

	Name of School	Gidea Park Primary School
	Policy review Date	October 2017
	Date of next Review	October 2020
	Who reviewed this policy?	Georgina Delaney

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

INTRODUCTION

Religious education is a legal entitlement for every pupil and forms part of the basic curriculum as set down in the 1998 Education Act. Its place in the curriculum is an acknowledgement of the fact that religious beliefs and practices play an important part in the lives of many people worldwide, and have done so throughout history. An understanding of religion can help children develop a better appreciation of themselves, the people around them and the world in which they live.

The education acts require that the religious education should be provided according to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Redbridge and Havering. This document is available in school.

AIM

As part of the London Borough of Havering, our school believes that Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life. The Havering agreed syllabus expresses the following aim:

'The core purpose of RE is to engage pupils in exploring and responding to challenging questions raised by religion and worldviews, so that they can develop the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, including their own.'

In essence, RE should:

- Encourage pupils to have confidence in their own sense of identity, as well as valuing and respecting diversity in others;
- Help pupils in their search for meaning and purpose in life;
- Not promote or undermine any particular religious stance;
- Be accessible to pupils and teachers of any religious persuasion or none;
- Help pupils to develop a positive attitude towards living in a society of diverse religions

CURRICULUM

Contribution of Religious Education to teaching in other curriculum areas

Through RE children have the opportunity to develop many key skills such as thinking, researching, evaluating, reflecting and empathising. Wherever possible, links are made between RE and other subjects.

Curriculum Organisation

Religious Education is taught through a combination of classroom work and work linked to assemblies. This work is co-ordinated to ensure the highest quality of learning experiences for the pupils and to cover the requirements of the Havering Agreed Syllabus.

The curriculum is planned to deliver R.E. through a combination of methods:

- Religious education is taught mainly through weekly lessons. The R.E. Schemes of work are linked with cross curricular school topics whenever possible;
- The opportunity is taken to deliver identified areas of R.E. through assemblies. The work is carefully planned and followed up in class when appropriate;

Further details can be found in the plans and schemes of work.

Curriculum Time

The School gives 5% of curriculum time to religious education in line with the recommendations of the Havering Agreed Syllabus. It is anticipated that the actual amount of time given each week will vary.

Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In the Reception classes RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged 0 – 5 years and with reference to the Havering Agreed Syllabus.

Equal Opportunities

The school equal opportunities policy is used throughout the curriculum and must be adhered to at all times. In addition it is important in religious education to ensure the work being covered is appropriate to pupils who come from any religious background or none.

Planning and assessment

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education contains appropriate levels of attainment for the subject which help teachers both plan and assess work.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

Collective worship in Gidea Park Primary aims to provide the opportunity for pupils and staff to:

- experience a variety of styles of worship
- celebrate together e.g. festivals, school values, individual achievements
- build a sense of community/foster corporate identity;
- develop a reflective approach to living which sometimes encourages understanding of and invitation to prayer;
- look beyond the physical, material and measurable;
- worship God or reflect on human values;
- consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs;
- participate and respond, through active involvement in the planning, leading, presentation and evaluation of worship
- feel safe and affirmed in doing any of the above

Statutory Requirements

By law, collective worship must:

- take place for every child not withdrawn by their parents every day;
- be wholly or mainly of a broadly christian character;
- take account of the ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds of the pupils;
- take place on the school premises, except on occasions, with agreement of governors;

Therefore, at Gidea Park Primary School our collective worship reflects the broad traditions of Christian belief without being distinctive of any particular Christian denomination. Not every act of collective worship must comply with this; just the majority so we can include material from other religions and non-religious world views.

The Act of Collective Worship

We use a variety of styles, active and interactive methods and a range of resources in our acts of collective worship. Leaders make decisions about these elements according to what is most appropriate to the content, the ages, aptitudes and the backgrounds of the pupils. Where prayer is included in our acts of worship it is introduced with a form of words that invites but does not coerce pupils to participate. Our prayers are addressed to 'God' rather than Jesus as this is inclusive of the beliefs of our non-Christian religious pupils. We hope that pupils who prefer not to pray will use these moments to reflect on the important messages shared in our worship.

MANAGEMENT

Co-ordination

The day to day support for religious education is provided by the subject leader who is responsible to the headteacher for:

- devising and maintaining the scheme of work;
- supporting teachers in their medium and short term planning;
- attending relevant in-service courses to keep up to date on religious education and reporting to staff;
- managing the resources for religious education;
- co-ordinating the links with local places of worship and religious and non-religious representatives;
- evaluating the quality of provision in R.E.

Withdrawal

Our policy sets out clearly our aspiration that collective worship and our RE curriculum will be a valuable and valued experience for all members of our school community whatever their backgrounds and beliefs. It is invitational and reflective in nature and never coercive or indoctrinatory. We teach the importance of tolerance throughout this curriculum.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from all or any acts of worship and staff are also free to withdraw from involvement in this aspect of school life. We request that those who wish to exercise this right inform the Head Teacher in writing so that school records are accurate. We also appreciate opportunities to speak with parents and staff who have concerns about collective worship as we are always keen to develop our understanding of sensitivities and to overcome difficulties where possible. Those pupils who are withdrawn from worship are cared for by a member of the school's staff; parents may provide suitable activities for children to complete whilst they are withdrawn. The right to withdraw a pupil from RE does not extend to other subjects that may teach about religion.

Community

The school has good links with local places of worship and each year we visit St Michael's church at Christmas, using Gidea Park Methodist Church to find out about Christian worship and with representatives from different faiths being invited into assemblies across the year. A range of special occasions is planned throughout the year to which parents and friends are invited. These include Class Assemblies, Harvest Festival Assembly, Musical Assemblies and Christmas performances.