



# **Religious Education Policy**

**Reviewed by Governors: January 2017**

## Introduction

R.E. in county and voluntary controlled primary schools must be taught to all children in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. This is a statutory requirement and the Tameside Agreed Syllabus has the same status as the National Curriculum in any other subjects of the curriculum. It is inevitable, therefore that this policy draws heavily on the Tameside Agreed Syllabus.

## Definition

In Religious Education pupils explore both the beliefs and practices of world faiths and their own responses to questions about the meaning of and the purpose of life.

It is clear from this definition that Religious Education is not designed to convert pupils to a particular religion or religious belief. Religious Education involves learning about religious beliefs and practices and their influence on life styles. It enables pupils to learn how to think and talk about their own beliefs and values. Also to analyse and evaluate the responses of other people to important moral issues with a religious dimension. Religious Education is, therefore, a school subject with a sound educational rationale.

## Aims and objectives

The aims of RE are inevitably linked to its definition. Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Greenside Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of Religious Education are to help children:

- To develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- To develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions; value systems and cultural differences found in Britain;
- To develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- To be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- To develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- To encourage respect for self, others and the natural world;
- To help dispel prejudice based upon ignorance.

## The legal position of Religious Education

Our school curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA 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 ERA 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 spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. The ERA 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.

## Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE 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. Our 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.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study 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 computers and working individually or in groups.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children. This is achieved by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child, and providing differing levels of adult support.

## Curriculum planning in Religious Education

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Tameside LEA's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry 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. Medium and short term planning are combined in one planning document.

## Religious Education in the Foundation Stage

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. 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, we relate 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. RE comes under the heading 'understanding the world'.

Through teaching Religious Education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We 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.

## Assessment and recording

Assessment provides reliable information about what pupils know, understand and can do at a particular point in time. Assessment should be an integral part of teaching and learning. Ongoing, continuous assessment can play a positive part in the process of learning.

The end of key stage statements are objectives for the Key Stage. They are not a fixed point of achievement but should be revisited during a Key Stage. Pupils will achieve at a variety of levels of understanding.

We assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgments as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgment about the work of each pupil in relation to the Attainment Targets from the Agreed Syllabus. Teaching staff complete a class record sheet at the completion of each unit of work, initialing to show which level each child is currently working at.

## Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep resources for Religious Education in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religion covered. Each religion has books, stories, artifacts, videos and posters to aid with learning. There are bibles relating to children's reading levels and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books to support the children's individual research.

## Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work. She 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.

*At Greenside Primary School we will continually strive to ensure that everyone is treated with respect and dignity. Each person will be given fair and equal opportunities to develop their full potential regardless of their gender, transgender, ethnicity, culture and religious background, sexuality, disability or special educational needs and ability.*