

### **Intent**

Religious education is important in its own right as a vehicle for developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society.

At Penkford, religious education aims to provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It can develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and worldviews that offer answers to questions such as these.

Religious education also contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being and to community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society.

Religious education makes important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as citizenship, personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE education), the humanities and English.

It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others – individually, communally, and cross-culturally.

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'.

At Penkford School, we believe that 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.

### **Implementation**

Religious education at Penkford School plays an important part of our broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. Pupils benefit from high quality learning experiences which are designed and provided by careful planning through the locally agreed Lancashire Agreed Syllabus and in school, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content, depth of learning and coherence between concepts, skills and content.

#### **At Key Stage 2**

At Key stages 2 and 3, pupils follow the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. This is the syllabus that all St Helens schools follow and is agreed by St Helens SACRE.

Key Stage 2 pupils have one 45-minute lesson per week of RE which is delivered by a Humanities specialist.

#### **Key Stages 3 and 4**

At Key Stage 3 and 4, pupils have one 30-minute lesson per week of RE delivered by form tutors during form time.

Key Stage 4 pupils follow a scheme of work which closely matches the AQA GCSE Religious Studies Short Course.

### Impact

Religious education plays an important role in preparing pupils 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.

Religious education 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. Effective religious education will promote 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.

Religious education 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.

In summary, religious education at Penkford:

- 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; and to express their responses. This also builds 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 to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.