

Tapton School

RE Policy

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COMMITTEE: Learning & Inclusion

LAST REVIEW/UPDATE: March 2017

LEVEL OF CHANGE: Minor

NEXT REVIEW: March 2018

RE POLICY

In accordance with the Education Reform Act of 1988 and the Education Act of 1996, Religious Education is an entitlement for all pupils. The emphasis on promoting community cohesion has also given added importance to the place of RE within the curriculum. RE at Tapton fulfils both the local and national requirements that RE should “reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian while taking account of the teachings and practices of the principal religions of Great Britain”. RE is unique in that while Agreed Syllabi are determined locally (in this case by Sheffield LEA) it still fulfils the aims of the National Curriculum by enabling young people to become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It makes a major contribution to spiritual and moral development of young people by providing opportunities for them to learn from religious and secular world views as well as about them. Underpinning all the work of the RE department is our commitment to “Valuing everyone, Caring for each other, Achieving excellence”.

The Aims:

Religious Education at Tapton enables pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teaching of principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 - Developing an awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experience, and the religious and secular responses to them.
 - Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.
- Develop and promote a tolerant understanding of and respect for religious believers in our multicultural society.
- Develop a positive attitude towards living in a society of diverse religions.

In meeting these aims, RE at Tapton does not seek to promote any one religion; rather it promotes a learning environment which supports children of all faiths or none by encouraging pupils to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others in a way that reinforces the position of the individual within our community.

The Curriculum:

In year 7 Religious Education centres on a study of the foundation and the main beliefs and practices of monotheistic religions (Christianity, Islam and Sikhism) as well as

exploring pupils' own beliefs about God and the reasons for them. Pupils learn how each religion began and the ways beliefs affect the way a person lives their life.

In Year 8 Pupils are introduced to polytheism through a study of Hinduism. In this year pupils also build further on their knowledge of Christian and Muslim beliefs and practices and in preparation for their GCSE studies. A more thematic approach to topics such as racism and life after death also enables pupils to develop the critical and analytical skills that will prepare them for GCSE study and beyond.

In recognition of the valuable contribution that Religious Education makes to social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, community cohesion and academic excellence, GCSE religious Studies forms part of the core offer at Key stage 4 at Tapton. To facilitate this all students begin their GCSE course in Y9. While certification is not legally required, experience shows that pupils gain the most from their experiences in RE when the academic value of the subject is recognised. The GCSE course focuses on Christian, Muslim and Secular responses to contemporary moral and philosophical issues. Pupils are encouraged to draw on their own experience in order to evaluate these responses and to develop and evaluate their own reasoned opinions.

Religious Studies is also offered as an option at both AS and A Level. Religious Studies is a respected discipline at this level due to the academic rigour and higher level reasoning skills inherent in the programme of study. In recognition of this, Religious Studies A Level appears on the Russell Group Universities list of preferred subjects at A Level.

Withdrawal from RE

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the RE provided by the school, however due to the inclusive nature of RE and many benefits it provides, parents rarely exercise this right. Every care is taken to ensure that RE provision is appropriate for all pupils and there should be no need for any child to be withdrawn. It is the policy of the school to address any concerns that parents may have concerning RE.

Parents wishing to exercise the right to withdraw their child from RE should in the first instance contact the Subject Leader for RE who will try to address any concerns. If following discussion concerns remain, parents should formalise their request by writing to the Head Teacher.

Parents should note:

- The right to withdraw is not from RE itself but from the RE provided by the school, alternative provision that seeks to further the child's knowledge and understanding of the parent's beliefs, values and philosophies must be provided by the parent and copies made available to the subject leader.
- This time is not for private study, extra tuition in another subject or homework.

Heather Bower

Subject Leader RE

April 2014

APPENDIX

Adapted from QCA National Curriculum

RE and the National Curriculum

Successful Learners

RE helps to develop successful learners by asking life's largest questions and presenting interesting, important conceptual challenges to pupils. Learning about religion and learning from religion has the capacity to motivate and empower pupils, enabling them to enjoy and value learning.

By investigating beliefs and teachings, explaining practices, reflecting on questions of truth, analysing ideas and evaluating answers, pupils can enhance their skills and confidence as learners. Pupils are able to engage with spiritual and moral concepts, some of which may be new to them, by reflecting on, analysing, interpreting and evaluating sources, questions, practices or ideas. Understanding the complexity of questions about truth, meaning, purpose, identity, values or commitments and analysing possible answers can contribute to successful learning individually and collaboratively.

