

SPECIALIST EDUCATION SERVICES

Religious Education and Worldview Policy and Practice

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1. **RATIONALE**

This document should be read in conjunction with the Curriculum Statement, which outlines specific issues underpinning the curriculum approach at SES, that is underpinned by our 'no limits' vision, and 'Be Curious, Show Love, Build Connections' ethos.

The very nature and purpose of the holistic provision at our establishments means that the focus is always on the 'whole child'. We provide a holistic framework of high quality care and therapeutic intervention embedded in a highly personalised learning experience known as the PAN My Journey Learning Model; this enables them to re-engage in the learning process. This is amplified in the range of documentation, policy and practice that reflects our philosophy of '24hr' learning, coupled with our "no limits' positive psychology.

The intensity of work in this respect, with both the child and where possible, family, is beyond what any child in a mainstream setting, and in many other specialist settings, would experience because of the very purpose and nature of practice at SES.

This document sets out the policy and principles that underpin the whole process of learning across the twenty-four hour learning experience available.

2. **CURRICULUM INTENT**

RE provokes 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 provokes personal reflection. It challenges students to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. RE encourages students to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables students to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables students to combat prejudice.

Whilst highly laudable the above list is in itself an extreme challenge to an SEMH child. Their low self esteem and poor self image as learners and as members of society, coupled with their learned avoidance behaviours often used for self protection against the risk of failure and exposure to ridicule, mean that they are likely to feel very threatened by the process of discourse and analysis. They are also likely to have developed polarised, prejudiced or extreme views on the subject.

It is therefore critically important that we provide experiences that counteract assumptions and provide opportunities to improve the child's self esteem allowing him to develop confidence and an open and accepting mind which accepts his own and others cultural heritage.

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.”

Albert Einstein

The specific intent of Religious Education teaching at SES is:

- To help students to develop a positive attitude towards other people and their right to hold to beliefs different from their own, to appreciate that religious beliefs are worthy of respect, and to live in a religiously diverse society.
- To promote respect for others, including those with different faiths and beliefs, and actively challenge prejudice.
- To help students to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain; to recognise and understand about festivals and ceremonies, buildings, worship, symbols, dress and traditions.
- To help students develop an understanding of the influence of religious beliefs, value and traditions on individuals in their personal lives and as part of wider communities, societies and cultures.
- To allow the students to understand the concepts of body, mind and spirit, in order to enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development.
- To allow students to reflect on human experiences and relationships in the light of their own experience and with reference to the teachings and practices of religions.
- To develop an awareness of awe, wonder, curiosity and appreciation of the world of nature and of the questions about life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings relate to such fundamental questions.
- To provoke thoughtful and challenging questions about meaning and purpose, beliefs, identity, and issues of right and wrong, commitment, and belonging.
- To develop a strong sense of identity and belonging, helping them to flourish within their own lives, their communities, and as citizens in a diverse society. I
- To consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to reflect on how they can contribute positively to their communities and to wider society.
- To explore and value their local community and the wider world, celebrating diversity and difference.
- To develop religious literacy related to the knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews.

Concepts developed and delivered in Religious Education are fundamental to the education of the ‘whole’ child. They include attitudes, for example, of:

- Self confidence
- Self esteem
- Curiosity
- Open-mindedness
- Consideration for others
- Respect for the views and ways of life of others
- Critical ability

3 THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

3.1 PLANNING FOR RE EXPERIENCES

SES recognises the common framework provided by the structuring of Religious Education within the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and seeks to use this as the foundation to RE teaching; schools are required to teach Religious Education in relation to their locally agreed syllabus, as content is not prescribed nationally. The most up to date 'Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance' is from 2010 and the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus (SACRE) was revised in 2019 (<https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/about/education/religious-education/curriculum-planning/>)

The students personalised RE pathway builds on their previous learning, and knowledge is strengthened, broadened and deepened over time. This approach allows teachers to identify gaps in learning and provide opportunities that will allow them to recover and catch up over time.

