Religious Education Policy

Documents to accompany this policy:	420[O] Teaching & Learning Policy
Member of staff responsible:	Mrs Pengelly/Mrs Marin
Governor delegation:	Headteacher
Statutory/Non-Statutory	Non-Statutory
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1. The Legal Position

The school, in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. Religious education is taught in accordance with The West Berkshire Agreed Syllabus.

2. The importance of Religious Education

We live in a diverse, multicultural and multi faith society. It is therefore paramount that pupils understand the relevance of religion in an ever changing society.

As such, Religious Education actively encourages the values of integrity, faith, justice and respect for all as well as caring for the Environment in which we live. It places particular importance on:

- Children valuing themselves as individuals and respecting other individuals and peers with different beliefs.
- Pupils understanding the important influence that religion has in families, communities, cultures and society at a local and global level.
- Pupils having an opportunity to celebrate diversity in a multicultural society by becoming aware of differences and similarities in belief systems.
- Encouraging pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging and to care for the Environment.

Religious Education recognises that we live in a fluid, organic, adaptive and changing society and that at times those changes also affect religious practice or expression. Religious Education also acknowledges the influence of religion in the local, national and global community.

3. Aims

At Coley Primary, the rights of the child, as embodied in the UNCRC are valued and positively promoted within RE lessons. Article 14 of UNCRC specifies 'Children have the right to think and believe what they want and to practise their religion, as long as they are not stopping other people from enjoying their rights'.

Religious Education should help pupils to:

Learn **about** religion by:

- acquiring and developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain
- developing an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- enquiring into, and investigating the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation.

Learn **from** religion by:

- developing a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions
- developing the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Great Britain
- enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
    - developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to them
    - responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their understanding and experience
    - reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

4. Key Aspects of Learning in Religious Education

At Coley Primary School, we follow the Discovery RE schemes of work to deliver religious education and intend that Religious Education will:

- **adopt an enquiry- based approach** beginning with the children's own life experience before 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. **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.
- **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**

5. Planning and Delivery

The teaching of RE is laid out in the Programmes of study from the Pan-Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus. The content of the syllabus is written and reviewed by the local SACRE, who have taken the QCA Non-statutory National Framework for RE (2004) as a basis for the syllabus using **an investigative enquiry model**.

At Coley Primary, further curriculum guidance is given using the Discovery scheme of work which is based upon the Pan-Berkshire Locally Agreed Syllabus

Teachers use the Discovery RE schemes of work to teach the Curriculum through detailed medium-term modules and, as per the Syllabus, it adopts an enquiry-based approach to teaching and learning.

Each year group will study two different faiths, one of which is Christianity with Christmas and Easter given new treatment each year and as such developing learning in a progressive way. This progressive enquiry model enables children to be introduced to new faiths and ideas together with building on existing knowledge and deepening understanding on key beliefs.

In **Foundation stage**, the curriculum is based upon 15-minute small play-based teaching lessons which are then supported and strengthen through a wider variety of play activities with a themed approach. This will help the children respond to a key learning question about the chosen world faith. These themes are Special People, Christmas, Celebrations, Easter, Story Time and Special Places.

Foundation Stage

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
What makes people special?	Christianity
What is Christmas?	Christianity
How do people celebrate?	Islam, Judaism
What is Easter?	Christianity
What can we learn from stories?	Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism
What makes people special?	Christianity, Islam, Judaism

In Key Stage 1 children will study Christianity in both year groups, and will be introduced to Judaism in Year 1 and Islam in Year 2.