As pupils interpret sources and texts with increasing skill they begin to ask questions about truth and meaning and to understand the importance of communicating ideas accurately and respectfully.

Applying vocabulary, explaining commitments, and evaluating beliefs enhance pupils' skills and confidence as group learners as they work with others to give expression to their understanding and response.

Confident Individuals

RE helps to create confident individuals by promoting self-awareness and self-esteem as pupils articulate questions and explore responsibility. RE provides a forum for young people to voice their questions about identity and meaning, contributing to their personal development. It can inspire pupils to search for and deepen their sense of personal meaning in their lives. As young people reflect on ultimate questions and on the ideas and practices of belief systems they are helped to understand more about themselves and others and how to communicate. They are encouraged to develop their ideas and express them appropriately. They can use beliefs, practices and values to deal confidently with challenges and setbacks. Evaluating practices, ways of life and values empowers pupils to make informed choices. They learn to take increasing responsibility for their attitudes and actions. These processes also strengthen pupils' realistic confidence in themselves and each other, and help them to make decisions with increasing autonomy and discernment. This enables them to deal with the demands of adult life sensitively and competently.

Responsible Citizens

RE helps prepare pupils to become responsible citizens by raising issues of local, national and global concern and placing them in spiritual and moral contexts. By understanding the beliefs and practices of religions and world views, pupils can make connections between belief and action. Through considering the beliefs behind environmental action, the needs of refugees or the work of aid agencies, pupils can become aware of the connections between beliefs, lifestyles and ultimate questions. Understanding the right to hold different beliefs enables pupils to see diverse religions and beliefs as a significant part of the local, national and global community and of human experience. They can develop as reflective and responsible citizens in a plural society and global community, with a strong awareness of religious and ethical diversity.

By evaluating ethical issues and expressing views using reasoned arguments, pupils can enhance their capacity and desire to make a positive contribution to debates and decisions in society.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Spiritual and moral development is an essential part of personal development.

Spirituality includes beliefs, whether religious or not, the search for meaning or purpose, relationships, creativity, a sense of otherness, wonder and awe, self-knowledge, and feelings and emotions.

Spiritual development can be the process by which people acquire not only knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes about spirituality, but also the disposition to foster their own inner spirit, and to recognise it in others.

Morality includes values and principles, attitudes and behaviour, knowledge of social conventions and codes of conduct, and the ability to make decisions about right and wrong.

Moral development can be the process by which people develop the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes they need in order to make responsible moral decisions and act on them, and also the disposition to do what is right as a point of principle.

The spiritual and moral dimension is important not only as a legal requirement but also because of the way it enriches teaching and learning. In religious education, pupils will explore the particular convictions at the heart of religious traditions, spiritual insights and secular world views, making their own discoveries and formulating their own interpretations and values on issues, questions and experiences.

Community Cohesion

By community cohesion, we mean working towards a society in which there is a common vision and sense of belonging by all communities; a society in which the diversity of people's backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and valued; a society in which similar life opportunities are available to all; and a society in which

strong and positive relationships exist and continue to be developed in the workplace, in schools and in the wider community.

From Alan Brine HMI

Religious Education provides a key context for children and young people to develop their understanding and appreciation of diversity through the study of religious and non-religious beliefs. It helps to promote shared values, respect for all, and to challenge racism and discrimination. In many schools this is achieved by providing a high quality classroom experience of RE enriched by opportunities to visit and meet with representatives from communities of religions and non-religious beliefs in the local area.

Good RE will promote community cohesion at each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance:

- * the *school community* - RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values within the school community can be celebrated and explored

- !*the *community within which the school is located* - RE provides opportunities to investigate the patterns of diversity of religions and non-religious beliefs within the local area. It is an important context within which links can be forged with different religious and non-religious communities in the local community

- * the *UK community* - a major focus of RE is the study of the diversity of religions and nonreligious beliefs which exists within the UK and how this diversity influences national life

- !*the *global community* - RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religions and non-religious beliefs and its impact on world issues.

Where RE provides an effective context to promote community cohesion it has a focus on 'securing high standards of attainment for all pupils from all ethnic backgrounds, and of different socio-economic statuses, abilities and interests, ensuring that pupils are treated with respect and supported to achieve their full potential'. (*DCFS Guidance on the duty to promote community cohesion July 2007 DCSF-00598-2007*). In order to achieve high standards, pupils' progress in the subject should be monitored carefully and any under-achievement by particular groups tackled