

Mayfield CEP School

Nurturing relationships, inspiring excellence, achieving potential

Policy on Religious Education (RE)

School Context

Mayfield CE Primary School is a small, rural school in the village of Mayfield which borders East Sussex and Kent. It has close links with the local Church of England, St. Dunstan's, and is part of the Diocese of Chichester, with voluntary-controlled status. The school also has links with the local Catholic church and a free evangelical church.

The religious representation at Mayfield CE Primary School is (as of January 2017):

- Christian: 78% (120)
- No religion: 22% (33)

Statutory position of Religious Education

Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage who are less than five years old. Parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from RE if they so wish; where parents and carers wish to exercise this right, they will need to discuss this with the Head of School then give written notice to the Governing Body.

Aims and Objectives

RE is an important part of the school curriculum. At Mayfield CE Primary School, we seek to provide a clearer idea of what religion is about, the importance that it plays in many people's lives and how that faith is expressed in their daily lives and routines.

We develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other major world faiths. Fundamental questions concerning the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit are addressed with the children being provided with opportunities to reflect on what it means to have a faith and develop their own spiritual understanding.

Our objectives in the teaching of RE are:

- to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all children, developing an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions or value systems;
- to develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- to support all children in forming their own opinions about religious beliefs and customs;
- to develop an understanding and respect for other people's views, celebrating the cultural diversity within British society today;
- to develop a love of learning about religion through a teaching approach that stimulates thought and promotes curiosity and exploration.

RE and safeguarding

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multicultural society which we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any child.

The teaching of RE is approached sympathetically to all religious beliefs with all teachers aware that they are informing children not promoting a particular religion. Teachers have undertaken 'PREVENT' training and are aware of the Mayfield CE Primary School's 'Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy.' As a result, it is important to note that all teachers at the school are aware that the teaching of RE must not be influenced by their own views on religion/faith. The teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's personal beliefs which may differ from the teacher's own. Teachers are aware that they must be sensitive about the language that they use, for example, '**Christians** believe...' or '**Hindus** believe...' not 'I believe...'.

Visitors to the school are encouraged to give children the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about another person's experience of living their life in accordance with traditions of a particular faith. Visits to local places of

worship are actively promoted. All external speakers are made aware of our policies to ensure that they are consistent with, and complement, the school's values and ethos. The same applies to all places of worship that are visited.

Core British Values

Mayfield CE Primary School is committed to promoting the core British values of democracy, the role of the law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Our Collective Worship programme 'Values for Life' enables our children to live in a diverse society, play a full role in decision making and grow up to be caring, polite, responsible human beings who are able to consider others' thoughts and feelings. In conjunction with this, RE provides a wide range of opportunities to incorporate these values into teaching and learning in order to enable our children to live and function in a multicultural, diverse British society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

RE is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as through our Collective Worship programme, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important. We encourage children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within society and their own experience. Religious education also strongly supports citizenship by introducing pupils to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider world, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice.

RE Curriculum Planning

RE is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the 2011 East Sussex Agreed Syllabus 'A Journey of Discovery' which mirrors the purposes of the National Curriculum. As a voluntary-controlled Church of England school, our curriculum is enhanced and supported by advice and resources from the Diocese of Chichester.

The RE subject leader has overall responsibility for curriculum planning across the school. It is approached in three phases:

- Long term planning - the overall distribution of themes and faiths to be explored in each year group are mapped out.
- Medium term planning - the main learning objectives and enquiry questions are developed.
- Short term planning - individual lesson plans are developed with the most appropriate strategies being implemented.

The RE subject leader is responsible for the long term plans and will ensure that the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus are being met. Medium term plans are developed by the class teacher then discussed with the RE leader to make certain the learning objectives will meet learning outcomes. Short term plans are the responsibility of the class teacher; the RE subject leader is available to advise if the class teacher needs support.

Teaching and Learning

At Mayfield CE Primary School, we place great importance on making teaching relevant to a child's stage of development and experience. Our teaching enables children to learn (or extend their knowledge) about religious traditions (*learning about religion*) and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them (*learning from religion*).

A variety of teaching methods should be used to teach RE. An enquiry approach is encouraged so that learning is child-centred and ensures the teaching is based on children's prior knowledge and experience. Many opportunities should be given for talking, listening and responding to others respectfully and time given to reflect on what religious ideas and concepts mean to the children. This can be achieved through a variety of strategies such as the use of drama/role play, presentation of stories, music, independent or group research, etc. The children should be encouraged to record their learning in different ways such as posters, PowerPoint presentations, written accounts, artwork, etc.

Cross-curricular approach to RE

Through the use of a range of teaching methods, a cross-curricular approach to teaching RE is embedded. The subject presents opportunities to make connections between RE and other subjects in the curriculum such as:

- English - RE provides a wealth of opportunities to support the English curriculum by promoting speaking, listening, reading and writing skills. There are rich, high-quality stories that can be used as a foundation for both reading and writing tasks. Paired and class discussion about spiritual and moral questions develop speaking and listening skills as well as providing the platform for debates that can be turned into a variety of written responses.
- PSHEe - through RE, the children are taught about religious values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour based on the faith that an individual chooses to follow. The PSHEe curriculum demonstrates that many of these religious values and morals are parallel to the secular values and morals of those who are of no particular faith. In this sense, the connections between the PSHEe and RE curriculum promote tolerance, respect, understanding, empathy and a sense of unity within a pluralistic society.
- Art and Design - within the different faiths that are explored, there is an exciting and inspiring range of art and design that can be used to support learning, for example, depictions of particular events in the Bible, the patterns used within mosques and what they represent or the statues used in Hindu homes to create shrines to their chosen god. These examples of art and design can be used as a basis for the children's artwork in which they develop specific techniques to achieve an effect.
- Computing - the skills children develop in Computing are able to be utilised broadly across the RE curriculum. Using their research skills, children can use the internet to find information and images to support their learning. (The school uses a child-friendly search engine called 'Swiggle' which is designed to ensure children only have access to safe sites; teachers will monitor sites being accessed to ensure they are consistent with the school's values, ethos and Preventing Extremism and Radicalisation Safeguarding Policy.) Children will also be able to use a

wide range of programmes to present their learning, such as PowerPoint presentations, creating a digital storybook, etc.

RE and inclusion

Inclusion and differentiation for children with SEN and EAL are taken into account in our planning and teaching as they are in all areas of the curriculum. Within the teaching of RE we make the most of opportunities to help the children develop their sensitivity to relevant issues, and to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

Recording, assessment, monitoring and review of RE

The recording, assessment, monitoring and review of RE is the responsibility of the RE subject leader who is accountable to the Senior Leadership Team, Head of School and Executive Headteacher.

Recording

Children are provided with an RE book in which they record their responses to learning. Other forms of recording such as artwork, videos and PowerPoints are also used as evidence for learning. It is the responsibility of the class teacher that RE books are marked in accordance with the 'Learning Through Feedback' policy of the school.

Assessment

As the school follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus, we assess against the expected level of attainment set out in the document. At the end of a school year, teachers will review children's work and make a summary judgement against the statements which will be reported to parents and passed on to the next teacher.

Monitoring and review of RE

RE is part of the annual monitoring timetable of the school. Observations and Book Scrutiny take place once a year by the RE subject leader. The feedback from observations is reported to the Senior Leadership Team, Head of School and Executive Head. Any areas of weakness are addressed with the RE subject leader providing a strategic lead and direction.