

The Academy is committed to excellent Safeguarding

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Policy Date: February 2010 Last updated: January 2017

Date review due: January 2020

Portfolio Group responsible: Curriculum & Christian
Distinctiveness

Origin: Assistant Headteacher

Academy Context

This average sized 11-19 Academy is built into a hill within a rurally isolated area. Around half of the students come from the local town but the remainder travel some distance to the Academy. Much of the local employment is seasonal. Almost all the students are White British. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is lower than that seen nationally, the largest proportion of these students having emotional, behavioural and social, moderate learning and specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia. There is a learning support unit (LSU) within the Academy and an Local Additional Provision (HUB) that students with a variety of needs can access. There are a number of Christian Churches in the catchment area, but no places of worship for other religions.

Aims and Values

We serve and support our community providing a child-centred education that reflects Christian values. Respecting the dignity and potential of each individual person and sensitive to the needs of a diverse society, we strive to enhance and strengthen our values:

- Hope
- Kindness
- Courage
- Integrity
- Trust
- Respect
- Responsibility

These values are central to our school.

We are committed to the highest standards of academic excellence; we are dedicated to providing the best possible education for all our students by developing the knowledge, understanding and skills essential for learning and leading a fulfilled life.

There are four main purposes to this policy:

- to establish an entitlement for all pupils
- to establish expectations for teachers of this subject
- to promote continuity and coherence across the school
- to state the school's approaches to this subject in order to promote public, and particularly parent's and carer's, understanding of the RE curriculum.

Introduction

The importance of religious education to the curriculum

It is the legal entitlement of all students to receive Religious Education in their Core Curriculum. The Academy is committed to meeting in full the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education in ensuring that the teaching and learning of Religious Education is treated with the importance and delivered with the excellence it deserves. The aims of Religious Education at The Ilfracombe Academy are those of the Devon Agreed Syllabus - ie to contribute to the pupil's development of their own beliefs and values, and to bring students to a knowledge and understanding of Religion. Religious Education at Ilfracombe is open to students of all beliefs and none. It does not aim to advocate any religious stance, but to encourage students to learn both from and about religion.

Religions have always shaped individuals, cultures and societies. The role of Religious Education is to provide opportunities for pupils to study and reflect on the beliefs and practices on which people base their lives so that respect for those with religious and other beliefs is well

founded. It promotes attitudes and values necessary for responsible citizenship in a democratic and pluralistic society

Religious Education provides pupils with opportunities to reflect upon human experiences that give rise to fundamental questions of life and death and to consider values and commitments. It provides opportunity to study Christianity and the principal religions of Britain. The subject contributes to the development of the pupils' own beliefs and values and their sense of identity. It does not promote a particular religion or particular set of beliefs. This kind of nurturing is the privilege of the home and faith communities to which pupils belong. The Religious Education taught in our school is based on Devon's current Agreed Syllabus.

The aims of religious education and how these contribute to the school's aims

The school aims to:

- encourage a reflective approach to living;
- enable the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the principal religions of Britain;
- provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their experiences of life;
- contribute to the development of their own beliefs and values.

In addition to these aims, we expect pupils to develop attitudes such as a willingness to explore the religious and spiritual experiences of humanity and a commitment to searching with an open mind

Entitlement and curriculum provision

- every student in key stage 3 and 4 has 2 hours of PCRE (Personal, Careers and Religious Education) per week, mostly with specialist staff. This includes their entitlement to religious education for at least 5% of curriculum time.
- religious Education at both key stages is combined with themes from Citizenship, personal, health and sex and relationships education, and careers into one seamless course which students complete with one class teacher. This enables a more specialist approach to teaching sensitive issues, and a focus on the moral principles underlying these areas.
- key stage 3 students follow the detailed schemes of work based on Devon's agreed syllabus for Religious Education, and the non-statutory schemes of work for PSHE and Careers.
- the majority of key stage 4 students follow a full course GCSE in Religious Studies. This includes a wide variety of moral issues, Citizenship and PSHE themes including sex and drugs education. A small group of students follow a non-exam course which covers all the main themes, but does not result in an external exam
- in the sixth form, Religious Studies is offered at A level, via the Philosophy and Ethics course.
- all students are given the opportunity to study both Christianity as the majority study, and a selection of the main religious traditions represented in Britain today, including the secular approach to many moral issues.
- the PCRE department is housed in adjacent rooms, and has a strong departmental ethos. Many students use the area at break and lunchtime, and access the staff and resources for support and advice.

