

Hill View Infant Academy

Religious Education (RE) Policy

Person Responsible: RE Subject Leader (N Stockley)

Review date: June 2017

Next review date: June 2019

Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Hill View Infant Academy we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental question 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 in particular Buddhism and Islam as those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

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, Buddhism, Islam and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- Develop and 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.

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 classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. Parents then become responsible for their child's RE and must make arrangements for this. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to refuse to teach religious education 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. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Sunderland LEA' s agreed Syllabus and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. 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.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions and religious festivals such as Easter, Hanukkah, Wesak 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 research and discuss religious and moral issues, working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school.

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 matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this 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

Curriculum planning in religious education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with Sunderland 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 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. The RE subject leader works out a plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics from the agreed syllabus.

Our medium-term plan give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

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.

Foundation Stage

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class and nursery.

In nursery and the reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As nursery and 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.

Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

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

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote 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.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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 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.

Teaching religious education to children with special needs

In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their school support plan.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work when it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the national curriculum levels of attainment. We record attainment grades, which we use for a basis for assessing progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

The Senior Management keeps a sample of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

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 unit of work. There are bibles in each classroom and a collection of religious artefacts which enhance the teaching of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their school support plan.

Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in religious education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current development in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.