



Redmile Church of England Primary School and Waltham-on-the-Wolds Church of England Primary School

Religious Education (RE) Policy

Introduction

Both Redmile CE Primary and Waltham-on-the-Wolds CE Primary School are part of a close working partnership through our Executive Headship model and as such, we share the same principles to the education of religion. The term 'school' throughout this policy refers to both schools and 'staff' includes all adults directly supporting teaching and learning, i.e. teachers and support staff.

Vision Statement

Where learning is for life. At our school, we maintain that learning should be a rewarding and enjoyable experience for everyone (adults and children); it should be fun and interactive. We believe that all children should be challenged and encouraged to maximise their own potential and have their achievements celebrated.

Ethos Statement

Recognising our historical foundation, we will preserve and develop our religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with our local churches at parish and diocesan level.

We aim to serve our community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of religious belief and practice. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith and promote Christian and British values through the experiences we offer to all our pupils.

We promote a Christian ethos. We teach our children to behave in God's image and to seek inspiration from Him so that school is a highly positive experience for everyone. We respect that not all children will believe in God, however, we teach all children that Christian and British Values are the foundations of an inclusive school.

Aims and objectives

The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own. Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At our school we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions 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, especially 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. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

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 and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain.
- develop an 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 people's views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

Skills to be developed in Religious Education

Our teaching aims to develop an enquiring mind and as such these skills are cumulative across the key stages and include:

- Investigation • Interpretation • Analysis and Evaluation • Synthesis • Application • Expression • Empathy

Key personal learning and thinking skills in Religious Education

- independent enquirers
- creative thinkers
- team workers
- self-managers
- effective participators
- reflective learners.

We encourage children to identify questions and define enquiries using a range of methods, media and resources. We want children to carry out and develop enquiries by gathering, comparing, interpreting and analysing a range of information, ideas and viewpoints and to present findings, suggest interpretations, express ideas and feelings and develop arguments. We want children to use empathy, critical thought and reflection to evaluate their learning and how it might apply to their own and others' lives.

Attitudes to be developed in Religious Education

We aim to encourage and develop key attitudes including:

- Curiosity & wonder • Commitment • Fairness • Respect • Self-understanding • Open-mindedness • Critical mindedness • Enquiry

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 Education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach Religious Education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention 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 Leicestershire LA'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.

In line with the law, our new Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education expects that we will enable pupils to explore Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, as well as Christianity. It also encourages the consideration of secular world views.

Approaches to the teaching of RE

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject, we employ a variety of teaching methods through discussions, recording, active participation, outside visitors, trips, art, music, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection. Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities.

We use as a basis for our planning the 'RE-Visual Literacy' syllabus and 'Understanding Christianity'. A programme of work has been developed using the two schemes.

Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that outstanding 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.

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 of religious festivals such as Easter, Christmas, Harvest, Diwali, Passover 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 discuss religious and moral issues using computers to extract information and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in collective worship assemblies.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities and backgrounds, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities accordingly. 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 and setting accessible tasks.
- providing resources of different complexity.
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Curriculum planning in Religious Education

We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning using the syllabus 'RE-Visual Literacy' and 'Understanding Christianity'. 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 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 subject leader works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach Religious Education topics in conjunction with our cross-curricular approach to learning and teaching.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have mixed-age classes, we normally carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle, although we are currently revising our planning to reflect the needs and interests of our pupils so our current approach is to plan for this academic year only.

The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson using 'RE-Visual literacy and 'Understanding Christianity' as a guide. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE coordinator.

The time allocation of RE will equate to:

36 hours for Key Stage 1 45 hours for Key stage 2

5% of curriculum time

(This may be timetabled on a weekly basis or blocked during themed activities.)

Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

RE can form a valuable part of the educational experience of children in the EYFS. It can contribute particularly to personal, social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy knowledge and understanding of the world and creative development. In our reception class, Religious Education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year.

Contribution of Religious Education to the teaching of other subjects

Religious Education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in all areas of learning in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion and informs their writing.

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 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.

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.

Teaching Religious Education to children with special educational needs

At our school, ALL members of the learning community will care for and support all children through the teaching of Religious Education regardless of academic ability, disability, age, race, gender, religious belief, home language, socio-economic background or sexual orientation. Offering an inclusive curriculum is a key part of our school vision. Religious Education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our Religious Education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our monitoring process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

We enable 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 a Sikh temple, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Monitoring, assessment and recording

In line with the school policy on assessment and monitoring, a range of methods will be used. The learning intentions are shared with the children and regularly throughout each unit of work tasks are set which are linked to the learning intentions. These tasks take a variety of styles, for example:

- Creative work
- Drama
- Writing
- Mind mapping

The children are encouraged to develop skills to enable them to assess their own development in RE and to understand how to improve their RE work.

Parents receive an annual written report on their child(ren)'s attainment and attitudes in RE.

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 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 expected attainment. We record children's

attainment , which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

We have recently agreed to trial a new assessment grid which is currently being used by all teachers who deliver RE lessons. The RE subject leader keeps samples 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 is a set of bibles for both key stages and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in Religious Education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books to support the children's individual research.

Monitoring and review

The RE coordinator and link governor are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education, in partnership with senior leaders. S/he is also 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.

REDMILE'S VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

"Teach children how they should live, and they will remember it all their lives." (Proverbs 22:6)

We Encourage Learning and Caring because Our school Matters to Everyone.

We are dedicated to serving the community by providing our children with life skills to flourish in a diverse society. Every individual is valued and celebrated. Faith, spirituality, Christian and British values guide us through our journey at Redmile.

J Hopkins and N Copeland Spring 2019