In any RE lesson you may expect to see a whole variety of 'learning experiences'; group and paired discussion, research, art work, drama, poetry, research, outside work, handling artefacts, listening to guests, hot-seating, ICT use, music, comprehension activities 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 visits from members of local faith communities.

Resources

All children from Year 2 onwards have their own Bibles, there is an extensive school library, there are a small number of artefacts located at school and artefacts and books are loaned from the Education Centre at Guildford Cathedral.

SEN Provision

As a highly inclusive church school all RE resources and lessons are suitably adjusted to meet the needs of children with a range of different additional needs eg resources would be enlarged for visually impaired pupils, less written work would be involved for children with difficulty in fine motor control, easily accessed and individually planned tasks are created for children with particular additional needs etc. Wherever possible the children remain in their class groups, benefitting from increased teacher input, TA support and beneficial pairings and group work.

Assessment, Recording and Monitoring of RE

RE lessons are observed by the RE coordinator and by members of the SLT. All year groups are observed during the academic year.

Any recorded written work by the children is given effective feedback, and then this sometimes becomes part of the child's topic work for that term. Some work is added to the class' "floor books" which create a visual reminder of the topics taught over the course of a year.

Through effective marking, planning and assessment procedures, staff are able to meet the needs of all children and plan future lessons. The school has a clear system in place to track assessment data in order to monitor progress both of the whole cohort and specific groups. Teachers record ongoing assessments in their individual markbooks.

All staff are very familiar with the Diocesan assessment descriptors for RE and use these in the assessment process. We have adapted these to determine end of year expectations, and teachers make a summative judgement annually as to whether each child is working towards these expectations, meeting these expectations, or working at greater depth within these expectations.

The right of Withdrawal from RE lessons

At HTPD School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education on the grounds of beliefs and conscience.

We would ask any parent considering this option, to contact the headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of RE. It may be that after due discussion, there are just 'some' elements that are objected to, and in which case, withdrawal may not need to be continuous.

Review

The Governing Body of HTPD first adopted this policy in 2017. The authors are CB /CF. It will be reviewed annually by the Governing Body and will be revised as often as may be required.

Date last reviewed: November 2023

Date for next review: November 2024

Signed:

Clare Brunet

Headteacher HTPD

Appendix 1 – See RE progression map for full curriculum coverage and unit plans.