



St Hilary's School

Religious Studies Policy

We actively promote democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and respect those with different faiths and beliefs. These are fundamental British Values which underpin all that we offer, as does our School Motto 'Not for oneself but for all.'

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Religious Studies at St Hilary's School. It has been developed through a process of consultation between teaching staff and is periodically reviewed.

What is Religious Studies?

At St Hilary's School Religious Studies plays an integral role in each child's education. In this multi-cultural age, religion is part of the fabric of our day-to-day lives. Understanding the basics of the world religions is important in helping children nurture their own moral and spiritual development, whilst broadening their minds with an appreciation of how others think, what they believe, and how this affects the way they live their lives.

We aim to provide a stimulating environment for discussion and debate, whilst also allowing pupils to have the space and security to begin to develop their own understanding of the world around them. We encourage our pupils to gain self-understanding, to explore relationships with others and to consider the place of the individual within the local community and the wider world. This is achieved in classroom-based lessons as well as through whole-school activities and assemblies.

Aims

- To develop a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and its impact on our local community and on our society today. The emphasis throughout the school is on the knowledge and understanding of the traditions and beliefs of the Christian Church.
- To develop a knowledge and understanding of some of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain today.
- To develop a sense of respect for religious traditions, beliefs and practice.
- To grow in their own spiritual development.
- To develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery.
- To develop skills and attitudes which will support their personal, moral, social and cultural development.
- To explore some questions of meaning and consider how the world's religions have responded to them.

- To reflect on their own beliefs and values in the light of the beliefs of others, both religious and non-religious and the values of the school community.
- To encourage children to become independent thinkers and learners and to enable the development of critical skills, giving children the ability to listen carefully and respect the beliefs and values of others, while making up their own minds and taking responsibility for their own decisions.

Organisation and Differentiation

Throughout the school RS is taught as a discrete subject, although cross curricular links are developed where appropriate.

In Prep and Pre-Prep each class is allocated one period of RS per week on a half termly rota with Philosophy. RS is taught by the RS teacher.

More-Able and Talented Pupils

More able, gifted and talented pupils are provided, within the RS lesson, with opportunities to extend their thinking and broaden their experiences through investigational activities linked to lesson objectives. The pupils are encouraged to express their thinking through oral and written language and through the use of computer software.

Pupils who are gifted in RS are likely to:

- show high levels of insight into and discernment beyond, the obvious and ordinary;
- make sense of and draw meaning from, religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices;
- be sensitive to, or aware of, the mystery of life and have a feeling for how this can be explored and expressed;
- understand, apply and transfer ideas and concepts across topics in RS and into other religious and cultural contexts.

In more general terms, they may also:

- have highly-developed skills of comprehension, analysis and research;
- show quickness of understanding and depth of thought.

Pupils with additional learning needs, including those with EHC Plans

- Pupils with additional needs have the same RS entitlement as all other pupils and are offered the same curriculum in RS.
- The pupils are encouraged to express their thinking orally, pictorially and through the use of computer software.

Teaching Strategies and Pupil Groupings

The range of teaching styles includes:

- exposition by the teacher
- individual, paired or group work.
- investigation and problem solving
- discussion and the development of thinking skills
- the use of artefacts, pictures, stories
- periods of stillness and reflection.

During any unit of work children will experience a variety of tasks requiring them to work

- as individuals
- in pairs or small groups
- as a whole group

Excellence in Religious Studies

Excellence in RS is celebrated by:

- reward stickers and House Points displayed in books;
- awards and certificates presented in Assembly.
- samples of work being showcased on the ‘Wow Work’ wall and via the department’s /school’s social media sites.

Homework

Homework is used to support RS work from Year 3.

- In the Autumn Term, Year 3, Year 4 and Year 5 are set a 30 minutes’ homework, within the none-core subjects homework rota.
- Year 3, Year 4, Year 5 and Year 6 are set a 30 minutes’ homework in the Spring and Summer terms, within the none-core subjects homework rota.

Some assignments may be produced on home computers at the subject teacher's discretion.

Strategies for Ensuring Progress and Continuity

- A Scheme of Work to implement the RS Policy has been developed by the Head of RS in collaboration with all who teach RS.
- Meetings are used to discuss the curriculum and its implementation, and to ensure consistency of approach and standards.
- Collaboration between the Learning Support Department and RS teaching staff aids and supports pupil progress.
- Reviews are monitored by the Senior Leadership Team.

Role of the Religious Studies Coordinator

The role of the RS Coordinator is to:

- Take a lead in policy development and the production of the Scheme of Work designed to ensure progression and continuity in RS throughout the school.
- Support colleagues in their development of detailed work plans and the implementation of the Scheme of Work.
- Monitor progress in RS and advise the Headteacher on action needed.
- Take responsibility for the RS annual budget.
- Keep up to date with developments in RS education and disseminate this information to colleagues.

Assessment and Feedback to pupils

This is achieved through discussion and the marking of work. The guidelines laid down in the school Marking Policy are followed.

Effective marking

- aims to be encouraging and supportive.
- includes written comments with errors and areas for improvement clearly indicated.
- is sometimes done while a task is being carried out through discussion between child and teacher.
- may be done by pupils marking their own work or by peer marking.

Assessment grid sheets are completed for each child on a termly basis. These are found in the V3 folder using the assessment criteria found in the HOD folder under the title 'Assessment criteria'.

Strategies for Recording and Reporting

Termly Reviews are written by the Head of Department in this subject and this informs future planning and summarises and assesses the teaching and learning.

Individual RS books containing examples of work, dated and annotated with teacher's comments are kept for each pupil.

Reports are sent to parents at the end of the Summer Term. The report focuses on

- attitude to RS
- competence in RS ability.

In addition, parents can at any time make an appointment to discuss their child's RS progress with the RS teacher in Prep, class teacher in Pre-Prep or the RS co-ordinator.

Resources

The school is well equipped with teaching resources from a range of faiths, including clearly labelled Topic Boxes. These are stored in the RS cupboard and may be borrowed and returned as required.

Review date: June 2022, June 2023, September 2023

Next review: June 2024

Person responsible: Miss Penny Hall (Head of Religious Studies)