

# Mount Pleasant Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

Reviewed and agreed by the Governing Body Date: Spring Term 2016

Revised Spring Term 2016 in response to new Agreed Syllabus

Next review date: Spring Term 2020

Religious Education is taught as part of a cross-curricular approach. Through this, we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of all pupils.

Religious Education is a compulsory subject and forms part of the national curriculum. The RE syllabus used at Mount Pleasant follows the Dudley Agreed Syllabus for Key Stage One and Key Stage Two, created by SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education).

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from RE. Where parents are wishing to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that the parents meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, parents need to apply to the Governing Body in writing to withdraw their child from RE lessons. The Governing Body will make arrangements with the Headteacher for the child(ren) to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.

### **School Context**

Religious representation at Mount Pleasant is currently (2016, January census):

Christian: 42% (167)

No religion: 50% (202)

Catholic: 1% (4)

Hindu: (1)

Sikh: 1% (3)

Muslim: 6% (22)

RE is taught, as in other curriculum areas, by starting from the pupils' own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community and in the wider national and international community. The background of many children therefore appears to be Christian, however the vast majority of pupils appear to have little experience of any strong faith or belief.

### **Aims of the RE Curriculum**

RE is an important part of the school curriculum and is taught relevant to the child's stage of development and experience. We seek to provide a clearer idea of what religion is about, the importance that it plays in many people's lives and how that faith is expressed in their daily lives and routines. The overall aims are:

- That all children form their own opinions about religious beliefs and customs and that they develop an understanding and tolerance of people who hold a strong faith.
- That children enjoy learning about religion because it is taught in a stimulating and interesting way that arouses their curiosity and develops positive skills and attitudes.

- That children develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them.
- To help pupils understand some of the impact of religion throughout the world, its influences on the lives of individuals and communities and its effect on the cultural diversity of their own and other societies both presently and in the past.
- To support pupils spiritual, moral social and cultural development by encouraging self awareness and self respect.
- To help pupils develop their social and moral development by encouraging a positive attitude and valuing the beliefs of others, however different from their own.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of Christian and other major religion in Britain as a whole and in the local community.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or special need or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multi-cultural society which we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any pupil.

The teaching of RE is approached sympathetically to all religious beliefs and teachers must remain mindful of the PREVENT and British Values Policy throughout their planned approach to teaching RE.

(Please see the Equality Policy)

### **Health, Safety and Well-Being**

Visits to places of worship and other RE related venues are encouraged as an important part of developing a child's understanding of the role religion plays in communities. Prior to all visits, staff will carry out a formal risk assessment, if necessary, visiting the venue prior to creating the risk assessment.

Staff will ensure that the context of the learning that will take place during the visit, will not undermine a child's own faith or challenge their belief and will only be presenting a knowledge base about a faith.

Permission will be sought from parents/carers for each child to attend the visit. We acknowledge the sensitivity that some families may have with regard to their child visiting another place of worship, staff must ensure that they do all they can to assure parents and encourage pupil participation.

### **Time-Tabling for RE**

The children in the Foundation Stage are taught RE through the area of Knowledge and Understanding of The World.

In KS1 and KS2 RE may be taught either discreetly or as part of a cross-curricular approach e.g. through PSHE, history, geography, art or as part of a focus day or period of time e.g. Christmas and Easter.

(Collective Worship is separate to the teaching of RE, though strands of Collective Worship may be used to enhance the RE curriculum. See Collective Worship Policy)

## **Teaching and Learning**

A variety of teaching methods should be used to teach RE, such as role play/drama, stories and music. Visitors to school should also be encouraged to give children the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about another person's experiences of living/celebrating through different faiths.

The Foundation Stage and KS1 forms the basis of children's future understanding and therefore should begin with children's own experiences and feelings, particularly around 'special times, people, places and objects/symbols. Many opportunities should be given for thinking, talking, listening and responding to others respectfully. Much emphasis should be placed on valuing and caring for other people in our local community and also for children to relate their understanding to a wider/global community.

In KS2, similar opportunities should be offered and children should be encouraged to openly discuss their understanding, opinions and attitudes about religion. They should be given time to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them and promote their own spiritual growth and development.

It is likely that a teacher may have their own religious beliefs/faith. The teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own. Teachers must be sensitive about the language that they use, for instance swapping, 'I go to church on Sundays' to, 'Christians go to church on Sundays'.

## **Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas**

### English

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We use texts with religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, which promotes speaking and listening.

### Personal, social and health education and citizenship

Through our RE lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our society.

### Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through RE and assemblies in school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognize the difference between right and wrong, through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multi-cultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

## Planning for RE

RE should be planned using the Dudley Agreed Syllabus as a content guide. This has two main attainment targets;

- Learning about religion  
This includes enquiry into, and investigation of the nature of religion, the range of beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Through this, the pupils should develop an understanding of ethical issues and an understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other. Pupils should also develop an understanding of the nature and characteristics of religions.
- Identify, name, describe and give accounts in order to build a coherent picture of each religion.
- Explain the meaning of religious language, stories and symbols.
- Explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.
  
- Learning from religion  
This focuses on developing pupils' reflection on and in response to their own and other's experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils should develop the skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they have learned about religions. Pupils should learn to communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments.
- Give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues.
- Reflect on what is to be learned from religions in the light of one's own beliefs and experience.
- Identify and respond to questions of meanings within religions.

## Assessment

As RE involves a process of personal development and emerging/changing views, it is difficult to formally assess all but the ability of children to recall facts and to be able to express a view about religions.

The Dudley Agreed Syllabus states that;

“Often the effectiveness or importance of an experience cannot be measured; experiences in RE should not be limited to what can be objectively assessed or measured.”

Teachers should therefore, assess what pupils know about religions, what their attitudes are to religions and how well they are able to express their own views and feelings towards other religions. This should be formally reported to parents as part of the child's end of year report.

Planning should be part of a child-initiated process, beginning with children's' current levels of understanding and following areas that children would wish to explore further. Examples of work produced, videos, photographic experiences should also be kept as an evidence

base for making evaluations about the teaching of RE and the successful levels of learning that have been achieved. This should be straightforward and manageable.

### **Home-Learning**

As the home may be the greatest source of a child's knowledge and understanding of RE, it is appropriate to set home-learning tasks related to developing and sharing their understanding.

### **Role of the Co-ordinator**

There is a named co-ordinator: Mrs N Pickford, responsible for co-ordinating the teaching of RE throughout the school.

Their role is to:

- Provide support, advice and resources to members of staff
- Monitor the teaching of RE and outcomes for all children, revising policies and supporting staff with planning of RE where necessary.
- Monitor the teaching of RE across the school highlighting the continuity and progression of the areas taught across the school
- Attend relevant training and support staff through relevant INSET sessions
- Monitor the use and need of resources throughout the school.

### **Monitoring**

In order to ensure continuity and progression, it will be necessary to monitor the teaching of RE across the school. This should be done through liaison with staff to be able to observe lessons, through INSET sessions, monitoring planning and coverage, carrying out pupil interviews.

The result of any monitoring should be discussed with the Headteacher/SLT and any actions resulting from this should be acted upon within a given time frame.

### **Resources**

Resources are stored in each year group and include books, pictures, artefacts, posters. All materials should be handled very sensitively and with respect.

### **Programme of Study**

#### Early Years Foundation Stage

Religious Education is statutory for all children of compulsory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday. Religious Education can form a valuable part of the educational experience of all children and although schools are not obliged to provide RE to pupils who are under compulsory school age there are many instances of good practice where it is taught to these pupils.

RE in the Early Years Foundation Stage, should be taught in a developmentally appropriate way. It should be well thought through and it should adhere to the themes, principles and commitments enshrined in the EYFS.

Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation stage should help children to develop empathy, values, and a capacity to make moral judgments and healthy choices. It should also help children to develop an understanding of their own culture and the culture of others. Religious Education should also help children to understand cultural diversity, well-being and community cohesion and so contribute to the preparation of children for adult life.

Religious Education during the Foundation Stage should be planned using where possible the three prime areas and the four specific areas of learning and development identified in the EYFS. Expressive arts and design; Religious Education can make a valuable contribution to many of these areas particularly, personal, social and emotional development, communication and language, literacy, understanding the world and expressive arts and design.

- **Personal, social and emotional development**

Explicit religious stories and stories which are not explicitly religious may be used to encourage young people to reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They may be used to encourage young people to think about and express their view of the words and actions of characters in the story and decide how they might have felt or responded in a similar situation. Using role-play or guided reflection children might be asked to think about the ways in which people show love, kindness and concern for others and how humans help each other. Stories may be used to stimulate the thought of young children about what is right and wrong and what justification or reasons there are for deciding that something is right or wrong.