- Parents have the legal right to withdraw their child from RE and Sex and Relationships Education. This needs to be by arrangement with the Headteacher in consultation with the Head of Religious Education.

Teaching and learning

- detailed schemes of work are in place for every year group. These give guidance to teachers, provide a wide range of resources and teaching and learning activities including the use of media and IT based resources.
- pupils are provided with as much first-hand experience of the principal religions as possible and artefacts and authentic resources are used wherever possible.
- where religious artefacts are used, they are treated with the respect they would be given if they were being used in their actual setting for worship.
- when teaching religious education, the school does not seek commitment by the pupils to a particular religion. Teachers do not assume that pupils are members of any faith community. They avoid phrases such as “When you go to church ...” and use statements such as “When Christians/Jews go to church/synagogue ...”. The integrity of pupils is respected and they are never asked or expected to believe the claims of a religion.
- sacred literature is treated with respect. For example, biblical material is presented as the sacred text of the believing community to whom it is the Word of God. Biblical stories are used to identify what they teach believers about God and his relationship with people.
- the experiences and views that pupils bring from home and faith communities are always valued.
- students are encouraged to develop their own views and opinions whilst respecting those of others.
- visitors are used wherever possible to give a personal view of what it is like to be an active part of a faith community.

Assessment and recording

- Annual reports for all pupils are completed once per year based on assessments carried out after each unit of work. Reports include a brief description of the work covered and identify the standards achieved. Personal and constructive comments are included.
- Learning outcomes and assessment activities are identified in each unit of work in the scheme.
- Assessments are based on the statements in the Agreed Syllabus
- Work in religious education is assessed in accordance with the school marking, assessment and recording policies.

The contribution of religious education to other aspects of the curriculum

Literacy

Key words and vocabulary are identified in the scheme of work and are included in classroom displays in the department. Students are given specific teaching on how to structure their answers, using connectives, paragraphs and other key literacy ideas.

ICT

The scheme of work identifies relevant websites, PowerPoint's, media clips and other IT based resources. Some units of work expect that the pupils present their work using ICT.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Religious education makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The scheme of work identifies opportunities for pupils to explore their own feelings and beliefs, to study the beliefs and values of others, to empathise with others, to ask puzzling questions and explore the responses from the faith communities.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

At The Ilfracombe Academy, PSHE is taught within PCRE (Personal, Careers and Religious Education) by specialist Religious Education teachers. There are links with PSHE when religious education explores self-awareness, inner feelings and emotions, and personal relationships. Those areas developing a respect for the beliefs and values of others also make a major contribution. The use of appropriate teaching and learning styles contributes to this. Group work provides opportunities for collaboration. Discussions are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Religious education differs from PSHE in that it explicitly explores how the principal religions address the issues.

Review

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's policy review programme. The subject leader is responsible for reporting to the governors' curriculum committee about the quality of its implementation and its impact on standards. In the light of this, policy amendments may be made.

POLICY HISTORY

Policy / Version Date	Summary of change	Contact	Implementation Date	Review Date
February 2010	Policy is linked with 'Devon agreed syllabus'	Judith Larrington	Feb 2010	March 2014
May 2014	Updates linked to Academy / Church status	Judith Larrington	LGB adopted March 2015	March 2017
January 2017	Updated by senior staff – minor amendments	Judith Larrington	January 2017	July 2017