

# Stanford School Policy for Religious Education

September 2016

## The legal status of RE

The law requires that the curriculum of every maintained school in England must comprise a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum) and include provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents (or by students withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 and over). Separate regulations covering maintained special schools require them to ensure that, so far as is practicable, a pupil receives RE learning. We ensure parents are informed of this right and also that parents are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. If a parent does decide to withdraw their child from all or part of RE, then the school will meet to discuss the arrangements with the parents. The meeting will be minuted to ensure a clear record of outcomes is in place.

The teaching of Religious Education follows the Agreed Syllabus for North East Lincs which has been updated September 2016.

## The value and purpose of RE

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, to challenge stereotypes and to build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

Religious education for children and young people:

- **Provokes challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **Encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non-religious) in the light of what they learn. As they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics, they express their responses, thereby building resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives
- **Enables pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging** which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **Teaches pupils to develop respect for others** including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **Prompts pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and others**, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.

In summary, Religious Education is important because it helps children and young people gain *wisdom* in the following areas of life:

- Cultural, artistic, musical and literary: many great artists, composers, musicians and writers had deep religious and/or philosophical motivation and inspiration for their work. Many use religious themes and employ references to religious literature and thought in their work. How can we understand the insights they are communicating without knowledge of key religious ideas and stories?
- Historical and geographical, scientific and technological: what is the meaning of life? Where are we going? What is 'true'? What is 'best'? Where do we come from? Why are people different and why do they have different tastes and preferences? What is to be gained from a diverse society? How can

we understand the history and traditional cultures of Britain and other countries without a knowledge and understanding of the religious and philosophical traditions which helped form them?

- Moral and ethical: in the light of the many moral and ethical dilemmas we meet in life, ranging from the personal to the global, what is it to lead a good life? How do we know? Whom should we trust? How can we decide? Religious and philosophical principles and insights can help guide us when faced with moral dilemmas
- Personal: How can I be happy? How can I best manage my relationships? What are the skills I need to succeed in life? What emotional resources do I need to maintain a healthy lifestyle? We can get insights from religions and philosophies studied in RE and get practice in 'skills for life' such as empathy, sensitivity, humility and in thinking and communicating well
- Political, social and psychological: How can we best understand the relationships between people? Why do religion and belief feature in the news so much? What do religious and belief groups say about various contemporary issues? How can we best understand the religious practices and festivals celebrated by our neighbours? What motivates people? Why are our public institutions set up in the way they are? How do/should people behave when in positions of power? How do/should people react when others have power over them?

Without knowledge of religions and beliefs, our gathered wisdom in all these aspects of our lives will be incomplete

## **Guidelines**

- Assessment will be made at the end of each school year.