Year 1

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
Does God want Christians to look after the world?	Christianity
What gift would I have given Jesus if he had been born in my town, not Bethlehem?	Christianity
How did Jesus show friendship?	Christianity
Why was Jesus welcomed like a king or celebrity by the crowds on Palm Sunday?	Christianity
Is Shabbat important to Jewish children?	Judaism
Are Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur important to Jewish children?	Judaism

Year 2

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
Is it possible to be kind to everyone all of the time? – Links to School's Belonging Value.	Christianity
Why did God give Jesus to the world?	Christianity
Does praying at regular intervals every day help a Muslim in his/her everyday life?	Islam
Is it true that Jesus came back to life again?	Christianity
Does going to the Mosque give Muslims a sense of belonging?	Islam
Does completing Hajj make a person a better Muslim?	Islam

In Key Stage 2, children will study key concepts of Christianity each year and will also study Hinduism (Year 3), Judaism (Year 4), Sikhism (Year 5) and Islam (Year 6).

Year 3

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
Would celebrating Divali at home and in the community bring a feeling of belonging to a Hindu child?	Hinduism
Has Christmas lost its true meaning?	Christianity
Could Jesus really heal people? Were these miracles or is there some other explanation?	Christianity
What is good about Good Friday?	Christianity
How can Brahman be everywhere and in everything?	Hinduism
Would visiting the River Ganges feel special to a non-Hindu?	Christianity

Year 4

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
How special is the relationship Jews have with God?	Judaism
What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?	Christianity
How important is it for Jewish people to do what God asks them to do?	Judaism
Is forgiveness always possible for Christians?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Jew to show commitment to God?	Judaism
Do people need to go to church to show they are Christians?	Christianity

Year 5

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
How far would a Sikh go for his/her religion?	Sikhism
Is the Christmas story true?	Christianity
Are Sikh stories important today?	Sikhism
How significant is it for Christians to believe God intended Jesus to die?	Christianity
What is the best way for a Sikh to show commitment to God?	Sikhism
What is the best way for a Christian to show commitment to God?	Christianity

Year 6

Discovery Enquiry	Religious Studies
What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?	Islam
How significant is it that Mary was Jesus's mother?	Christianity
Is anything ever eternal?	Islam
Is Christianity still a strong religion 2000 years after Jesus was on Earth?	Christianity
Does belief in Akhirah (life after death) help Muslims lead good lives? (Double unit)	Islam

6. How is RE organised in this school?

Coley Primary School uses Discovery RE units of work which brings together learning about and from religion, questioning and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of enquiry-based learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Each enquiry starts with an **Engagement lesson**, which primarily draws on the children's own life experiences

to create a **bridge** into the **main investigation** of the religion being studied over a series of two to three lessons. Learning is assessed as children are given an opportunity to **express** their own thoughts and beliefs and articulate their learning outcomes from the lesson series. Additionally, they are encouraged to think beyond and suggest ways in which they can apply the moral values of what they have learned. Moreover, it enables children to articulate their beliefs, understand other's belief systems and further empathise with believers of that religion or belief position.

Teaching RE is timetabled by teachers and often linked across the curriculum to other relevant subjects such as PSHE, History, Geography, Literacy and SMSC.

Across the year, children will receive the equivalent of between 45 minutes to an hour of teaching and learning each week.

The Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter are studied by all year groups which enables the children show progression across the years and deepen their understanding of these special times for Christians as well as make links to other and their own faith festivals.

7. Attitudes and Key Skills in Religious Education

The role of Religious Education is to encourage pupils to develop positive attitudes regarding learning and respecting the beliefs and values of others. Through the study of Religious Education, four attitudes are being developed at each stage or phase of the subject, to encourage good learning:

- Self-awareness and curiosity
- Respect themselves and others
- Open-mindedness and empathy
- Interest and enjoyment in discovery

These attitudes are further embedded and underpinned by our Coley Values of Belonging, Respect, Pride, Curiosity, Courage and Honesty. Consequently, pupils are able to develop key life skills such as communication, investigation, interpretation, empathy, expression, evaluation, consideration, reflection and exploration.

8. Assessment and Record Keeping

Each unit of work has an opportunity for formative assessment. Work within each unit is collected and presented by each child in their topic books which is currently being developed further to demonstrate the range of activities and reflection of personal experience achieved through RE. Together with the learning expectations from the units, teachers are able to use Target Tracker to track the progress the children are making or indeed their assessment within a band.