- **Communication and language**

Children may communicate using non-verbal methods like facial expression, eye contact and hand gesture. However, children may also be encouraged to listen and speak so that in RE they may express their view or feelings in response to material of a religious nature, for example, a religious artefact, a story, a piece of music, image or food. Or may be stimulated by giving young children an opportunity to encounter objects from the natural world, for example, a leaf, a flower, the bark of a tree, a pebble, a rainbow or a butterfly. By doing so the vocabulary of young people may be extended so that they become familiar with some basic religious vocabulary. Young children may also become acquainted with some of the language and basic grammar that may be used to express emotion, values, reasons and personal views. They begin to acquire the language used for thinking, for example the words used to express feelings, ideas, values, likes and dislikes.

- Literacy

Children should be encouraged to handle books which contain information about religion. Religious stories may be read to children using puppets, soft toys, or real objects as props. Children should also be permitted to handle sacred books. However, this should be undertaken with care, and with the intention of helping children understand the importance of showing respect towards an object which is deeply respected by others. Children can be encouraged to suggest what happens next or how a religious story might end. While reading a story the teacher might pause and encourage a child to 'read' the next word.

- Understanding of the World

This area of learning engages children in an investigation of objects and materials and their properties. Children learn about change and pattern, about similarities and differences. They begin to question how and why things work. Children also learn about the world in relationship to time so they find out about past and present events relevant to their own lives or those of their families. They become aware of and interested in the natural world. They find out about their local area and learn about what they like and dislike about it. Children are also beginning to know about their own culture and about the culture of others in order to understand and celebrate the similarities and differences that exist in a diverse society. Children may be encouraged to learn about explicit and very concrete examples of religious life and behaviour in the world, for example, churches, mosques, temples, holy books, prayer beads, food associated with religion and religious symbols. Children should be encouraged to notice and be curious about such objects in their immediate neighbourhood and in the larger world. Young children's natural curiosity and desire to know should be encouraged by providing opportunities to visit places of worship and to learn about festivals, clothes, symbols, special ceremonies, rituals and other forms of religious expression. Young children should be encouraged to ask questions and to learn about religion which is of a direct factual nature, e.g. 'What is it called?' 'Where is it?' Young children should also be introduced to asking questions and learning answers which require a level of understanding and insight, e.g. 'Why do you do that?' 'What makes it special?'

- Expressive Arts and Design

Children respond in a variety of ways to what they encounter through what they see, hear, smell, taste or touch. As a result of these encounters children may express and communicate their own ideas, thoughts and feelings in a wide variety of ways. This means that in RE young children should be introduced to ways in which religious life and belief may be expressed in creative and imaginative ways, for example, through song, music, dance, play and art. They should be given opportunities to learn and be encouraged to express their experiences and feelings in ways which are imaginative and creative drawing upon a large range of senses like touching, smelling, hearing and tasting. Young children should be encouraged to use their imagination when learning about religion in the world by inventing stories, situations, role-play, dance and designs of their own. To be creative such work should not simply be different but should be genuinely expressive and respectful of the views of others.

## Key Stage One What should be taught Core knowledge and skills

**stories** - Pupils should learn about Christian stories that are in the Bible, for example, stories like: the lost sheep, the prodigal son, the Pharisee and the tax-collector and the Good Samaritan. Opportunities should be taken to encourage enquiry into how these stories may be interpreted and what values and beliefs they may be expressing. Pupils should similarly learn about stories associated with at least one other religious tradition. They should enquire into what values, beliefs or meaning these stories may also be expressing. Pupils should be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or moral these stories may give expression to and begin to make the attempt to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

**Artefacts** - Pupils should be taught to recognise Christian artefacts, for example, the cross, the Bible, images of Jesus and artefacts associated with Christmas and Easter, for example, a manger scene, an Easter egg. Pupils should explore how and when such artefacts may be used and why they are of religious importance to Christians. Pupils should similarly explore artefacts associated with at least one other religious tradition. Opportunities should be taken to encourage pupils to ask questions about the values or beliefs these artefacts may represent or express. They should also be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or beliefs these artefacts may express and begin to make the attempt to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

**places of worship** - Pupils should learn about the church as a place used for Christian worship. If possible pupils should have an opportunity to visit a local church. They should be encouraged to explore the atmosphere in a church, how and why Christians worship together and how and why special events like baptism are celebrated in a church. They should be taught to recognise features found in churches like a cross, images of Jesus, the font, the altar and the lectern. Pupils should be taught how at least one of these features may be used and should explore why it is religiously important.

Pupils should also explore a place of worship associated with at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts in response to views and beliefs which arise from their exploration into places of worship and begin to attempt to explain or support their view making use of simple reasons.

