



Shaftesbury  
School  
*We aspire*

## Religious Education Policy

**Approved by: Student Outcomes Committee**

**Date: 27 June 2011**

**Date of next review: June 2014**



### ***Our Mission Statement:***

'To empower every individual who participates in our community to realise his / her aspirations.'

We create an environment where those with Christian faith are encouraged to grow. For those of other faiths, or those who choose not to have a faith, we allow for a good and positive experience of Christianity, so that they may understand, appreciate and respect the Christian faith.

*Our **Mission Statement** states our commitment to the whole child, further developed by our **Ethos statement** composed in partnership with the **Ministry team**. Our policies are rooted in **Christian values**.*

**Ethos:** Pervading the ethos of our school are the values of our Christian Foundation, the ideals of the Olympic movement and the spirit of internationalism.

We value the uniqueness of every human being regardless of gender, age, ethnic origin, creed or sexual orientation. We teach the importance of love and respect, tolerance, forgiveness, the need to work for peace and justice, honesty, selflessness and loyalty.

Shaftesbury School is an internationally outward-looking community promoting harmony, participation, friendly competition and opportunities for recognition and celebration. **(See also Appendix: The Eight Conditions that affect Aspirations as allied to Christian Teaching)**

### **Statement regarding the legal position of RE in Shaftesbury School:**

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that **'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered students'**

Shaftesbury School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled school therefore we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus 'REsearch' (Dorset). As a Church of England Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School.

The Governors, in consultation with the Head teacher have decided, following advice from the Diocese to adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus and supplement this with material from the Diocese and elsewhere.

### **Rationale/Aims for teaching RE (See: *Locally Agreed Syllabus and Religious Education in English schools: Non statutory guidance 2010*)**

In Religious Education at Shaftesbury School we aim that Religious Education will:-

- **Provoke 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 students' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **Encourage students 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; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.

- **Enable students to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **Teach students to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **Prompt students to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- **Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery**

*(See Locally Agreed Syllabus for specific skills and attitudes developed in Religious Education)*

**The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims (in particular to community cohesion):**

#### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all students should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of students and of society, and prepares students for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

#### **Personal development and well-being:**

RE plays an important role in preparing students for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

- **Elements of PSHE are integrated into RE e.g. Sex Education with a cohesive programme of Diocese guidance and Christian resources alongside local PCT/NHS input and guidance and GCSE syllabus on Sex & Relationships & Medical Ethics. Other policies relating to Local & National guidance are to be read in reference here**

#### **Community cohesion:**

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. The Head of RE contributes towards the Community Cohesion Development Plan and SEF. Shaftesbury School are committed to host a Bi-annual community National Holocaust Memorial Day Community event. Whenever possible in the Church calendar and when appropriate we contribute to local clergy events and festivals with students and parent/ staff contributions. Effective RE at Shaftesbury School promotes 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 can be celebrated and explored.

**The community within which the school is located** – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

**The UK community** – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

**The global community** – RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

***RE is an important subject in contribution to Shaftesbury Schools development as a Rights Respecting School.***

#### **Approaches to teaching RE:**

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all students are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through locally agreed syllabuses, (with Diocesan advice) and through wide consultation within our own school, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content and quality of a good Teaching and Learning experience.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject which is directly relevant to students own experience and lives now, and for their future, we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, ICT, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible, we want our students to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities. The clergy team take lessons, planned with teachers, on a Modular basis throughout Key stages 3 and 4. Because of our isolated and rural location, that is not presently very diverse, we make great use of visits to places of worship in other major locations such as a Hindu Temple and Sikh Gurdwara in London and the Islamic Mosque in Bournemouth. We encourage Sixth formers on an annual basis to participate in the HET 'Lessons from Auschwitz programme.'

#### **Gifted and Talented / Most Able Provision / Differentiation:**

We have a well established Gifted and Talented / Most Able Programme funded and supported by the Foundation Governors. On an annual basis young people participate in programmes in Salisbury Cathedral Education Department taught by Diocese staff on a range of cross-curricular topics to challenge and extend their RE skills and knowledge and understanding.

It is the responsibility of each teacher to differentiate appropriate to each student's needs; to maintain IEP information and to liaise directly with Teaching Assistants and the RAD Dept. in order to support students inclusively where possible and appropriate.

**Religious Education at Shaftesbury school is delivered in the following way;** We use, as a basis for our planning, the Dorset Scheme of Work. As a source of ideas and teaching strategies we also make use of a variety of WJEC GCSE resources and materials. We have a wide range of resources and materials and maintain, with appropriate dignity and policy for staff and students, Artefact boxes for all major world religions.

#### **How RE is organised:**

RE is delivered as a discrete subject where all students receive one hour a week of RE. The Head of RE is responsible for curriculum and resources and these are held centrally in A19. **(For religions taught at each Key Stage see attached overview)**

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that;

- At KS 3 students study Christianity and other world religions (to include Humanism/ Atheism) : Students begin GCSE syllabus Modules in Year 9
- We include 'School Based Study Units' at KS3 & 4
- At KS 4 students follow Christianity and Islam (to include Humanism/ Atheism and in the case of Most Able to include other world religion references e.g. Buddhism / Hinduism)
- At Year 10 students study WJEC GCSE Short Course "Believing & Living" Specification B Unit 1
- At Year 11 students study WJEC GCSE Short Course
- "Believing and Experiencing" Specification B Unit 2
- All students will follow the GCSE syllabus however not all students will be entered for Short or full course GCSE examinations and a range of options can be considered in consultation with the Head of RE in terms of students personalised learning agendas. Non-entry to exam does not equate with Withdrawal from RE in accordance with Legal (1988 Education Act ) requirements (See below ref The Right of Withdrawal)

### **Assessment and Recording of RE**

In line with the school policy on assessment and recording it is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her students through marking work in terms of classwork; assessments, Mock examination papers and homeworks. Three times a year each student will complete an agreed key assessment task that will form part of his or her work done in RE. The class teacher will record the level achieved by each student. The level achieved will be used by the Head of RE to track student progress through the school and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that each student is set work that is appropriately challenging and appropriately differentiated.