Religious Education is delivered through a dialogue, which may involve groups or paired work. Individual work is important too, as a means of reflection and expressing and recording religious ideas. This dialogue fosters the development of religious concepts by students and in planning one should consider planning for the development of the following skills:

- * Thinking and acting logically and objectively.
- * Ascertaining facts.
- * Assessing and classifying evidence.
- * Pursuing a line of argument or of enquiry.
- * Presenting information in the most appropriate way; verbal, written, aural, visual.
- * Exercising critical and appreciative judgement in order to distinguish prejudice, superstition, opinion.
- * Observing the world and appreciating beauty, order, shape, pattern, usefulness and mystery.
- * Entering imaginatively into the experience, intentions, beliefs and desires of other people.
- * Understanding and sharing the experience of awe and wonder felt by others.
- * Realising that others base their lives on their own set of concepts and ideals.
- * Understanding the need for self-discipline and self control, recognising one's own powers and limitations and so preparing a foundation for a personal set of values.
- * Developing good relationships.
- * Appreciating care and concern.
- * Acquiring the means of self-expression and communication through speech, drama, friendship, art, creative activities.
- * Understanding the use of symbols.
- * Recognising the use of symbols.
- * Distinguishing between various literary forms as they are used in different religions.

In planning for students to learn about and learn from religion opportunities should be sought for students to:

- encounter people from different religious, cultural and philosophical groups, who can express a range of convictions on religious and moral issues, where possible
- visit places of major religious significance, where possible
- use Computing and ICT to enhance understanding of religion
- discuss, question and evaluate important issues in religion and philosophy, including ultimate questions and ethical issues
- reflect upon and carefully evaluate their own and others' beliefs and values, using reasoned, balanced arguments
- use a range of forms of expression to communicate their ideas and responses
- explore the connections between RE and other subject areas.

A scheme of learning will relate to the SACRE guidelines and the students personalised pathway. Each scheme of learning is intrinsically flexible; it is useful to use a variety of approaches and teaching strategies covering the same core unit to develop a variety of skills.

3.2 TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

Approaches to learning will to a greater or lesser extent involve an enquiry method:

- asking questions and possibly forming hypotheses,
- planning investigations,
- finding, collecting and recording information and evidence,
- analysing and interpreting information,
- drawing conclusions,
- evaluating and organising information.

Activities that enhance student skills and experience are:

- discussion and debate with the teacher
- writing including narrative, analysis, explanation and description
- communication/presentation of findings in a variety of ways to the class group or a wider audience
- tasks which develop knowledge, skills and understanding;
- activities should be balanced between activities which are short in duration and those which have scope for development over an extended period;
- activities should, where appropriate, use students' own interests or questions;
- activities should, where appropriate, involve both independent and co-operative work;
- activities should encourage students to become confident in the use of a range of media and equipment;
- activities should encourage students to become confident in the use of a range of new technology;
- creative activities related to elements of the units
- visits to museums and religious sites
- use of artefacts, replicas, etc.

3.3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

SES is committed to ensuring that all students are treated with equality of regard.

This will involve:

- Providing equality of opportunity in the RE curriculum in an attempt to maximise the potential of each individual pupil.
- Treating as of equal value the different needs, interests and abilities of individual students.
- Through their experiences within RE pupils should have respect for others and the idea that all should be treated as equals.

In pursuing this policy with regard to individual students, there are four categories of difference between groups of students, in which it is generally acknowledged that 'treatment as equals' may be problematic and for which it is therefore important to have specific policies. These are:

- Racial/Cultural differences
- Social class differences
- Ability differences
- Gender differences.

3.3.1 Racial/Cultural Differences

It is vital that staff avoid any racial bias or stereotyping with respect to the particular individuals who are from ethnic-minority backgrounds and that they are alert to and willing to challenge any such discrimination or stereotyping by students.

Furthermore one of the primary aims of Religious Education is to help students to develop a positive attitude towards other people and their right to hold to beliefs different from their own.

3.3.2 Gender differences

Equal opportunities in terms of participation are carefully considered, however, issues of prejudiced attitudes and stereotyping towards the opposite sex can be in existence and can potentially be magnified in our environments, especially given the contextual background and past experiences of our student.

Staff should therefore be aware of this and should be willing to challenge any such discrimination or stereotyping by students. Furthermore such risks can be mitigated through planned teaching strategies.

3.3.3 Social Class Differences

Staff should be aware of making assumptions about student's levels of knowledge and opportunities for acquisition of knowledge whatever their background. Socio-economic and cultural factors may well result in different levels of and kinds of exposure to people from other religious backgrounds.

