

West Exmoor Federation



Religious Education Policy

Reviewed in May 2016

West Exmoor Federation – Policy for Religious Education

RATIONALE

Religious Education is about the distinctive ways in which human beings express their understanding and experiences of life. It provides pupils with opportunities to reflect upon human experiences that give rise to fundamental questions of life and death and to consider values and commitments. This is done in the context of some of the world's living faiths. It provides opportunity to study Christianity and the other principal religions of Britain. The subject promotes attitudes and values necessary for responsible citizenship in a democratic and pluralistic society. Religious education engenders respect for the beliefs and values of others. It does not promote a religion or particular set of beliefs; this kind of nurturing is the privilege of the home and faith communities to which pupils belong. The religious education taught in our school is based on Devon's Agreed Syllabus, the Diocesan Scheme of work for R.E. and QCA.

AIMS

1. To encourage a reflective approach to living.
2. To enable the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions of Britain.
3. To provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their own experiences of life.
4. To contribute to the development of their own beliefs and values.

STRATEGY FOR IMPLEMENTATION

ENTITLEMENT AND CURRICULUM PROVISION

- Five percent of curriculum time is allocated to the RE curriculum at both key stages. This amounts to 40 hours at Key Stage 1 and 45 hours at Key Stage 2 per year.
- Religious Education is taught every week at Key Stage 1 for about 45 minutes. At Key Stage 2 some units of work are continuous and require weekly lessons, and others are blocked and require more time allocated in some weeks and none in others. Decisions about this are indicated in medium-term planning.
- The pupils spend the majority of curriculum time studying Christianity, as that is what is well represented in our own community.
- At Key Stage 1 pupils learn about the principal religions of Britain by studying a relevant aspect of one of the religions in every unit of work. In this way, pupils are introduced to the wider concept of religion and to the richness and diversity of world faiths.
- At Key Stage 2 pupils continue to study other religions in more depth.
- All units require teachers to include opportunities for pupils to reflect on meaning (Target 1) and learn about religion (Target 2). Work on both is included in most lessons.
- The scheme includes a full study of Christianity as required and each of the other principal religions, as required by the Agreed Syllabus.
- There is a suitable balance between expecting pupils to express their own ideas through speaking and listening, and to record what they have learnt through writing, illustrations and diagrams.
- Teachers provide stimulating and challenging experiences that enable pupils to gain enjoyment from their studies.
- Opportunities for visits to places of interest and visitors to school are regular features of the curriculum. In this way pupils have first-hand experiences of the religious traditions.

- The learning objectives identified in the units of work cover the full entitlement for pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

- Pupils are provided with as much first-hand experience of the principal religions as possible and artifacts and authentic resources are used whenever possible.
- Where religious artifacts are used, they are treated with the respect they would be given if they were being used in their actual setting for worship.
- Religious education is taught with the following principles in mind: the role of the school is not to seek commitment by the pupils to a particular religion; teachers should not use the first person (avoid “I think that...”); teachers should not assume that pupils are members of any faith community - therefore, teachers should not use the second person in the context of describing what a pupils does or believes (avoid “When you go to church...” – rather, “When Christians/Jews go to church/synagogue...”); the integrity of pupils is respected and they are never asked or expected to believe the claims of any religious tradition.
- Biblical material is presented as the sacred text of a believing community which regards it as the Word of God.
- Biblical stories are used to identify what they teach believers about God and his relationship with people.
- Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore the themes they perceive in the stories.
- The experiences and views that pupils bring from home and faith communities are always valued.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING

- Annual reports for all pupils are completed once per year based on work completed by the children during the course of the year.
- Learning outcomes and assessment activities are identified in each unit of work in the scheme.
- These are based on the assessment document published by Devon County Council (1999).
- Work in religious education is assessed in accordance with the school assessment policy.

CONTINUITY AND PROGRESSION

Each unit in the curriculum indicates how it builds on previous units which have similar learning objectives and how it leads into the units which follow. This helps teachers take account of how the unit is developed later.

In each unit the expected levels of achievement are identified and these are based on the appropriate level statements for the age and stage of the pupils.

Teachers need to be aware of and take account of pupils’ achievements in their previous learning.

ORGANISATION

In Key Stage 1 and 2, teachers teach religious education to their own groups. Teachers decide on the appropriate organization in lessons. All activities are based on the scheme of work. Teachers organize lessons so that pupils of all ages work as a whole class, in small groups and individually over time.

In all classes, children are from two year groups - there is a two year rolling programme so that pupils study the same unit, but tasks are differentiated appropriately.

Teachers need to prepare material to extend the learning of the most able pupils for each unit of work, ideally in every lesson. Teachers should seek guidance from the subject leader if required in relation to this.

Where parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from religious education, parents are invited in to discuss their decision with the headteacher. The headteacher will explain the religious education policy, attempt to identify the reason for withdrawal and agree alternative arrangements.

THE CURRICULUM

The school will take note of further developments from QCA and the local Standing Committee as they arise.

Teachers are expected to complete a brief evaluation of each unit of work that is completed. These should be sent to the subject leader by the end of each term. The subject leader takes these into account when completing the subject's annual review.

LEARNING RESOURCES

Learning resources for each religion are stored centrally in each school and organised into boxes. Most fiction and non-fiction books are kept in the library, although there are also books kept in individual teachers' classrooms.

It has been agreed that each class will mount at least one display about religious education across the school year.

CROSS-CURRICULAR LINKS

Literacy

Key words and vocabulary are identified in the scheme of work. The teaching activities include tasks closely related to the National Literacy Strategy.

ICT

The scheme of work identifies relevant websites and online resources. Some units of work expect that the pupils present their work using ICT. Where this is the case teachers should ensure that all pupils complete it because it forms part of their entitlement in relation to ICT.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Religious Education makes a particularly strong contribution to pupils' spiritual development. The scheme of work identifies opportunities for pupils to explore their own feelings and beliefs, to study the beliefs and values of other, to empathise with others, to ask puzzling questions and explore the responses for the faith communities.

Personal, social and health education

There are links with PSHE when religious education explores self-awareness, inner feelings and emotions and personal relationships. Those areas developing a respect for the beliefs and values of others also make a major contribution. The use of appropriate teaching and learning styles contributes to this. Group work provides opportunities for collaboration. Discussions are conducted in an atmosphere of mutual respect. Religious education differs from PSHE in that it explicitly explores how the principal religions address the issues.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Every effort is made to ensure that each individual child receives equal learning experiences in religious education, regardless of ability, culture and gender. The curriculum ensures that it is accessible to include all children with Special Needs. See the appropriate policies for details.

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