



## **Religious Education Rationale**

RE at Beechwood explores big questions about life, to find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can make sense of religion, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

The teaching of RE in our school:

- Contributes to pupil's education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- Enables pupils to learn about religions and beliefs in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Helps pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response and to agree or disagree respectfully.
- Equips pupil's with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and beliefs, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- Helps develop in pupil's an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and beliefs.
- Allows pupils to gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

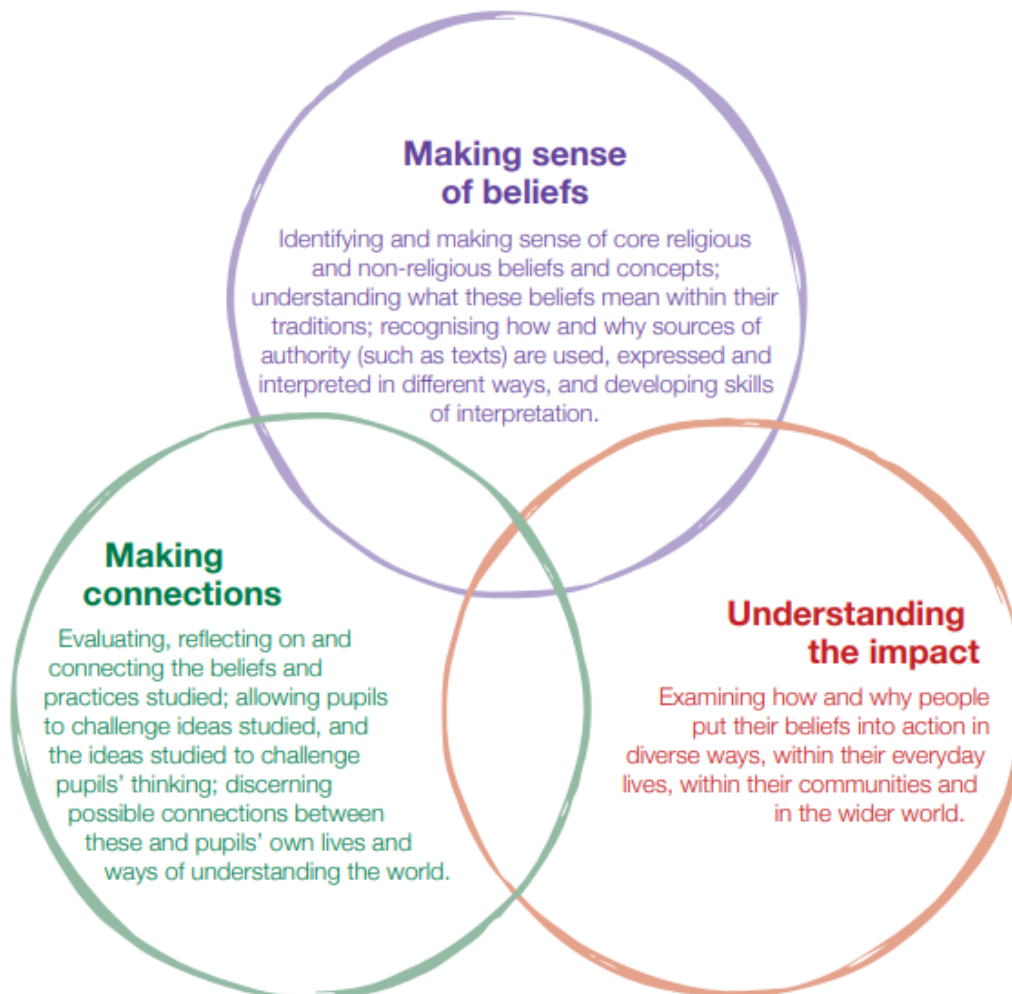
### **RE Curriculum**

To be able to do this the school has developed its RE curriculum by using the 'Worcester Agreed Syllabus' and the 'Understanding Christianity Project.'

We choose to use the Worcester syllabus because SACRE in Worcestershire have developed excellent materials to support pupils in understanding the complexities of this world and developing a sound moral compass to support themselves in their adult lives.

The principle aim of this syllabus is for pupils to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

There RE teaching and learning approach is as shown in the diagram below:



This vibrant syllabus supports both the teachers and the pupils. It is full of thought-provoking material and ideas to motivate and inspire exciting RE for our pupils. It enables pupils to study beliefs, teachings and ways of living and is structured so that they can explore a range of responses to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitment. In the process they can examine and reflect upon their own ideas and values. At a time when religious beliefs guide the lives of billions of people worldwide, understanding people's views can be a first step to recognising and appreciating diversity.

