



Barnabas Oley School

Religious Education Policy

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Revision History

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1 Aims and Objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Barnabas Oley School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the major world faiths. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

1.2 The aims of religious education are for pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in the UK
- Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs (both religious and secular) values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own; living in a society of diverse religions
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Cambridgeshire and the UK
- Encourage openness to ask questions and search for answers of meaning and purpose for themselves
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
 - Developing awareness of the fundamental questions raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them.
 - Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience
 - Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

The two attainment targets are:

AT 1 Learning about Religion and Belief

Enquiring into, investigating and understanding religions and beliefs. This includes thinking about and interpreting religious beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and ways of expressing meaning with reference to the specific beliefs and religions studied.

AT2 Learning from Religion and Belief

Questioning, exploring, reflecting upon and interpreting human experience in the light of religions and beliefs studied. This includes communicating reflections, responses and evaluations about questions of identity, belonging, diversity, meaning

and purpose, truth, values and commitments, making increasingly insightful links to the specific religions studied.

2 The Legal Position of Religious Education

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the Education Act 1996 and the Education Standards and Framework Act 1998. The SSFA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The SSFA allows parents to request:

- That the pupil may be wholly or partly excused from receiving Religious Education in accordance with the school's basic curriculum
- That a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving Religious Education provided by the school may in certain circumstances receive Religious Education of the kind desired by the parent elsewhere, provided that it will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil on any day except at the beginning or end of a school session (5.71 [3] [b] SSFA)
- That a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving Religious Education provided by the school may receive Religious Education of the kind desired by the parent on the school premises provided that it does not entail any expenditure by the responsible authority.

Teachers - with specific exceptions, teachers may withdraw from teaching Religious Education and they should not be discriminated against for their Religious opinions or practices.

Our school RE curriculum is based on the Cambridgeshire LEA's Agreed Syllabus (2018) and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.

3 Teaching and Learning Style

- 3.1 In line with the Cambridgeshire Agreed syllabus 2018 RE lessons are taught using an enquiry-based approach. Pupils are encouraged to explore and examine questions raised by the teacher and themselves about religious beliefs and practices and none, through gathering information, and increasing knowledge and understanding.
- 3.2 We base our teaching and learning style 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.
- 3.3 Our teaching and learning styles 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, Harvest, and Easter etc. to develop their religious thinking. We use a range of activities, e.g. discussion, art, dance and music, as appropriate, to explore religious topics. We organize visits to the local church and other places of worship when appropriate.

- 3.4 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 discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.
- 3.5 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 by 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);
 - 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.

4 Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

- 4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Cambridgeshire LEA's Agreed Syllabus 2018 and incorporate RE Today's 'Understanding Christianity' material. 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.
- 4.2 We carry out the 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 coordinator works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, where possible to create cohesion in our learning.
- 4.3 All our classes are mixed-age. We plan our RE topics on a two year rolling programme for each class on the Christianity materials, and World Religions on a four year rolling programme. This ensures coverage but limits unnecessary repetition.
- 4.4 The teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson.

5 Early Years Foundation Stage

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

- 5.2 In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the 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. Diocesan learning resources are used to facilitate this.

6 Contribution of Religious Education to the Teaching of Other Subjects

6.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in the Literacy Hour 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.

6.2 Information and Communication Technology (ICT)

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

6.3 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the 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.

6.4 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 to 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. The Annual Spirit Arts Competition also encourages deeper personal reflection.

7 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 our 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 Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

8 Assessing and Recording

- 8.1 We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we use the cloud format to push children's thinking. 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. This is recorded on assessment sheets designed to complement the assessment systems used in other areas of the curriculum.
- 8.2 The RE co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring that assessment occurs and keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio, which s/he uses to demonstrate the expected level of achievement in RE for each age group in the school. This is reported to SACRE each year.

9 Resources

There are two sets of Bibles and the school library has a good supply of RE topic books and some computer software to support the children's individual research. Artefacts and other resources are available from the Ely Diocese Office and we are gradually building up our own topic based resources-currently stored in the Library.

10 Monitoring and Review

The RE coordinator is responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE coordinator is also responsible for liaison with outside agencies including the Diocese and the LEA through attending workshops and the regular meetings provided.