

Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School Religious Education Policy

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY STATEMENT

Why teach Religious Education?

Religious Education plays a major part in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of every pupil in the school. It aims to acknowledge the faith of every pupil. It is available to children of any faith and no faith. It develops knowledge and respect for personal and other religious cultures.

Religious Education and the LA Guidelines

By law Religious Education must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus. This document is based on the delivery of the Birmingham LA Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. The Scheme of work is mainly based on the Birmingham LA non-statutory guidance.

In addition at Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School we have decided to prioritise the religious festivals celebrated by the children in this school. We feel this is an excellent way for children to learn to share their experiences with others and learn to appreciate and respect experiences and cultures of their peer groups.

Personal Choice

Under the 1988 Education Act (ERA) parents have the legal right to withdraw children from all Religious Education lessons or any part of the Religious Education syllabus. However it is our policy to discuss the matter with parents and whilst being sensitive to their views, faiths and traditions, would point out the benefits of them taking part in, certain, if not all activities.

The implementation of this document it is responsibility of all members of staff unless it has been agreed by the headteacher that they may refrain from teaching on the "grounds of conscience".

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.

Aims (as stated in the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus)

Religious Education promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by helping them to:

- address the fundamental questions of life;
- respond to such questions with reference to the teaching practices of religions, and in the light of their experience and understanding;
- reflect on their beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their studies;
- develop the ability to make reasoned, informed judgements about religious and moral life;
- develop positive attitudes towards other people, respecting their rights to hold beliefs different from their own, and to be able them to live in a world with many diverse religions;
- develop knowledge and understanding of the faiths, practices and values of religious traditions found in Birmingham and elsewhere and their influences on individuals, families, communities, societies and cultures.

Our School Aims

At Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School Religious Education aims to:

- play a major part in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the school;
- acknowledge the faith of every child within the school. It is available to children of any faith and no faith:
- develop in each child a knowledge of and respect for their own and other religions and cultures;
- provide a broad and balanced curriculum with both continuity and progression within the school.

Planning

The planning is based at three levels:

Long-term planning which is based on the Areas of Study and Attainment Targets in the Birmingham LA Guidelines for Reception and Key Stage 1. Nursery planning is based around the Early Learning Goals in Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

Medium-term planning which is based on half-termly units focussing on the five Areas of Study in the Birmingham LA Syllabus. This includes the learning objectives and outcomes for each unit and suggests activities that will enable this to be achieved.

Short-term planning is carried out weekly and includes learning objectives and resources needed for the lesson.

The medium and short-term planning is monitored by the RE coordinator.

Problem Solving and Thinking Skills

In RE thinking skills enable children to ask relevant questions, to pose and define problems and to explain their opinions and actions.

In evaluating information they to:

- judge the value of what they read, hear and do;
- develop criteria for judging the value of their own and others' work or ideas;
- have confidence in their judgement.

Teaching Methods and Approaches

The teaching of RE at Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School provides opportunities for a wide variety of teaching strategies and experiences. Pupils will be introduced to Religious Education by starting from familiar experiences and then encountering, at their own level, aspects of religion and life through such activities as are outlined in the Birmingham LA guidelines:

- listening to and reading appropriate stories with spiritual and moral dimensions;
- listening to and making sounds;
- looking at and handling artefacts;
- observing and, where appropriate, taking part in celebrations;
- looking at pictures;
- meeting people;
- visiting places of worship;
- talking about these encounters;
- responding to these encounters using suitable media.
- singing

At Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School we base our teaching and learning 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.

The teaching and learning 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 Christmas, Easter, Eid, Diwali etc. to develop their religious thinking. We also organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Cross-curricular Links

As well as making its own contribution to the school RE contributes to the wider aims of primary education. Our festival celebrations work has strong links with art, DT, music drama, PSHE and SMSC. Through discussion, RE contributes to the development of speaking and listening. In Key Stage 1 reading and writing are an essential part of finding out and communicating an understanding of RE. these links can be seen in the long, medium and short-term planning. Guidance is given detailing the breadth of opportunities that can be offered in the RE QCA document (p14-17).

In the Early Years the links are even more evident because of the structure of the Early Learning Goals and the less formal timetable.

