**Religious Education Policy**

**Rationale**

As a church school, we value the place of Religious Education (RE) very highly and we aim to provide a rich and varied curriculum that enhances children’s spiritual, moral and cultural development. RE poses challenging questions which demand self-awareness, reflection and deeper thinking. At St James Primary School, questions are explored predominately through Christianity but also by accessing other World Faiths. Through exploring and discussing Christianity and World Faith beliefs, values and practices, pupils learn ***about*** religions and ***from*** religions. Pupils are encouraged to explore their own thoughts and feelings about the way that they wish to live. Above all the pupils are encouraged to respect people who hold beliefs that are different to their own and to develop understanding and tolerance by exploring and respecting aspects of other faiths.

We make close links between Religious Education, our teaching of life skills and our school values. Our three core values of **Love, Respect and Unity** are rooted in Christianity and are embedded into the everyday life of our school.

**Aims**

The RE curriculum strives to be rich and creative, providing a whole range of learning opportunities for pupils.

**We aim to:**

* enable children to develop their sense of identity and belonging, which will help them to flourish as individuals.
* encourage children to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious) in the light of what they learn; and to express their responses to their learning.
* pose questions about life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and many, many more. RE teaching aims to foster this personal reflection and spiritual development.
* teach children to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, encouraging them to challenge prejudice.
* prompt children to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. We encourage empathy, generosity and compassion.
* provide children with opportunities to think and reflect, inspiring in them a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.

 **Learning Organisation**

The school follows the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which provides a broad and balanced range of units of study, focussing on Christianity but also providing a valuable insight into other World Faiths. Specific guidance is provided within the scheme for Early Years Foundation Stage, which incorporates R.E. into the six areas of learning. The syllabus for key stage one and two has been broken down for each year group to provide a range of topics appropriate to the age and stage of the pupil.

RE lessons are generally taught on a weekly basis but there are many times where a topic is based around a whole week’s work or may well be a day’s worth of activities.

At Christmas, Easter and Pentecost each year group is involved in longer projects or Pause Days, providing a deeper experience and enabling pupils to engage in a meaningful level with these key Christian festivals.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active and creative subject we employ a variety of teaching methods. In any RE lesson you may expect to see a whole variety of ‘learning experiences’ for example; group and paired discussion, art work, drama, poetry, research, handling artefacts, listening to guests, hot-seating, ICT use, music, periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship, virtual tours or visits from members of local faith communities.

**SEN Provision:**

As a highly inclusive church school RE resources and lessons are differentiated to meet the needs of children with a range of SEND. This is in line with our policy in all subjects areas. Wherever possible the children remain in their class groups, benefitting from increased teacher input, TA support and beneficial pairings and group work.

**Assessment, Recording and Monitoring of RE:**

Through effective marking, planning and assessment procedures, staff are able to meet the needs of all children and plan future lessons. Each teacher uses this assessment data in order to monitor progress and this is recorded on their RE medium term plans. As in all areas of the curriculum, staff mark work in a way that will enable the children to respond to their comments and then reflect and improve on their work. At the end of each RE unit teachers make a summative judgement as to whether each child is working towards the expectations, meeting the expectations, or working at greater depth within these expectations.

**Equal Opportunities**

Equal access is available to all pupils but parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education lessons. Any teacher has the same right to withdraw from teaching religious education.

We would ask any parent considering this option, to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of RE. It may be that after due discussion, there are just ‘some’ elements that are objected to, and in which case, withdrawal may not need to be continuous.

**Written –** February 2019

**To be reviewed -** February 2022