3.3.4 Ability differences

SES establishments are resourced such that Students receive a highly individualised curriculum based on their Portfolio of Achievement and Needs. Implicit in this is a response to differing levels of ability.

It is also important that protected characteristics as defined in the SES Equality and Diversity Policy are considered when planning and implementing teaching practice to ensure equal opportunities. This policy should therefore be read in conjunction with the SES Equality and Diversity Policy and Practice document and the DfE guidance around our equality duty.

3.4 RE AS A CROSS CURRICULAR SUBJECT

It is important to stress the particular interrelationship of Religious Education with many other areas of the curriculum and with aspects of learning, communication and social functioning beyond the Learning Centre. At each establishment every aspect of its operation is viewed as a potential vehicle for building upon students' knowledge, understanding and skills. All staff need to be skilled at finding unobtrusive ways of supporting cross-curricular links through taking advantage of the total living experience without this intruding on the naturalness of domestic living.

RE promotes ***citizenship*** through:

- developing students' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding
- enabling students to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally
- enabling students to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.

RE promotes ***personal, social and health education and RSE*** through:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on drug use and misuse, food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling students to consider and express their own views
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

The study of Religious Education in its broadest sense will raise both staff and student awareness of key opportunities to follow lines of enquiry within other curriculum subjects. Illustrations are:

- In **History** - historical events past and present
- In **Geography** - distribution of world faiths
- In **Art and Design** - a study of religious art, symbolism and religious costume.
- In **Design and Technology** - there may be scope to study the structure of religious buildings most of which are set out in a design determined by the nature of the faith communities or the background cultural influence.
- In **Food Technology** - to experience foods unique to religious faiths and particular ceremonies found within them.
- In **Science** - there is an opportunity to give alternative explanation to creation stories defined in the principal faiths and possible explanations for 'miracles'.
- In **Mathematics** - exists the opportunity to study and compare the religious calendars and how calendrical observation is a key element of some religious disciplines.
- In **English** - there is an opportunity to retell stories from religious faiths or study the framework for progress writing as well as being the platform for a wide range of creative writing opportunities including the 'modernisation' of religious stories.
- In **Music** - there is a strong element in every faith and examples to be studied or emulated are readily available to include in any study of a faith.

Dimensions can add a richness and relevance to the curriculum experience of pupils. They can provide a focus for work within and between subjects and across the curriculum as a whole, including the routines, events and ethos of the school.

3.4.1 Learning Outside the Classroom

SES supports and endorses the Learning Outside the Classroom initiative as its principles and philosophy match the SES Vision Statement. We believe that every pupil should experience the world beyond the classroom as an essential part of learning and personal development, whatever their age, ability or circumstances.

The use of places other than the classroom for teaching and learning often provide the most memorable learning experiences and help us to make sense of the world around us by making links between feelings and learning. They stay with us into adulthood and affect our behaviour, lifestyle and work. They influence our values and the decisions we make. They allow us to transfer learning experienced outside to the classroom and vice versa.

Students can benefit from well-organised visits, community activities and getting involved in wider learning projects (such as helping to organise information, reviewing policies and providing peer support). As students progress, work placements and visits help shape their decisions about future opportunities.

All children and student have the opportunity to participate in both focused field trips and extended residential weeks, throughout a range of local and national locations. In addition to the social and personal benefits, these offer real life knowledge and experience that can be developed in context.

3.5 PRESENTATION OF WORK

At SES we believe presentation of work is vital aspect of creating a positive and stimulating environment and in enhancing student motivation and self-esteem. Presentation of work can take a wide variety of forms ranging from:

- Written format
- Recording (oral and photographic)
- Displays
- Through use of computing and digital media
- Through witness statements created pupils and adults

Adults at SES, are expected to make a professional judgement with regards to each individual pupil's aptitude and ability in terms of facilitating presentation of work. We seek to continually implement our 'No Limits' thinking in the way we facilitate presentation of work ensuring feedback is given to support student's continual progress in this area.

3.6 PROGRESSION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Progress in RE can be characterised by:

- acquiring wider and more detailed knowledge of religious beliefs and practices;
- deepening understanding of the meaning of stories, symbols, events and practices;
- more fluent and competent use of religious language and terminology;
- increased levels in skills of responding to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitment.

Progression in RE is shown through students building on, and consolidating, the skills, processes and areas of knowledge, understanding and evaluation.