**festivals** - Pupils should be taught about the Christian festivals of Christmas and Easter. They should be taught the outline of the Christmas and the Easter story and explore what these stories suggest, mean or give expression to. They should learn about some of the traditions, symbols, special food and beliefs associated with these two festivals. Pupils should also explore at least one festival which is celebrated by at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to any beliefs or values a festival they have explored may suggest. They should be encouraged to explain or support their view making use of simple reasons.

**prayer** - Pupils should be taught about Christian prayer. Pupils should learn about different types of prayer, for example, praising (devotional) prayer, asking (petitionary) prayer, and how music or song may be used in Christian prayer. Pupils should be encouraged to be curious and to raise questions of their own about prayer. Pupils should also explore prayer in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to their enquiry into prayer. They should be encouraged to explain or support their view making use of simple reasons.

**beliefs** - Pupils should learn about some important Christian beliefs, for example, God, Jesus, the resurrection, forgiveness, kindness, concern for the rejected and prayer. Pupils should enquire into how religious faith may influence the lives of people, who may live in the

local community, and who may act in ways which show forgiveness or kindness to others. Pupils should be encouraged to attempt to share their thoughts and views in response to how faith may influence how a person chooses to live. They should be encouraged to explain or support their views making use of simple reasons.

### **Enquiry based KS1 topics**

Examples of possible KS1 enquiry topics are:

- Harvest – why do people give thanks?
- Why is Christmas celebrated?
- Why is Purim celebrated?
- Are there signs of God?
- What is a good friend?
- What was Muhammad like?
- Who are Rama and Sita?
- Why did Jesus tell these stories?
- Why is Easter so important?
- Why do people pray?

What did Jesus teach?

Why are babies baptised?

These enquiry topics are not a list of topics that must be taught in Key Stage 1. They are examples of topic titles teachers may find helpful. Some of these topics clearly concentrate on only one religion. For example, 'Why did Jesus tell these stories?' is clearly a topic which is focussed on Christianity. Other topics however may involve an enquiry into two religions. For example, 'Are there signs of God?' and 'Why do people pray?' may involve the pupils enquiring into two religions like Christianity and Islam.

### Key Stage Two What should be taught Core Knowledge and skills stories

Pupils should learn about Christian stories that are in the Bible. Stories that they learnt about in Key Stage 1 like, the lost sheep, the lost (prodigal) son, the Pharisee and the tax-collector and the Good Samaritan may be revisited in Key Stage 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding of how these stories may be interpreted. In addition pupils should also learn about other New Testament stories, for example, the story of Zacchaeus the tax collector, the Centurion's servant, the healing of the blind man, the feeding of the five thousand, the unforgiving servant (Mt 18 v 21-35) and the Lord's Prayer (Lk 11 v 1-4). Pupils should also learn about Bible stories which are part of the shared Judaic-Christian tradition, for example, the Creation Story, Adam and Eve, Noah's Ark, Moses and the Ten Commandments. Pupils should be encouraged to enquire into how these stories may be interpreted and what values and beliefs they may be expressing. Pupils should also learn about stories associated with at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their views and thoughts in response to any message or moral these stories may be expressing and support their views with clear and cogent reasons.

**worship** - Pupils should learn about Christian worship. Types of prayer like praising (devotional) prayer, asking (petitionary) prayer may be revisited in Key Stage 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding, for example, pupils might consider different types of asking prayers and whether asking for some things might be appropriate while other things might not be. The Lord's Prayer as a model for prayer involving devotion, confession and petition in Christianity should be explored. Pupils should also learn about Holy Communion, the

symbolism involved in the ceremony, the idea of a fellowship meal and the idea of Christ being present. Pupils should also learn about worship in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to their enquiry into worship. They should be taught to support their views or beliefs making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

**festivals** - Pupils should learn about Christian festivals. Festivals like Christmas and Easter may be revisited in Key Stage 2 in order to gain a deeper understanding. For example, pupils might explore the idea that Christmas is a time of peace and goodwill, a time for putting aside disagreements and of seeking reconciliation. Pupils might explore the belief that Easter was a victory when good triumphed over evil. Pupils should also learn about festivals in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to the beliefs that festivals often celebrate. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