### **Arrangements for monitoring standards of teaching and learning in RE and RE contribution to School Self Evaluation**

The Head of RE will monitor, evaluate, review and develop RE within the school through analysis of assessment data, work scrutiny, student voice and maintain SEF. The Head of RE and teachers will meet on a regular basis with students for student evaluations of RE curriculum and experience. The Head of RE is responsible for contributing to the Church school self evaluation process.

### **Responsibilities for RE within the school, (Head teachers and Governors):**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher should also make sure that:

- all students make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing students' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- where appropriate, students have opportunities to take courses leading to an accredited qualification in the subject
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw

- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and students can make good progress
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the head teacher ensures that students receive their entitlement to RE. In these circumstances, head teachers might wish to seek advice from their LA or SACRE.

### **The right of Withdrawal from RE:**

At Shaftesbury School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, 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 students or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Shaftesbury School.

### **Managing the right of withdrawal:**

- The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all students and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or students themselves if they are aged 18 or over), 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.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- 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 students are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Students will usually remain on school premises.
- Where a student has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the student to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the student could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.
- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the student with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the student may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the student's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

As Shaftesbury School is a secondary school if parents have withdrawn a student from RE provided at the school and asked for alternative RE to be provided in accordance with the tenets of a particular religion or denomination, then the LA must either:

- provide facilities for the alternative RE to be given at the school unless there are special circumstances which would make it unreasonable to do so Or
- agree to outside arrangements being made as long as no financial burden falls on the LA or school as a result of these arrangements.

*This Policy document has been developed based on Religious Education in English Schools: Non statutory guidance 2010 DCSF <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>*

## **Eight Conditions that Affect Aspirations as aligned with Shaftesbury School Church Status and Christian Teachings**

### **Belonging**

*We, who are many form one body, each member belongs to all the others. We each have different gifts... (Romans 12.4-8) The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts, all; though all its parts are many they form one body. (1Corinthians 12.12)*

As a Christian school we are committed to fostering our Christian sense of community, appreciating that each of us is a unique and valuable person, loved by God, but with different gifts, experiences and aspirations that complement each other and make the community complete.

### **Heroes**

*“Clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience. Let peace rule in our hearts.” (Colossians 3.12ff) “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self control.” (Galatians 5.22-23)*

The Christian idea of a hero may differ from the image portrayed to young people in the media. We are committed to the image of hero that values a self confidence that is shown in considering the needs of others and a true humility. For inspiration we look to those “saints” in the Christian and other faiths who have called on their experience of God to achieve great things.

### **Sense of Accomplishment**

*“If we think we are something when we are nothing we deceive ourselves. We each need to test our own actions. Then we can take pride in ourselves, without comparing ourselves to others.” (Galatians 6.2-4)* Being honest in recognising our achievements and the achievements of others gives value to each of us and encourages growth and self-confidence. It allows each of us to become the person we aspire to be - or that God wants us to be.

### **Fun and Excitement**

*“I came that you should have life and life in abundance” (John 10.10)*

*“The glory of God is a human fully alive”. St Iranaeus “You will not begin to live until you have found something to die for.” (Anon) “Live each day as if it were thy last.”*

Our Christian ethos thrives on living each moment to the full, continually aware of the goodness, fun and excitement in life, feeling a sense of awe and wonder of life itself, of being “fully human and fully alive”, experiencing life through senses and feelings, both good and bad and giving thanks to God for it all. It is what Jean Pierre de Causade called appreciating “the holiness of the present moment” and St Ignatius called the state of total awareness.

### **Curiosity and Creativity**

*“The beginning of wisdom is the most sincere desire for instruction (The Wisdom of Solomon)*

*“Ask and it shall be given to you, seek and you will find...for everyone who asks will receive and everyone who seeks will find.” (Matthew 7.7)*

*Learning, questioning, seeking are the some of the qualities of a lively spiritual mind. As Christians we particularly encourage not only the “What?” and “How?” questions but especially the “Why?” which brings us to the real questions and issues of life itself.*

*Spirit of Adventure “You were called to be free.” (Galatians 5.13)*

*“Forgetting what is behind and straining towards what is ahead, I press on towards the goal to win the prize...” (Philippians 3.13-14)* The Christian ethos gives confidence to grasp the opportunities that life provides with a sound set a values that enables good decision making.

These values can be found in Christian teaching and are the basis of much of British life and citizenship.

### **Leadership and Responsibility**

*“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you” (Jesus to his disciples after he had washed their feet - John 13) “Whoever among you wants to become great must be your servant and whoever wants to be first must be your slave” (Matthew 20.26-27) “Do to others as you would have done to you.” (Matthew 7.7)* Servant leadership is the hallmark of Christian community life and has become an attribute of the most successful modern businesses. As students are encouraged to take on new challenges they learn the need to recognise that in leading others they are also serving them. The great example is in the life of Jesus.