Links with Numeracy

- Sequence events using ordinal numbers (as in the Chinese New Year)
- Order religious events by direct comparison
- Place celebrations personal to them in charts and graph of preference

Links with Literacy

- Listen, understand and respond to others
- Remember specific points of interest
- Make relevant comments
- Ask questions to clarify understanding
- Understand that texts about some topics may contain different information or similar information in different ways
- Speak clearly, fluently and confidently to different people
- Convey knowledge, skills and understanding in writing
- Use language and actions to explore and convey situations, characters and emotions

Links with Science

- Find out about similarities and differences between themselves and others and to treat others with sensitivity
- Group living things according to similarities and differences
- Identify similarities and differences between what they believe and way in which they affect others

Links with other Foundation Subjects

- Geography - Recognise the original places of religious observance
- ART - Learning about art from a variety of cultures, through looking, reading, discussion, and making connections with their own work
- MUSIC - Music from different cultures
- PE - Various performances and assemblies

Links with Citizenship and PSHE

- RE promotes the values and attitudes needed for citizenship in a democratic society by helping pupils to understand and respect people of different beliefs, practices and cultures. Similarities and differences in commitment, self understanding and the search for truth can be recognised, respected and valued for the common good.
- RE deals with religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin individual choices and behaviour, social policies and practices and concepts and patterns of health.

Links with Spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC)

Through teaching RE at Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to moral and ethical questions. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong also through questioning and quiet reflection. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a diverse society. They also explore issues of religious faith and values and which helps develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School enables pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to the Baptist Church, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Selection of Material from the Principal Religions

The Birmingham LA guidelines state that pupils will be introduced to RE through material selected from at least three religious traditions appropriate to the local community and pupils in school one of which must be Christianity. At Cottesbrooke the main religions have been chosen taking into account religious traditions and faiths of pupils within the school. The main religions to be followed will be Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. Buddhism and Judaism are also included with the programme of study.

Organisation

The advised time for teaching RE during Key Stage 1 and Reception is 72 hours. This has been divided into block units of approximately 4 hours per each half term. This currently allows for a weekly lesson of 30-40 minutes in Years 1 and 2 with a more flexible approach to the timing in Early Years. However many of the activities carried out at the times of festival celebrations will be cross-curricular and more time may be spent on RE on such occasions e.g. making cards for Diwali, Eid, Easter and Christmas; learning songs to celebrate various festivals; drama and role play to celebrate festivals.

Displays

At Cottesbrooke we recognise the importance of display in the teaching of RE. Posters and artefacts relevant to the major festivals are displayed in the entrance hall at appropriate times of the year. During the year classroom displays relating to RE are made when appropriate. These provide a learning tool and means of valuing and presenting children's work.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Assessment of children's progress is made informally over a period of time. They may include observing children's work, involving children in assessing their work, questioning, talking and listening to pupils and considering materials produced by the children. Short term informal assessments by the teacher are continually taking place and may inform the

delivery and structure of the next stage of learning. Formal records are kept in the form of end of year reports.

Reporting

Parents will be kept informed of their child's progress in RE through consultation at Parents' Evening and in the end of year report. Parents can also make an appointment at any stage in the year to discuss their child's work and/or progress.

Resources

Resources for the delivery of the RE curriculum are stored both centrally in the Resources Room and in year group areas. 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 separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. Each class will also have their own bible in the classroom.

Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School uses a variety of materials to facilitate the teaching of RE. These include:

- Fiction/non fiction books
- Videos
- Picture cards
- Photographs
- Objects
- Paintings
- Artefacts
- Library books
- Songs

These materials are constantly updated as new and relevant items become available. The RE co-ordinator orders new resources after consultation with the staff.

Equal Opportunities

It is the responsibility of each class teacher to ensure that children of both sexes and all cultural backgrounds have equal experiences and encouragement. All children are entitled to a broad and balanced programme of activities. It is recognised that these opportunities will need to be carefully planned in RE with staff showing consideration at all times for the cultural background, gender, special needs or home circumstances of each child.

Children with Special Educational Needs

At Cottesbrooke Infants we do not make the assumption that a child with special educational needs in another curriculum area will necessarily have particular difficulties for religious education. As with any other pupil it is the teacher's task to help a child with

special needs to experience success and the same degree of satisfaction as the rest of the class. The teacher will need to consider:

- differentiating to meet individual needs;
- offering additional help and experiences;
- taking account of IEPs for children on the Special Needs Code of Practice

Fundamental British Values and Universal Virtues

Cottesbrooke Infant & Nursery School promotes the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. We also promote the universal virtues of courage, compassion, self-discipline, justice and humility. Where relevant, these values and virtues should form part of the teaching of RE.

Actively promoting these values and virtues means challenging opinions or behaviours in school that are contrary to fundamental British values.

It is not necessary for staff to 'promote' teachings, beliefs or opinions that conflict with their own, but it is unacceptable for staff to promote discrimination against people or groups on the basis of their belief, opinion or background.

Homework

There is no specific homework set for RE. However children are encouraged to bring in artefacts and share experiences relevant to their faith at appropriate times.