



POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (known as Beliefs and Values)

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Responsibility: Curriculum Learning & Teaching Committee

Religious Education Policy

Introduction

The importance of religious education in the curriculum

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

RE develops students' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions, as decided by the Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE); Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Consideration is also given to other non-religious perspectives such as humanism.

RE offers students opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It considers the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

RE has two central attainment targets:

- AT1 Learning about Religion**
- AT2 Learning from Religion**

In Learning *about* Religion students learn about different beliefs and teachings, practices and ways of life and how religions express themselves in different ways.

In Learning *from* Religion students reflect on and consider important questions of identity and belonging (e.g. who and what matters to me?) questions of meaning (e.g. what do people believe about how life began?) and values and commitments (e.g. who and what do I value?)

Religious Education is known as Beliefs and Values (B&V) at Clyst Vale Community College

Every Child Matters in B&V

Although ECM is no longer a statutory framework, it is still helpful in identifying B&V's contribution to the whole child, and complements much of the Course 42 content:

- *Being healthy (Body, Mind and Spirit)*
 - i. Respect the dignity and worth of the human body (Body)
 - ii. Consider the beliefs and teachings of various religions towards the use of food and drink, relationships and human sexuality (Body)
 - iii. Engage with challenging concepts and ideas on the philosophy of religion and develop an understanding of complex ethical issues (Mind)
 - iv. Develop thinking skills in order to become critical thinkers and independent learners (Mind)
 - v. Develop a discerning, thoughtful, empathetic approach to life (Spirit)
 - vi. Reflect on the complexity of spirituality, both for the individual (self-esteem) and for others and respond sensitively to the immaterial nature of others (Prejudice/ caring for the planet) (Spirit)

- *Being safe*
 - i. Developing awareness of the destructive power of prejudice, racism, offending behaviour and bullying, including key teachings from religions and belief systems on these issues.
 - ii. Reflecting on the behaviour of inspirational figures and encouraging pupils to take responsibility for their actions.

- *Enjoying and achieving*
 - i. Providing engaging and challenging learning activities, including story, music, art, drama, visits and speakers, group work and class discussions to stimulate pupil's mental and emotional development.
 - ii. Setting clear standards in knowledge skills and understanding which are understood by pupils and led to clear improvements in learning.

- *Making a positive contribution*
 - i. Contributing positively to students' understanding of community and their roles within it whilst considering the roles and responsibilities of themselves and others.
 - ii. Promoting racial and inter-faith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination.

- *Achieving economic wellbeing*
 - i. Investigating issues of wealth, poverty and justice and exploring religious beliefs, teachings and practices in response to these issues.
 - ii. Reflecting on global issues of social justice and the importance of the environment

There are thus considerable links with our PSHE curriculum, delivered through Course 42 (see *The contribution of B&V to the wider curriculum* on page 5).

Community Cohesion

B&V has a central role in promoting respect and understanding towards people's faith and beliefs. A vital part of B&V is exploring the damaging effects on human beings of xenophobia, prejudice and discrimination. B&V invites students to engage in a dialogue with other faiths and beliefs as they explore and question others' opinions and practices to develop an understanding of the values, beliefs, and behaviours of faith groups within their own community. B&V actively encourages students to visit places of worship and communicate with people of different faiths and beliefs both, within their class and with visiting speakers. Pupils are encouraged to see religions as *living* faith, not a *historical* culture, and it is intended that all pupils will develop tolerance and respect for beliefs other than their own.

Key Skills in B&V

B&V is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. It seeks to develop important skills. These include:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live and the different ways people express their beliefs).
- Communication (sharing their ideas and those within religions and beliefs in a lively, informed way including different styles of writing, oral contributions and the use of ICT).

- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts).
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others).
- Application (applying religious beliefs and teachings to contemporary moral issues, understanding the reasons why people behave/ act in certain ways).

Key Attitudes in B&V

As with skills, B&V has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote. These include self-esteem (so that every child feels valued and significant), respect (including being sensitive to the beliefs, feelings and values of others), open-mindedness (being willing to learn and gain new understanding) and appreciation and wonder (developing students' imagination and curiosity).

B&V has an important role in preparing students for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables students to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faith and beliefs are different from their own. B&V promotes a discerning, thoughtful approach to life and enable students to combat prejudice and discrimination.

Approaches to teaching and learning in B&V

B&V is an exciting curriculum subject so a variety of teaching methods are employed.

These include:

- Philosophical and ethical discussions, thus making a significant contribution to Thinking Skills
- Visiting places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities and organisations
- Using art, drama, music to enrich students' understanding
- Using regular times of quiet reflection for students to develop their own thoughts and ideas
- Using pictures, photographs and stories to enhance students learning
- Using artefacts to help students develop their understanding of religious beliefs and forms of expression
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- Developing the use of ICT (particularly DVDs, power point presentations and the internet) to promote understanding of religions and beliefs.

