



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. It is this Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2011 which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

RE is concerned with "learning about religions and beliefs" and "learning from religion and beliefs" and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from religious education (RE). If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes this may consult the head teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of 4 principal world faiths. These include Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.
2. develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
3. develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about

religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the 4 religions and other beliefs.

4. enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 - a. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them.
 - b. responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices.
 - c. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.
 - d. expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way.
5. recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within a religiously diverse society.

LEARNING

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own by Learning about Religion and Belief and Learning from Religion and Belief.

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum.

AT1 Learning about Religion and Belief

- **Beliefs, teachings and sources** (interpreting teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to understand religions and beliefs)
- **Practices and ways of life** (exploring the impact of religions and beliefs on how people live their lives)
- **Expressing meaning** (appreciating that individuals and cultures express their beliefs and values in different ways)

AT2 Learning from Religion and Belief

- **Identity, diversity and belonging** (understanding how individuals develop a sense of identity and belonging through faith or belief)
- **Meaning, purpose and truth** (exploring some of the ultimate questions that confront humanity, and responding imaginatively to them)
- **Values and commitments** (understanding how moral values and a sense of obligation can come from beliefs and experience)

SKILLS in Religious Education

The skills required in the study of Religious Education fall into three categories:

Reflection:

- Ability to reflect on experience, relationships and feelings

- Ability to reflect on ultimate questions, beliefs, values and symbolic representation of meaning.

Empathy:

- Consider the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes and beliefs of others.
- Develop the power of imagination to identify feelings of love, wonder, forgiveness, sorrow etc..
- Ability to see the world through the eyes of others and appreciate their point of view.

Creativity of thought and expression:

- Think creatively, exploring a wide range of ideas and hypotheses
- Express a diversity of religious thought and feelings in a variety of forms.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches.

Experiences and opportunities to be included in teaching in Early Years Foundation Stage:

- Visual/special expression shown in art and other creative activities
- Auditory experiences listening to music, stories and rhymes
- Kinaesthetic activities such as movement, games and handling a range of resources
- Verbal/linguistic communication in a range of speaking and listening activities
- Mathematical experiences by making simple models and patterns
- Music and songs from different cultures
- Naturalistic engagement with living things and the environment
- Interpersonal skills offering co-operative opportunities

Experiences and opportunities to be included in the teaching of Key Stage 1:

- Encountering religion through visiting places of worship and focusing on symbols and feelings
- Ask questions of, listen to and respond to visitors from local faith communities
- Using their senses and having times of quiet reflection

- Using art and design, music, dance and drama to develop their creative talents and imagination
- Sharing their own beliefs, ideas and values and talking about their feelings and experiences
- Beginning to use ICT to explore religions and beliefs as practised in the local and wider community
- Identify questions about the world and space they would like to answer
- Are enabled to notice some key ideas in the celebration of festivals and to learn the ways these ideas can make sense of festivals studied
- Listen to stories from scriptures and sacred texts and talk about what the stories mean
- Take turns to speak and listen when talking about R.E. topics
- Learn from religious artefacts, works of art and stories, using both spiritual and literacy methods to develop understanding

Experiences and opportunities to be included in the teaching of Key Stage 2:

- Encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship and focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- Considering a range of human experiences and feelings
- Reflecting on their own and others' insights through art and design, music, dance, drama and ICT
- Developing the use of ICT, particularly in enhancing pupils' awareness of religions and beliefs globally
- Consider questions that are mysterious and puzzling and think of alternative answers

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, role play, drama, asking and

answering questions, using a range of sources including ICT, works of art, artefacts, visits and visitors.

PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and there is progression at each key stage the school follows the scheme of work based on the Herefordshire Programmes of study 2011-2016 for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. Teachers are free to plan their own lessons and the programmes of study are a useful resource. This scheme shows how aspects of all four faiths are explored over key stage one and two. It also takes a strand from AT1 and a strand from AT2 to form a key question to be studied as the Agreed Syllabus recommends. We use a combination of teaching RE through topics (or blocks of work where more than one curriculum area is linked together in a coherent way) and as a separate subject, depending on the material, which has to be covered.

Suggested themes for the year according to the schemes of work:

Foundation stage (Reflective of the religions in the school community)

- Being special
- Special people
- Special times
- Special places

KS 1 (Christianity and Judaism)

- Believing
- Story
- Celebrations
- Symbols
- Leaders and teachers
- Belonging
- Myself

KS 2 (Christianity, Islam and Hinduism with Judaism being further developed)

- Beliefs and questions
- Sacred writings
- Worship, pilgrimage and sacred places

- The journey of life and death
- Symbols and religious expression
- Inspirational people
- Religion and the individual
- Religion, family and community
- Beliefs in action in the world

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE co-ordinator is available to help with this and keeps a range of teacher's resources as a guide. (When planning each unit of work the teacher will identify which parts of the programme of study are to be the focus, the learning objectives for the unit (i.e. what the pupils should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their work), the activities planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of the pupils).

In line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus we plan to spend 36 hours per year at key stage one and 45 hours per year at key stage two on the teaching of RE. This is separate from the act of collective worship. (See school policy on collective worship).

PRESENTATION

Each unit of work will involve pupils in activities, such as already mentioned. These will provide opportunities to demonstrate how far they have learned "about religions" and "from religion". In addition, pupils will sometimes be encouraged to present work for a wider audience, such as in assembly (for the school and/or parents), or for display in the entrance area or hall. Pupils will need to think about the purpose of the work or its intended audiences.

CROSS-CURRICULAR ISSUES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and a consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed. As will their creative and imaginative thinking.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined by the Eight Level Scale. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

Through activities for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and the RE element will be included as part of a child's learning journey.

MANAGEMENT AND CO-ORDINATION

The RE co-ordinator manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject co-ordinators.

RESOURCES

These will continue to be kept in the hall cupboard/family room and will be up dated and added to as the budget allows. Some classes may wish to purchase resources relating to their learning journey.