

COATES WAY SCHOOL



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Summer 2020

Policy Number: 50

BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education is not a National Curriculum subject, but the law states that the RE Agreed Syllabus 'must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking into account of the teachings and practices of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain'. As RE is not nationally determined the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. It is this Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022 which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with "learning about religions" and "learning from religion" and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children to a particular religion. 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. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending and RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn.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. (DFE Circular 1/94 paragraphs 44-49)

A. 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 principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. These include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, each of which is represented in Hertfordshire;
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 principal religions;
4. enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 - developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;

- responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - 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.

B. OBJECTIVES

Learning

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

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

Learning about Religions

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

Learning from Religion

- give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues;
- reflect what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the questions of meaning within religion.

Children will be “Learning about Religions” and “Learning from Religion” through:

1. investigation; the use of first-hand and other resources to understand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories
2. questioning; developing curiosity about life, relationships and the natural world
3. empathy; developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as wonder, forgiveness, sorrow, joy and to try to see the world through the eyes of others

4. reflection; the ability to consider thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs of oneself and others
5. relating; linking significant features of religions, making associations between them, to understand what makes religions distinct and/or similar
6. expression; the ability to identify and explain feelings and aspects of religions

Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas.

- Belief and Teachings – e.g. stories, prophets, founders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death
- Religious Practices and Lifestyles – e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, effects on individuals
- Ways of Expressing Meaning – e.g. art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, drama, prayer, silence/stillness
- Human Identity, Personality and Experience – e.g. preferences, relationships between family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people
- Questions of Meaning and Purpose – e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, ultimate questions of life raised by life's experiences
- Values and Commitments – e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, moral dilemmas

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.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role-play; encouraging children to learn through familiar and unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect while deepening knowledge
4. parents; by valuing family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community

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.

ICT and Religious Education

ICT can be used as both a teaching and learning tool for RE. As a teaching tool it can be used to display information in a multimedia format engaging the pupils. As a learning tool, pupils have access to a number of resources including CD ROMS and the Internet which support learning in RE.

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 following the Eight Level Scale in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education. 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 work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements and knowledge and understanding.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and these reports are used to inform parents of their child's achievements in all areas of the curriculum, including RE.

PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage the school follows the Primary Scheme of Work for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. This scheme shows how we have planned that "aspects of all six principal faiths are explored over the foundation stage and key stages one and two". We have a combination of teaching RE through topics (or blocks of work where more than one curriculum is linked together in a coherent way) and as a separate subject, depending on the material which has to be covered.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE Subject Leader reviews these plans annually.

Short term planning of the individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE co-ordinator is available to help with this and keeps a range of the 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, 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 30 hours per year at the foundation stage and key stage one and 39 hours per key stage two on the teaching of RE. This is separate from the act of collective worship.

PRESENTATION

Each unit of work will involve pupils in activities, such as already mentioned above (see sections on Teaching and Assessment). 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, or for display. Pupils will need to think about the purpose of the work or its intended audiences before starting.

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 and a consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and the 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.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

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

There is a yearly staff meeting on RE, led by the co-ordinator, where matters arising can be aired openly and issues resolved. This policy is reviewed at that meeting to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school.

This policy will be reviewed in Summer 2022