B&V Curriculum

B&V is taught through a range of religions and beliefs and key themes. These are outlined below:

	Autumn	Spring	Summer	Religions Focus
Year 7 (Integrated Humanities)	Islam and Sikhism	Islam and Sikhism	Islam and Sikhism	Islam and Sikhism
Year 8	Is Religion Useful in Society? Justice and Injustice: World Poverty	Global Issues: Religion and the Environment	My self, My world	Christianity, Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism Humanism
Year 9 (start of GCSE)	Sikhism Beliefs	Sikhism Practice	Religion, War, Peace and Justice	Christianity Buddhism Sikhism

Assessment and Reporting

Year 7 B&V is still assessed using level descriptors (just like the subjects of the National Curriculum). The Devon, Torbay and Plymouth Agreed Syllabus contains 8 levels plus exceptional performance. However, Year 8 assessment is a mixture of levels and GCSE grades, dependent on the piece of work. Students are assessed against their target grades using flight path.

By the end of Year 8 most students can give informed accounts of religions and beliefs explaining the reasons for diversity within and between them. They can explain how the impact of religions and beliefs on individuals and communities varies. They consider the challenges of belonging to a religion in the modern world and support their own views and ideas with a range of reasoned arguments.

From Year 9, all students will follow an accredited course (GCSE Religious Studies). The Course comprises units from Religion & Morality, and Religion and Citizenship. Paper 1 covers Buddhism and Sikhism. Paper 2 covers Religion and War, Religion and Crime, Religion and Life, and Religion and Social Justice.

Written reports in Years 10 and 11 provide a brief summary of the work covered, a summary of the standards achieved and how the student can improve their learning. We also recognise that some of the most important learning in B&V (e.g. how B&V contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed. What we do assess is students' progress against the level descriptors in the local agreed syllabus and GCSE grades according to the specification.

Rights of withdrawal

We firmly believe that B&V is an important subject in students' learning. We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of B&V on the grounds of conscience. Parents are requested to contact the Principal if they have any concerns about B&V provision and practice at the school.

Learning resources

We encourage the use of a wide range of resources to enrich students' learning. These include children's and teachers' books, DVDs, music, artefacts and CD ROMs. We try to ensure B&V is a lively, stimulating subject which engages all students. We have also

developed specific resources to support students with special educational needs and those with specific talent in B&V.

The contribution of B&V to the wider curriculum

While B&V has its own distinctive subject matter it does make an important contribution to other aspects of students learning. These are outlined below.

1. Students' spiritual development by:

- Discussing and reflecting on questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, good and evil, life after death, beliefs about God and humanity and values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- Learning about and reflecting on important concepts and experiences such as love, trust, forgiveness, obedience and sacrifice.
- Valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging.
- Considering how religions and beliefs regard the value and purpose of human beings, the importance of the environment and the significance of emotions such as love, anger, joy, jealousy, happiness and pain.
- Developing their own ideas and views on religious and spiritual issues.

2. Students' moral development by:

- By enabling students to value themselves and others.
- Exploring the influence of family, friends and other sources on moral choices.
- Considering what is of ultimate value both to students and people within religious traditions.
- Developing an understanding in religion of the key values and moral choices.
- Considering ethical issues especially justice, which promote racial and religious respect.
- Exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by teachings and guidance from religions and beliefs.
- Reflecting on the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

3. Students' social development by:

- Considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns
- Reflecting on the importance of friendship and positive relationships.
- Investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions.

4. Students' cultural development by:

- Encountering people, stories, artefacts and resources from differing cultures.
- Promoting respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination.
- Challenging stereotypes of religion and beliefs.

5. Students' respect for the British values of democracy, the rule of the law, individual liberty and mutual respect, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs by:

- Encountering and exploring different places of worship and people of faith.
- Exploring diversity within our society and what it means to be British
- Investigating social issues of prejudice and discrimination, multicultural society, crime and punishment, justice and protest through schemes of work.
- Promoting respect for all and encouraging pupils to develop tolerance and understanding of reasoned opinions and views within discussions and learning opportunities

6. B&V and the use of language

B&V can also make an important contribution to student's use of language by enabling them to:

- Acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- Communicate their ideas with clarity.
- Listen and respond to the views and ideas of others.
- Be inspired by the power and beauty of language.
- Write in different styles such as poetry, diaries and extended writing.
- Highlight their own ideas and those of others.
- Understand and apply key terminology
- Learn languages linked to religion, eg. Punjabi

7. B&V and the use of ICT

B&V can make an important contribution to students' use of ICT by:

- Helping them make effective use of the internet and CD ROMs to investigate and learn from different religions beliefs, teachings and ideas.
- Use e-mail and video conferencing to collaborate with other schools in different locations to Devon.
- Use multimedia and presentation software to communicate their own ideas and those within religions and beliefs.

Conclusion

B&V at Clyst Vale Community College is a relevant, challenging subject which contributes a great deal to students' spiritual, moral social and cultural development. B&V is important in promoting respect and combating prejudice and negative discrimination stereotyping. B&V develops the core skills of investigation, communication and evaluation.