The Understanding Christianity Project came out of a response to Ofsted reports and the Church of England's 'Making a Difference?' report which recognised opportunities to develop and enhance the quality of teaching about Christianity in both church and community schools. It is a resource not a curriculum or syllabus. It has been developed to use alongside locally agreed syllabuses or diocesan syllabus. The key purpose of this project is to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it.

The aim of the project is to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice. Pupils from 4-14 explore the significant theological concepts within Christianity as part of developing their wider religious, theological and cultural literacy. The project also seeks to support teachers in developing their own knowledge and understanding of Christianity theology to be able to teach with confidence.

So, by using the Worcester syllabus and the Understanding Christianity project we help the pupils to develop strategies to try to answer to the 'Big questions' that we ask them at the start of every unit of work. They also help us achieve the strands, 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the SIAMs guidelines.

## **RE Lessons**

Throughout the key stages R.E. is taught during one lesson a week and sometimes flows over into the cross-curricular topics. We ensure that the topics studied in R.E are built upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the schemes of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move throughout the school.

When each child starts in school we aim to build upon his/her own experiences of life – family and friends, birthdays and other celebrations that are important to them. They are introduced to the Bible and the beliefs and practices of the Christian church and to the Christian values which our school focusses on. This is developed and extended on as the children move through the school. We try to make learning as fun and practical as we can. We use religious stories, artefacts from many religious traditions, drama, works of art, music, visits and visitors, all of which are a stimulus for conversation and questions.

The children get the opportunity to visit our parish church 'St Edmunds' and we have regular visits from Rev Rachel Newell one of the Team vicars from Top Church in Dudley and from Rev Hugh Burton the Team Rector from Top Church. They also get the opportunity to visit a Mosque when learning about Islam and when learning about places that are sacred to believers at the end of Year 2 the children either visit a range of sacred places or have visitors into their classroom to share their experiences. In Year 1 the children get to visit a Synagogue so they can find out about Jewish people and how they live and worship. In Year 4 the children get to talk to members of the Hindu faith about what it means to be a Hindu in Britain today. At Beechwood we also try and give the children the experience of visiting Worcester Cathedral who run many experiences for the children to participate in over the school year.

The children then have time to reflect on what they have learnt and can share this with each other, record it in their books, create displays or artwork.

### **Differentiation and special needs**

All pupils need to feel that they have something valuable to contribute. Activities will be differentiated so that every pupil feels that he can achieve at a level appropriate to his/her ability.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Religious Education should seek to ensure that it promotes respect, mutual understanding and tolerance for those who adhere to different faiths and those unable to accept a religious faith. Pupils need to recognise, understand and respect diversity of values in order to determine and justify their own religious or secular position. Religious Education alongside other parts of the curriculum should enable and help pupils in their understanding of religion within a multi-cultural context, as well as playing a vital part in dispelling ignorance and promoting religious, cultural and racial understanding. All of these ideals are embodied in the equal opportunities policy.

### **Entitlement**

Entitlement RE is legally required for all pupils. RE is a core subject of the curriculum for all pupils. RE is an entitlement for all pupils through their schooling, from Reception year up to and including Key Stage 5.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

Some pupils and staff may belong to other Religious denominations and care is taken to ensure that all staff and pupils, whatever their religious conviction, are made to feel comfortable with Religious Education. It is therefore hoped that few parents will choose to withdraw their pupils from religious education lessons. Parents are asked to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns at the earliest opportunity.

### **Assessment**

We expect children to achieve as well in RE as they do in other subjects across the curriculum. Pupils will be taught knowledge, skills and understanding through the use of thematic units. The assessment format takes the form the teachers marking objectives achieved as they move through a unit of learning. Each objective is labelled as 'achieved' 'partially achieved' or 'not achieved'. There are also mastery objectives which can be labelled in the same way. This gives teachers a clear view of where an individual fits within the end of year outcomes and allows for accurate assessment of the a pupils understanding and because the teachers are assessing the unit as they are teaching it then it gives them opportunity to address any misconceptions straight away.

### **Monitoring and evaluation**

Monitoring takes place through pupil voice, book trawls and learning walks around the school. Using this combination of monitoring gives us a clearer view of what the children have learnt in RE lesson. The book trawls are carried by the RE subject lead, by the head teacher or by phase groups. External partners are invited into the school to also contribute to the monitoring cycle which ensures the moderation of judgements on the quality of RE.

SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspections evaluate the impact of RE on the school community and its contribution to the values and ethos of the school.