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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction

The importance of religious education in the curriculum

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

RE in Devon schools develops children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity (which is taught throughout each key stage of learning) and the other principal religions: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Consideration is also given to other non-religious perspectives such as humanism.

RE offers children opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It considers the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

In Devon schools, RE has the central attainment target of

- **Engaging with religions and worldviews**

The attainment target Engaging with Religions and Worldviews brings together the two commonly used attainment targets: Learning about Religion (AT1) and Learning from Religion (AT2). "Engaging with" involves both learning about (investigating, describing, explaining) and from (responding, analysing, evaluating) religions and worldviews and provides important balance in RE.

Key Skills in RE

RE is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. It seeks to develop children's skills in investigation/enquiry, communication, interpretation, analysis and evaluation. These are important skills for children to develop.

These include:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live and the different ways people express their beliefs).

- Communication (sharing their ideas and those within religions and beliefs in a lively, informed way including different styles of writing, oral contributions and the use of ICT).
- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts).
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others).

Key Attitudes in RE

As with skills RE has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote. These include self-esteem (so that every child feels valued and significant), respect (including being sensitive to the beliefs, feelings and values of others), open-mindedness (being willing to learn and gain new understanding) and appreciation and wonder (developing children's imagination and curiosity).

Expectation in RE

The Devon RE syllabus is designed to be used in conjunction with the established 8 level scale with which teachers and pupils are familiar. However, it is recognised that schools are having to review assessment procedures and for this reason the use of levels in association with this syllabus is being kept under review. As schools develop new approaches to judging progress, further advice and guidance will be made available.

Approaches to teaching and learning in RE

RE is an exciting curriculum subject so we employ a variety of teaching methods. These include:

- Visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities
- Using art, music, dance and drama
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas
- Using story, pictures and photographs
- Using artefacts to help children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and forms of expression
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- Developing the use of ICT (particularly DVDs and the internet) in helping children's awareness of religions and beliefs.

Organisation of RE

RE is taught through a range of religions and beliefs and key themes. These are outlined below

				Religions studied
Reception	Families	Special People	Special Places	Christianity and one other religion
Key Stage 1	Who are we? (Myself)	Why are some times special? How do we celebrate our journey through life? (Celebrations)	Where do we belong? (Belonging)	Christianity, one other religion and other worldviews
	Why are some stories special? (Beliefs and stories)	How should we live our lives? (Leaders and Teachers)	Why are some symbols and places special? (Symbols)	
Key Stage 2	Why are some journeys and places special? (Worship, Pilgrimage, Sacred Places)	How and why do people express their beliefs in different ways? (Symbols and Religious Expression)	Why do religious books and teachings matter? (Teachings and Authority)	Religions to be covered, in a systematic way: Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam, and non-religious worldviews such as Humanism
	How should we live and who can inspire us? (Inspirational People)	What does it mean to belong to a religion/belief system? (Religion and the Individual)	What does it mean to belong to a religion? (Religion, family and community)	
	What is important to me? (Beliefs and Questions)	How do we make moral choices? (Beliefs in Action (1) – The Environment)	What do people believe about life? (The Journey of Life and Death)	
	How do we make moral choices? (Beliefs in Action (2) – Faith in Action)			

Assessment and Recording

In RE we provide annual reports based on the assessment of children's learning after each unit of work. Reports provide a brief summary of the work covered, a summary of the standards achieved and how the child can improve their learning. To help us in report writing we are building a portfolio of children's work. We also recognise that

some of the most important learning in RE (e.g. how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed. What we do assess is children's progress against the level descriptors in the local agreed syllabus.

Rights of withdrawal

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning. We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE on the grounds of conscience. We do encourage parents to contact the Headteacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school.

Learning resources

We encourage the use of a wide range of resources to enrich children's learning. These include children's and teacher's books, DVDs, music, artefacts and CD ROMs. We try to ensure RE is a lively, stimulating subject which engages all children. We have also developed specific resources to support children with special educational needs and those with specific talent in RE.

UNDER REVIEW

The contribution of RE to the wider curriculum

While RE has its own distinctive subject matter it does make an important contribution to other aspects of children's learning. The key ones are outlined below.

RE contributes to children's spiritual development by:-

- Discussing and reflecting on questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, good and evil, life after death, beliefs about God and humanity and values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- Learning about and reflecting on important concepts and experiences such as love, trust, forgiveness, obedience and sacrifice.
- Valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging.
- Considering how religions and beliefs regard the value and purpose of human beings, the importance of the environment and the significance of emotions such as love, anger, joy, jealousy, happiness and pain.

RE contributes to children's moral development by:-

- Enabling children to value themselves and others.
- Exploring the influence of family, friends and other sources on moral choices.
- Considering what is of ultimate value both to children and within religious traditions.
- Developing an understanding in key beliefs and teachings in religion and values and moral choices.
- Considering ethical issues especially justice which promote racial and religious respect.
- Reflecting on the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

RE contributes to children's social development by:-

- Considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns.
- Reflecting on the importance of friendship and positive relationships.

RE contributes to children's cultural development by:-

- Encountering people, stories, artefacts and resources from differing cultures.
- Promoting respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination.
- Challenging stereotypes of religion and beliefs.

RE and the use of language

RE can also make an important contribution to children's use of language by enabling them to:-

- Acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- Communicate their ideas with clarity.
- Listen and respond to the views and ideas of others.

- Be inspired by the power and beauty of language.
- Write in different styles such as poetry, diaries and extended writing.
- Highlight their own ideas and those of others.

RE and the use of ICT

RE can make an important contribution to children's use of ICT by:-

- Helping them make effective use of the internet to investigate and learn from different religions beliefs, teachings and ideas.
- Use e-mail and video conferencing to collaborate with other schools in different locations to Devon, Plymouth and Torbay.
- Use multimedia and presentation software to communicate their own ideas and those within religions and beliefs

Conclusion

In essence we are aiming to help our children develop respect and sensitivity for all people and to understand more about the importance of religion in today's world.

Future plans for RE include devising more challenging activities for our more able children in RE and developing a wider range of resources. We also want to increase the role of visitors from different faiths visitors to enhance our children's learning.