For many students the formal study of Religious Education will be their first real point of contact with Religious knowledge and it is important that they are aware of the framework within which they are working. It must be a 'real' and relevant experience for them and be reflected across the curriculum wherever the opportunity arises.

Students will develop and consolidate their skills in relation to:

- a gradual extension of content, increasing complexity, greater awareness and understanding
- a progression from the use of more generalised Religious knowledge to the application of abstract ideas
- improving skill and precision in practical and intellectual tasks.

To allow for progression planning should reflect:

- a steady acquisition of new skills and knowledge
- consolidation of skills and knowledge in a range of relevant contexts

- opportunities for students to apply skills, knowledge and understanding in a range of relevant contexts.
- use of artefacts/texts and sources which are familiar and unfamiliar and which increase in complexity as abilities develop.
- use of information technology in open and closed research work.

3.7 DIFFERENTIATION

Students at our establishments will clearly differ in ability and teaching should take account of this by providing a range of learning situations and approaches. In addition the philosophy of SES is such that personalised learning is a cornerstone.

Religious Education provides wide opportunities for differentiation by:

- Input
- Resource
- Task
- Support
- Outcome
- Response

In planning for our students the following factors should be considered:

- activities should build on what our students already know and can do.
- our students need immediate and regular encouragements, praise and reward.
- the activities should be broad enough to allow scope for development and not prevent more able students from extending their learning.
- the work should be pitched at the age, maturity and ability of the group.
- tasks should be differentiated according to individual student needs.
- consider the balance between group activities and individual differentiated tasks for specific students.

However, differentiation does not happen automatically and careful consideration of student's abilities should be taken when planning Religious Education learning experiences. This process involves recognising the variety of individual needs, planning to meet those needs, providing appropriate delivery and evaluating the effectiveness of the activities in order to maximise the achievements of individual students.

Differentiation should involve:

- Providing a range of equipment appropriate for different students
- Using a variety of teaching methods to elicit a particular response
- Organising the groups in different ways appropriate to particular objectives
- Setting open-ended tasks so that students can respond at their level
- Issuing different 'challenges' to different students
- Providing extension work for students with greater ability
- Allowing time for individual diagnosis, teaching and feedback

The method of assessment and reporting should provide feedback that is appropriate to students of differing abilities. It should aid their future learning by providing knowledge but should also give them support and encouragement.

More specifically, the teacher should consider:

- resources reading levels and ease of use.
- availability of a range of texts, support materials, media/software.
- availability of a range of support equipment, (e.g. artefacts)
- provision of a variety of tasks to cover the main content area.
- take account of time available to support individuals/group.
- other adult/student support.
- student/student support, e.g. pairing.
- various ways of praising achievement.

Bibles are provided with texts of varying difficulty to aid in resourcing differentiated tasks.

3.8 ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

Assessment is part of an on-going process that informs future planning and subsequent learning. All assessments should take account of:

- Skills, knowledge and understanding acquired
- The contexts of the activity
- The purpose of the activity

Effective formative and summative assessment:

- is embedded in planning, teaching and learning
- requires a shared understanding of learning objectives and success criteria between teacher and learner
- draws on evidence of learners' achievement and progress from a wide range of contexts within and beyond the classroom
- values information that teachers retain in their heads, as well as concrete evidence produced by learners
- is based on evidence generated in the course of continuous teaching and learning, engagement with learners through observation, discussion, questioning, and review and analysis of work
- helps to shape and refine future teaching and learning, and to personalise the experience of individual learners
- provides the basis for discussions with learners themselves, their parents/carers and with other professionals about their strengths, areas for development and future learning targets
- is the foundation upon which periodic assessment can be based
- recognises and celebrates learners' progress in the light of their previous performance and motivates them to improve further
- promotes independence and self-motivation
- develops the capacity for peer and self-assessment among learners.

Assessment is a continuous process and testing and accreditation are built in at various stages of a students development

Any system of evaluation and assessment should

- Identify what has been taught and learnt
- Monitor student's progress in each
- Monitor student's progress in cross-curricular elements
- Establish student's needs as a basis for further planning and teaching

Student involvement in the assessment and evaluation process is critical.

Evidence can be gleaned from:

- Observing
- Questioning and listening
- Discussion
- Written work, audio and digital video recording, drawings, charts, etc.
- Specific assessments tied to curriculum materials.

3.8.1 The marking of students work

Teachers' responses to students' work should be positive, encouraging, sympathetic, honest and appropriate. Marking should be completed in a pragmatic way, as appropriate to the needs of the student and whenever possible completed in their presence. Further areas of study can then be negotiated with the student.

- Students should be made aware of the assessment criteria being employed, particularly before tackling new situations and subsequently when marking work
- Students should, as a result of the interaction, be aware of the next steps in their learning
- It is sometimes useful for students to respond to each others work

3.8.2 Record Keeping

Records are kept in the form of long term planning (Curriculum Overview), Medium Term Planning (unit objectives) and short term planning (detailed planning of learning episodes). A record of progress is evident in the on-going feedback (verbal and written) between adult and pupil. Where appropriate an evidence base is collated for an episode of learning this can take various forms e.g.files, exercise books, scrap books, digital media files.

3.8.3 Individual Programmes

- The Portfolio of Achievement and Needs of each student will inform the global priority targets to be addressed for the child.
- More detailed educational objectives will be identified by Learning Centre staff and students, and negotiated targets reached.
- Targets set will be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and time related.
- Targets will always be compatible with the requirements of the National Curriculum, SACRE Guidelines and/or Portfolio of Achievement and Needs

3.9 EVIDENCE FOR LEARNING

Every student has a unique and personalised learning journey that is based on their individual needs and starting point. Evidence of Learning enables Learning Centre staff to capture and create a rich, comprehensive picture and narrative that details learning and progress for each student. The subject knowledge sequences are available to track and record professional judgements on progress, alongside the students personalised EHCP and LCEP outcomes, and broader PAN targets

4 **IMPACT**

Students can be enthused and inspired by RE. They enjoy exploring beliefs and practices and gain satisfaction from engaging with issues of meaning and value. Investigating the place and impact of religion in the modern world develops students' curiosity and imagination. Encountering and making sense of ideas for the first time allows students to enjoy their own search for meaning. Students can respond positively to vigorous debates, to the respectful sharing of beliefs and feelings, and to the discovery of places of worship. They enjoy meeting people of different cultures and beliefs. They can rise to the challenge of understanding texts, expressing ideas and dealing with ultimate questions, celebrating their insights and achievements.

Health can be understood on physical, intellectual, emotional, ethical and spiritual levels. When students explore the impact of practices and ways of life on how people live their lives, they are helped to make informed choices about ideas and lifestyles. Religions and beliefs can be either life-affirming or damaging in their teaching about the human condition. Evaluating both kinds of beliefs can lead students to positive and healthy attitudes. When students confront ethical issues such as relationships, drugs, advertising, genetic research or violence, they learn how to make wise decisions, to help or advise others and to understand moral or emotional pressures. By gaining an understanding of ideas such as temptation, desire and emptiness, students strengthen their understanding of spiritual and moral perspectives on health and wellbeing.

Students often wrestle with questions such as 'What can I believe in?' 'Who is a trustworthy friend?' 'Where are the exciting ideas and activities to be found?' 'How do I weigh up the integrity of a person or a group?' RE offers students lively opportunities for evaluating the safety of ideas, relationships and practices. By learning about religious and ethical rules governing care of children, respect for friends and neighbours and responsibility for crime, students widen their understanding of safe and unsafe situations. By learning from themes such as authority, ethics, relationships, and rights and responsibilities, students can deepen their understanding of, and commitment to, safe lifestyle choices.

RE offers students the skills for living prosperously and ethically in an increasingly complex economic world. Students can use their understanding of beliefs and teachings to perceive how economic activity can help or harm humanity, other species and the planet as a whole. Students can develop their knowledge and understanding of themes such as equality and justice, prejudice and discrimination, human rights, fair trade, the environment and climate change, and religious rules on financial matters. By considering and responding to these issues, students develop

their awareness of how economic wellbeing connects to beliefs, attitudes and lifestyle choices.

Preparation for the world of work includes understanding the differing needs of others in relation to understanding the nature of a contract and the characteristics of trustworthiness, imagination or empathy. RE can develop students' awareness of the personal attributes that many employers look for. The workplace can also present students with specific religious issues such as diet, clothing, use of money, use of time for prayer, or values and attitudes. RE can provide future employees and employers with crucial information on working with a diverse workforce and public and enrich their understanding of economic and social systems.

RE invites students to voice their questions and hopes, to engage with major issues affecting their futures and to consider the contributions made by religions and beliefs. RE offers a structured forum for sharing insights and developing an appreciation of different points of view. It encourages students to investigate, discuss and build reasoned arguments, giving them experience of dealing with difference respectfully. By engaging with themes such as justice, authority, interfaith dialogue and the environment through local community involvement, students learn they can make a difference. Using ICT to discuss these themes with other schools, in the UK or overseas, helps students understand that their generation can contribute to, and shape, the future.

Accreditation in Religious Education is available for individual pupils, through either GCSE (Full or Short Course) or Entry Level, depending on ability and interest. Due to our personalised approach to learning, chronological age is not seen as a barrier to accreditation opportunities. Due to our personalised approach to learning chronological age is not seen as a barrier to accreditation.

5 SMSC AND BRITISH VALUES IN RE

At SES we believe the development of SMSC and promotion of British Values, should be embedded within all areas of teaching and learning across both the school and residential setting. This policy should be read in conjunction with the Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social Policy and Practice document and the British Values Policy and Practice Document.

5.1 SMSC

At SES we develop SMSC in many aspects of the curriculum through ensuring opportunities for SMSC development are extensive and frequent. These opportunities are reflected in planning documents as well as in outcomes for pupils.

Examples of SMSC development within Religious Education are:

Spiritual

- discussing and reflecting on key questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, life after death, good and evil, beliefs about God and values such as justice, honesty and truth
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts, experiences and beliefs that

- are at the heart of religious and other traditions and practices
- considering how beliefs and concepts in religion may be expressed through the creative and expressive arts and related to the human and natural sciences, thereby contributing to personal and communal identity
- considering how religions and other world views perceive the value of human beings, and their relationships with one another, with the natural world, and with God
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging
- developing their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues.

Moral

- enhancing the values identified within the National Curriculum, particularly valuing diversity and engaging in issues of truth, justice and trust
- exploring the influence of family, friends and media on moral choices and how society is influenced by beliefs, teachings, sacred texts and guidance from religious leaders
- considering what is of ultimate value to students and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy about values and ethical codes of practice
- studying a range of ethical issues, including those that focus on justice, to promote racial and religious respect and personal integrity
- considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

Social

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns
- investigating social issues from religious perspectives, recognising the diversity of viewpoints within and between religions as well as the common ground between religions
- articulating students' own and others' ideas on a range of contemporary social issues.

Cultural

- encountering people, literature, the creative and expressive arts and resources from differing cultures
- considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices

5.2 BRITISH VALUES

Promotion of British values is an integral part of life at SES. We believe that the promotion of such values should be inherent in teaching and learning as well as in the wider community. We fundamentally believe that the promotion of British Values is an essential strategy in preventing radicalisation. This document should therefore be read in conjunction with our Radicalisation Policy and Practice document.

Examples of the promotion of British values within Religious Education are:

Rule of Law

- Exploration of the contrast of rule of law and religious views is important in the context of Religious Education
- Identification and exploration of religious customs which civic laws prevent e.g. polygamy.

Democracy

- Contrasting democratic countries to theoretic countries or monarchy rules countries and identifying similarities and differences.
- Exploration of freewill and determinism.

Individual Liberty

- Considering the relationship of individual liberty and religious obligation including rights and responsibilities.
- Considering individual liberties and freedom of choices in relation to religion and the extent to which this is possible in different cultures.

Mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and for those without faith

- Promotion of racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination, contributing positively to community cohesion and promoting awareness of how interfaith cooperation can support the pursuit of the common good.
- Pupils develop knowledge of people who have taken particular actions because of their beliefs, actions that have been about equal treatment and respect for those who are, for example, black, female, or have a different religious belief from the majority, such as Martin Luther King or Malala Yousafzi.

6 COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective worship is an important part of the broader curriculum although not compulsory in independent schools.

The SES response to collective worship should be appropriate to the real life needs of the children and student concerned.

“The kind of worship which rings true in a school is one in which everything that is held to have ‘worship’ by that particular group can be celebrated and praised.” (Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2012, p235).

it is the quality of the experience rather than the daily occurrence that is important.

6.1 WHAT IS WORSHIP?

Worship comes from an Anglo-Saxon word meaning to attribute 'worth' or 'worthship'. It has the same root as the word 'worthy'. The most obvious meaning of the word 'worship' may initially be that of paying homage to a divine power or being: religious communities 'worship' God in whatever form their tradition demands. However, worship can also refer to the celebration of, honour paid to, or service offered to, those individuals or things people consider worthy. In our own day people have been known to 'worship' pop groups, football stars, political leaders, money, fame or power.

Worship may find expression in many different forms: in music, song, dance, drama, in words of praise, in prayers, readings and teachings, in listening, in thoughtful silence, in meditation, in contemplation of icons and symbols, in the service of others, in the passing on of one's beliefs, in the lighting of a candle and other symbolic actions. And whilst this list may originate in the actions of religious communities, they are not without parallel, for example, in the football world or other secular fields.

6.2 WHAT IS COLLECTIVE WORSHIP?

The government requires an act of Collective worship for all registered students in state schools on a daily basis. Special schools have to meet the requirements "so far as is practicable". It states:

"Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for students to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs, to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and re-inforce positive attitudes."

[Religious Education and Collective Worship Circular 1/94 (para 50)]

The government's legislation provoked much debate as to the meaning of 'worship' in school contexts. Circular 1/94 commented on the meaning of Collective worship as follows:

"'Worship' is not defined in the legislation and in the absence of any such definition it should be taken to have its natural and ordinary meaning. That is, it must in some sense reflect something special or separate from school activities and it should be concerned with reverence or veneration paid to a divine being or power. However, worship in schools will necessarily be of a different character from worship amongst a group with beliefs in common. The legislation reflects this difference in referring to 'collective worship' rather than 'corporate worship'."

[Religious Education and Collective Worship Circular 1/94 (para 57)]

The notion of 'collective worship' was introduced by the 1944 Education Act, passed at a time when England was an overtly Christian country where the great majority of the population were churchgoers. By 2010, the percentage of UK citizens who attended church regularly had dropped to 6%. Over the past 60 years there has also been a significant decline in Church of England baptisms. In 1950, approximately 67% of UK babies were baptised into the Church of England. By 2010 this figure had dropped to 19%. The 2014 British Social Attitudes Survey found that 58.4% of the population never attend religious services.

In view of the changes to British society (and schools) that have occurred since 1944, many people hold the view that collective worship is now an outmoded concept. Many prefer the term 'spiritual reflection', which supports the requirement for schools to promote pupils' spiritual development. The notion of spiritual reflection lends itself to the 'stimulus/response' model for collective worship which is the preferred model of Essex SACRE (Guidance on Collective Worship in Schools 2013, p17). In providing structured time for daily spiritual reflection, schools will be providing something important for the wellbeing of pupils and other participants; something that is unique and distinctive; something that is different from but complementary to 'assembly'.

6.3 THE OBJECTIVES OF COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

The following may be seen as objectives adults should have in mind:

- to ensure that it is an educational activity linked to the whole curriculum and especially religious education
- to explore the spiritual dimension
- to foster such feelings as awe, wonder, thankfulness, mystery and joy
- to help with anxiety or stress
- to give memorable and enjoyable experiences, especially at times of festival
- to encourage sensitive understanding of a variety of beliefs and practices, taking Christianity as the starting point
- to present basic religious concepts
- to develop understanding of religious symbols and language
- to provide times of peace for reflection or prayer
- to support the search for meaning
- to respond to the aesthetic
- to encourage a sense of responsibility and community
- to affirm values and commitment
- to think about others, and to empathise with them
- to develop concentration and self control

Collective worship can be related to the day-to-day life aspirations and concerns of the school. An act of collective worship should be capable of eliciting a response from students even though on a particular occasion some of the students may not feel actively to identify with the act of worship.

6.4 ASPECTS OF GOOD PRACTICE

Aspects of good practice identified by SACRE are:

- thoughtful planning in line with the multi-faith nature of the country
- opportunities to reflect on events locally, nationally and internationally
- contributions to developments in SMSC
- offers insights into the life and values of the student themselves and others
- raises awareness of wide diversity in society
- supports the ethos and community life of the establishment
- is well coordinated
- involves students and recognises and supports good relationships between

adults and students

- is enriched by visiting speakers from faiths and other walks of life
- has good links with all areas of the curriculum
- there is a sensitive use of different religious beliefs
- supports and enhances RE
- times of celebration validate students' own lives.