

Religious Education Policy

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At our Church of England Primary School, children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths is developed, and the fundamental questions in life are addressed, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. Children are encouraged to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. Children also learn from religions as well as about religions.

1.2 The aims of religious education are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences.
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain.
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition.
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today.
- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues.
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

2. The legal position of religious education

2.1 The school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of The Education Act 1996. The Act stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The Act allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The Act also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's identity and it's spiritual, moral, and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Herefordshire's Agreed Syllabus combined with the Understanding Christianity Resources and it meets all the requirements set out in these documents. The Education Act 1996 states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

3. Teaching and learning styles

3.1 The school's teaching and learning style in RE is based on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

3.2 The school's teaching and learning style in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. The children's will use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. Where practical visits to local places of worship will be organised and invitations made to representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

3.3 Children carry out research in key religious questions. They study aspects of particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using ICT, working individually or in groups.

3.4 the school recognises the fact that all classes in the school have children of widely differing abilities, and so the school provides suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. This is achieved in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks).
- grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group.
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child.
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

4. Curriculum planning in religious education

4.1 The school plans the religious education curriculum in accordance with the guidance included in the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus. The school ensures that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. The school offers opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and ensures that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

4.2 The school carries out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term, and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage.

4.3 Medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. Where mixed-age classes exist, the school carries out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, the school ensures that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

4.4 The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

4.5 In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus, it is recommended that there is a minimum allocation of 5% of curriculum time for RE.

This means in practice that schools are recommended to allocate:

Foundation Stage 2: 36 hours per year (both teacher-led and child-initiated activities)

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year (On average, 1 hour per week)

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year (On average, 1 Hr 15 mins per week).

5. Foundation Stage

5.1 The school teaches religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

5.2 In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, the school relates the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Additional RE topics covered throughout the year are outlined in the long-term plan and taught weekly within the reception classes.

6. Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

6.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking, and listening. Some of the texts that we use in our literacy sessions have religious themes or content, which encourage discussion, and this is one method for promoting the skills of speaking and listening.

6.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

The school uses ICT where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select, and analyse information, using the internet and CD ROMs. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

6.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through religious education lessons, the school teaches the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, the school contributes to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. The school also promotes the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

6.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching religious education, the school provides opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. They are helped them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. The school seeks to enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

6.5 The school staff firmly believe that the consideration of important questions about life, its origins and meaning cannot be separated from the study of science, and that due consideration of religious ideas and concepts can contribute much to our understanding of the importance of scientific study and vice versa. This has proven particularly truthful for children who would state that they have no faith or belief.

7. Assessment and recording

7.1 The school assesses children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as the children are observed during lessons. A piece of work is marked once it has been completed and comments made, as necessary. On completion of a unit of work a summary judgement is made about the work of each pupil in relation to the expectations of the unit. A record is kept of the attainment grades in assessment files, which are used as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

7.2 The RE subject leader may keep samples of children's work in a portfolio. This will help to demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

8. Resources

8.1 The school seeks to maintain sufficient resources to be able to teach all religious education teaching units. The school keeps resources for religious education in a central store where there is a separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. Bibles aimed at different maturity levels are available in school,

9. Monitoring and review

9.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.