

POLICY STATEMENT FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Shaftesbury School as a Christian School – Our Vision

“the Holy Spirit produces this kind of fruit in our lives: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control.” (Galatians 5:22-23)

*Our vision for education reflects that of the Church of England and is one that asks ‘**for everyone to be the best they can be**’. This is rooted in the three basic elements of our school motto – ‘Aspiration, Action, and Achievement’*

Rationale

The School RE Policy reflects and reinforces the school’s ethos of Educating for ‘Aspiration, Action, Achievement’ and is underpinned by the Christian values as expressed in Galatians as the Fruit of the Spirit. At Shaftesbury school we consider RE contributes significantly in the Christian character of the school and educates students in developing their personal faith, spirituality as well as the faiths and opinions of others. RE supports students to develop responsibility and respect for all aspects of diversity, whether it be social, cultural, and religious.

Background to Religious Education at Shaftesbury School

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but it is a legal requirement that RE is provided for all registered students in state-funded schools in England including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents. It is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum (*Note 1*).

As RE is not nationally determined, a locally agreed syllabus of RE is prepared by a local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and adopted by a local authority. It is this Dorset Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022, which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE. (*Note 2*)

Intent

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our Christian ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually, is reflected in the RE curriculum. At this school we aim to achieve high quality RE for all students.

It is our intent for the Religious Education curriculum to engage, inspire, challenge and encourage pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions. Religious Education contributes significantly to the Christian character of the school and enables pupils to ask deep and often searching questions about their own faiths and beliefs, and the beliefs, faiths and opinions of others regarding pertinent contemporary moral issues. Pupils will be able to deepen their understanding of God as encountered and taught by Christians. The teaching of RE makes links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of a range of faiths and world-views studied. The RE curriculum will help to develop responsibility and respect for all aspects of diversity, whether it be social, cultural and religious, and prepare pupils well for life in modern Britain.

RE teaching provides students with a systematic knowledge and understanding about Christianity, principal religions and worldviews (*Note 3*) which give life value. RE aims to enable students to become religiously and theologically literate (*Note 4*), so they can engage in life in an increasingly diverse society. It is not about telling students what religious views they should have but rather assists them in gaining shared human understanding, developing personal identity and searching for meaning in the context of evaluating different viewpoints.

Implementation

Learning is embedded through the development of knowledge and skills over time. In KS3, the curriculum breadth supports learners’ knowledge and understanding of religions and non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism. Half-termly assessments are given at the end of each topic. Regular exam questions are given from year 7-11. Throughout each key stage, the learning deepens their understanding of Christianity and students are given opportunities to identify with teachings and see the impact these may have on their own lives. Progression is mapped coherently. The progression allows for effective differentiation, marking and feedback, and stretch for all. Pupils have access to key terminology and sources of wisdom. (*Note 5*) Regular extended writing allows pupils to develop their language and vocabulary. In Key Stage 4 RE is optional and the learning is built on from KS3 to deepen

their understanding of the relationship between people and about common and divergent views within traditions in the way beliefs and teachings are understood and expressed. Students follow the Eduqas Religious Studies Course for GCSE. Students are given opportunities to explore the fact that religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main are Christian but that they are also diverse and include other faiths, such as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, as well as non-religious beliefs, such as atheism and humanism. Students are also exposed to Philosophical and Ethical Studies in the Modern World, looking at current real world issues. There is scope to develop their ability to construct well-argued, well-informed, balanced and structured written arguments, demonstrating their depth and breadth of understanding of the subject. Students are given opportunities to actively reflect, investigate and make meaning of relationships, the world and God. Year 10 and 11 students who do not opt for RE have opportunities to explore religious, social, moral and cultural issues through enrichment days and visiting speakers.

Withdrawal

At this school it is our practice to talk to parents to ensure that they understand the aims and value of the RE curriculum before complying with the right of withdrawal from RE (*Note 6*). Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from RE. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes to withdraw their child is expected to consult the head teacher. It is up to parents to provide alternative RE provision for their child.

Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE.

Additional Notes

- 1. Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998, Schedule 19: Education Act 2002, Section 80. See also section 78 of the 2002 Education Act, which applies to all maintained schools. Academies are also required to offer a broad and balanced curriculum in accordance with Section 1 of the 2010 Academies Act.*
- 2. The locally agreed syllabus is statutory for maintained schools without a religious character and Voluntary Controlled schools. Voluntary Aided schools are not obliged to use the locally agreed syllabus. They must, however teach RE in accordance with their trust deed. Faith and non-faith academies and free schools may use their locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with permission of the SACRE concerned), or devise their own curriculum.*
- 3. The principal religious traditions taught are, in accordance with guidance from the DfE, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Humanism and Atheism are worldviews which are appropriate to include as part of the RE curriculum. Where we have students who are members of other world faiths (e.g. Baha'i or Jain) then in line with our inclusion policy and valuing of the individual, we include aspects of that religion in RE.*
- 4. 'Religious literacy' focuses on the human experience of religion and belief and the development of skills for expressing these experiences. 'Theological literacy' focuses on the big concepts upon which religions are founded, such as God, creation and the afterlife and the development of skills for expressing these concepts. These big concepts are explored through the non-statutory additional guidance document.*
- 5. Sources of wisdom include: sacred texts, psalms, hymns, prayers, poems, letters, paintings, icons, artefacts and people.*
- 6. (DfES Circular 1/94 para 44-49).*