9. The Learning Environment

We encourage 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, we draw on our Coley Value of Respect to promote understanding of each other's views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion. Additionally, any artefacts the children come into contact with are handled with respect and care.

10. Resources

There is a large number of resources in the Resource Room at the School house and a list is available on the school's common drive under RE Resources. Resources include a good range of Artefacts for the different religions, information and resource books, some information on local places of worship and posters. Furthermore, the RE Co-Ordinator regularly adds additional resources for each of the religions or themes covered on the curriculum to the School's RE Computer Folder.

Whenever possible the RE Curriculum is linked to Edison Learning to enhance, compliment and underpin learning across the different Topics taught at the school. Also, children's experience of religion is enriched by opportunities for first hand experiences visiting places of worship and at times welcoming visitors from religious communities into school.

11. External contributors

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of 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.

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.

12. The Role of the Co-ordinator

The co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring the implementation of the RE policy and planning, organisation and updating of resources in line with the needs of the school. The co-ordinator will give support and guidance when needed and as identified.

To oversee the teaching and learning of RE across the school: conduct learning walks, oversee assessment of RE, working with the SLT to monitor RE work through regular sampling of work, observing displays and lessons ? (part of new coordinator role?)

Organise whole school assemblies and liaise with the local church/es? (would you like me to take that on? - Happy to!)

To develop whole school overview, mapping and progression of skills across the school.

To coordinate the development and implementation of Knowledge Organisers across KS1 and KS2.

To lead and support staff through good practice and team teaching?

To keep informed of new ideas and changes in RE curriculum with the School Development Plan and to attend coordinator meetings organised by the Local Authority.

13. Inclusion

RE can make a significant contribution to inclusion, particularly in its focus on promoting respect for all. It has a role in challenging stereotypical views and appreciating, positively, differences in others. It enables pupils to consider the impact of people's beliefs on their own actions and lifestyle. It can also help to develop pupils' self-esteem.

Effective inclusion involves teaching a lively, stimulating Religious Education curriculum that:

- builds on and is enriched by the differing experiences pupils bring to Religious Education
- meets all pupils' learning needs including those with learning difficulties or who are gifted and talented, boys and girls, pupils for whom English is an additional language, pupils from all religious communities and pupils from a wide range of ethnic groups and diverse family backgrounds.

14. 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.

Evaluation of the programme's effectiveness is conducted on the basis of:

- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes;
- Staff meetings to review and share experience;
- Monitoring of assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.

15. Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues Involving parents and carers

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs. Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should never feel obliged to discuss their own beliefs unless they feel comfortable doing so and can ensure that this will not influence or restrict the children's own expression.

16. Withdrawal from Religious Education

Coley Primary School, in accordance with the 1996 Education Act, provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Pan-Berkshire Agreed Syllabus. There are other opportunities for spiritual reflection in other curriculum subjects and assemblies.

The right of parents to withdraw their children from religious instruction on conscience grounds was included in the Education Act of 1944. All subsequent legislation has retained the clause that allows parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE. It also protects teachers' right to withdraw from teaching the subject.

Since 1944 the nature of RE has changed significantly from the nurture of children in a faith tradition to an open and educational enquiry. Religious education does not attempt to alter a child's beliefs but to provide knowledge of their own and others beliefs within the community context. At Coley Primary, we hope that parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the nature and areas of learning found in RE syllabus.

However, parents may wish to withdraw their children from religious education and/or other Religious activities on the grounds of conscience of belief. Parents who wish to withdraw their children must put their request in writing to the Headteacher. Staff may also withdraw in agreement with the Headteacher.

17. Training and support for staff

All staff benefit from training in order to enhance their RE delivery skills. Opportunities are provided for staff to identify individual training needs and relevant support is provided. We hold an open practice approach in our school ethos with regular looks at topic books by Teams and SLT, lesson observations and discussions about best practice about a range of issues regarding RE.

In addition to this, support for teaching and understanding RE issues is incorporated in our staff meeting programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies.