



# ST STEPHEN'S CEVA PRIMARY SCHOOL, BATH

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

*This policy links with the Collective Worship and SMSC policies*

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## Rationale

Our rationale for the teaching and learning of RE is rooted in our Christian Values, which inform our vision statement:

*“St Stephen’s is a unique community inspired by Christian Values, promoting mutual respect, responsible behaviour and encouraging creativity and a joy in learning.”*

St Stephen’s is a caring, happy and ambitious church school, reflected in our four core values of Love, Courage, Creativity and Joy. Rooted in an inclusive and caring Christian approach, we strive to help every child find a place in the world that is the right shape for them by inspiring them with enriching experiences, challenging them to achieve, and enabling them to gain a sense of who they are and how they can thrive in the wider world. We want all children to feel valued and nurtured as individuals knowing they are unique and loved by God.

Our RE curriculum is a vital part of achieving this aim. In line with the Church of England RE Statement of Entitlement, we provide:

- A challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework.
- An assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts.
- A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide.
- A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place.
- The opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development.

In so doing, we intend our RE curriculum to make a significant contribution to the development of each child’s sense of self and spiritual nourishment and to their ability to become a confident and compassionate citizen of the world. Children reflect upon 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. 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 views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Strong links with St Stephen’s Church enriches the children’s experiences and helps to develop their religious thinking, with the Rector and Curate acting as a ‘Living Bridge’ between the church and the school.

## Aims

The aims of our Religious Education curriculum are to help children:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and 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 investigative and research skills and enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious views;
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

## Teaching

These are the key principles we adopt to ensure our RE teaching is meaningful to the children in our community:

### *Reflection*

We encourage the children to reflect upon religious ideas and concepts and what they mean to them. Opportunities for this are specifically planned for and recorded, typically in the RE or discussion books.

### *Awe and wonder*

We plan opportunities to nurture a sense of awe and wonder when learning about God, the world around us and the mysteries of life. We believe there is much to be gained from nurturing curiosity alongside expressing our feelings related to the experiences of amazement, mystery or disappointment that the natural world can evoke.

### *Challenge*

To ensure our RE teaching continues to challenge the children and builds knowledge and conceptual understanding progressively, we use the Diocesan approved Awareness, Mystery and Value RE syllabus which is enhanced by the Understanding Christianity syllabus. We develop the children's knowledge and understanding of a range of world faiths, taking into account the faiths represented in our school community.

Our core value of Creativity is reflected in the range of activity types, including group discussions, role play, treasure hunts, games and art which enable children to develop their understanding and demonstrate deeper thinking in a variety of ways.

### *Assessment*

We assess the children's RE thinking and understanding three times a year through specific assessment activities directly related to the 'I can...' statements. In line with assessment in other areas of the curriculum we use the terminology of *working towards* the standard, *expected standard* and *greater depth in the standard*. The progress of three focus children in each class is closely tracked throughout their school career by the RE leader who also reviews the RE books, including the Discussion Books, to monitor standards, coverage, creativity and challenge. This is supported by an annual Book Look involving the RE Leader, Senior Leadership Team and Governors. All teachers receive written feedback after each assessment point.

### *Enrichment/ broader curriculum*

As a Church of England school, we maintain a strong relationship with St. Stephen's Church. Throughout the academic year, we celebrate Christian festivals such as Harvest, Easter and Christmas, as well key events such as our end of year leavers' service, all of which take place within the church with all pupil, staff, governors and families who are also invited to join us. 'Our Church' is also a valuable learning space, used to enhance our RE curriculum but also to support other areas such as history and art. The Rector maintains a high profile in the school, actively contributing to many areas of the wider curriculum. Children also visit other places of worship to enhance children's understanding and experiences of other religions.



### **Parental Choice**

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from RE lessons. If they wish to do this they must put their request in writing to the Head.

The right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost.