



# Silverdale St John's CE Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

### Introduction

We are a Christian School, committed to excellence in academic, spiritual and social development. The life and work of the school is founded upon Christian values and beliefs, enabling every child to achieve their potential and enrich the community.

Within the Anglican ethos of the Church of England Foundation our school aims to:

- Uphold the tradition as a Church of England school and nurture the children's moral and spiritual development.
- Ensure that every child feels safe, happy and part of the Christian family.
- Create a happy, healthy and safe school in which children are able to develop their own personalities, confidence and curiosity to learn.
- Provide an enjoyable and stimulating learning environment that allows children to develop knowledge and skills.
- Develop a curriculum that enables and challenges children of all abilities within a nurturing environment.
- Encourage children to develop responsibility for themselves and each other.
- Develop a strong, supportive partnership with parents and the community.
- Encourage children to see themselves as part of the local, national and global community.

### Aims and Objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Silverdale St John's CE School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other major world religions and value systems found in Britain
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today
- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues

- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society

RE and Collective Worship in our school, lie at the very heart of the curriculum. Although RE and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another they should be managed separately.

## **The Legal Position of Religious Education in school**

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). Silverdale St John's CE School is a Voluntary Aided Schools. Within a Voluntary Aided school the management of RE is a distinctive role of the governors and headteacher. RE has to be in accordance with the Trust Deed and in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided in its school.

The Governors of Silverdale St John's CE School have adopted the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE. At least 5% of curriculum time is devoted to RE and Christianity plays a central role in RE, taking up between two thirds and three quarters of the time available.

Appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is included, guidance of which is provided in the Blackburn Syllabus. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms a central part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

## **Teaching and Learning**

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Harvest, Easter, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. The Vicar of St John's Church takes a weekly Act of worship in school and in Church. His involvement is an integral part of school life and he often comes into school to support RE and cross curricular work.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks)
- grouping the children by mixed ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children

## **Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Spiritual development within RE in our Church School enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment. Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice.

Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

## **Foundation Stage**

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

## **Assessment and Recording**

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. The children work in mixed ability groups and record work within these groups. In Foundation Stage and Key Stage One, the children's work is recorded in class floor books that the teacher uses to assess understanding and record progress. In lower Key Stage Two the children's work is also collated in floor books; children have more ownership of how this book is organised and again, the teacher uses it to assess understanding and record progress. In upper Key Stage Two, children record their learning in individual books and the teacher marks these according to our Assessment and Marking Policy. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the national curriculum levels of attainment.

## **Monitoring Religious Education**

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. When possible she has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

**Date agreed: Autumn 2015**

**Next review date: Autumn 2017**