**leaders of religion** - Pupils should learn about Jesus of Nazareth as the founder of Christianity. They should by the end of key Stage 2 have a reasonably secure knowledge of events in Jesus' life like the story of his birth, his baptism, his entry into Jerusalem, the last supper, his death and his resurrection. They should also have learnt that Jesus showed a particular concern for the marginalised and rejected as reflected in his attitude towards people like Zacchaeus the tax collector and the Roman Centurion whose servant was sick. Pupils should have knowledge of some of the parables which Jesus used to teach about kindness, going out of one's way to help others and of having a forgiving nature, as reflected in stories like the lost sheep, the lost (prodigal) son, the Good Samaritan and the unforgiving servant. Pupils should also have learnt about some of the miracle stories associated with Jesus, for example, the healing of the blind man and the feeding of the five thousand. They should also have been taught about Christian beliefs about Jesus, for example, that Jesus is not in the Christian tradition merely a prophet of God and he was not just a wise man who taught about God or that Jesus was a moral teacher who taught about what was right and wrong. Pupils should be taught about the mainstream Christian view that Jesus was God living on earth in human form, that Jesus was the Saviour and that Jesus is the second person in the Trinity which consists of the Father, the Son (Jesus Christ) and the Holy Spirit. Pupils should also learn about the leader of religion in at least one other religious tradition. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to the beliefs held about leaders of religion. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

**holy books** - Pupils should learn about the Bible as the holy book of Christianity. They should learn that for Christians the Bible is made up of two main sections, of which there is material which pre dates the life of Jesus, which is sacred for both Jews and Christians. They should learn about stories associated with certain books of the Bible, for example, Genesis, Exodus and the Gospels. Pupils should explore the idea of literal and non-literal or symbolic interpretation of scriptural passages. Pupils should be taught that the Bible is divided into named books, numbered chapters and numbered verses. Pupils should explore the Christian belief that the Bible is 'holy' and that individuals have received divine revelation or have been divinely inspired. Pupils should also learn about the holy book or scriptures associated with at least one other religion. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to what they have learnt. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

**people of faith** - Pupils should be taught about the life and work of at least one person who was motivated or inspired by their Christian faith. Pupils may explore the life of a well-known person drawn from history, for example, St Francis of Assisi, Thomas Barnardo, Florence

Nightingale, Harriet Tubman, Mary Seacole, Mother Teresa, Desmond Tutu or Jackie Pullinger. Or pupils may explore the life and work of an individual in the local community who may work or volunteer their time and energy to the disadvantaged, or a 'good cause' either locally or abroad. Pupils should explore in what way this person's life and work has any direct links to Christian teaching and practice and in what ways, if any, their faith may be of help to them. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to what they have learnt. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

**Beliefs** - Pupils should learn about some major Christian beliefs, for example, central beliefs about God as creator, Father and the idea of God as being a loving and all-powerful God. Pupils should learn about central beliefs associated with Jesus, for example, that for many Christians Jesus was God living on earth in human form, was resurrected from the dead, and lives on today, is known as the Son of God, that Jesus was the Saviour, that Jesus is the second person in the Trinity. Pupils should learn about central beliefs associated with the belief in the resurrection of the dead and eternal life. Pupils should learn about beliefs associated with living a Christian life, for example, a Christian life is a life lived in relationship with God, it involves a commitment to the welfare of others, forgiveness, love and charity. Pupils should also learn about some central beliefs associated with at least one other religion. Pupils should be encouraged to share their thoughts and views in response to what they have learnt. They should be taught to support their views making use of reasons which are clear and cogent.

RE- related learning is more likely to be achieved if a clear RE question is identified from the beginning and is pursued over several lessons. In this way the lessons should be conceived of as being an enquiry into a particular RE related question. Children should become familiar with the idea that the answer to the question being enquired into is not one which they can get from the teacher. The answer, such as it is, is one they have to think about for themselves and answer for themselves. It may not be very clear to the children that they are involved in an enquiry if traditional topic titles are used. For example, topic titles like, 'Pesach', 'Creation stories', 'Signs and symbols', 'Easter' and 'Forgiveness' are not wrong but they do not immediately make it clear what the focus of the enquiry is.

### **Enquiry based KS2 topics**

Examples of possible KS2 enquiry topics are:

Who was Jesus?

What is the Bible?

Why do Muslims pray?

What is the meaning of Christmas?

How should animals be treated?

What is Holy Communion?

Who was Guru Nanak?

Why is Pesach celebrated?

Where do rules come from?

What is prayer?

Did Jesus make the blind see?

What did the Buddha teach?

Do Hindus believe in many gods?

Does faith make a difference?

Why is Muhammad important to Muslims?

These enquiry topics are not a list of topics that must be taught in Key Stage 2. They are examples of topic titles schools may find helpful.