

Deerhurst and Apperley C of E Primary School



Religious Education (RE) Policy

Reviewed Dec 2015

1. Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Deerhurst and Apperley C of E Primary 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 peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

2. 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 Gloucester 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.

3. Teaching and learning style

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.

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 Easter, 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. In 2010 the children began going to the 'Experience' workshops run by the local ministry team. This has included Experience Christmas and Experience Easter. These workshops support and complement the RE curriculum and bring the festivals alive for 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 and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

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);
- grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- 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

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Gloucestershire LA's Agreed Syllabus. 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.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in two phases (long-term and medium 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 cooperation with teaching colleagues in each year group. As we have mixed-age classes, we carry out the long-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

The agreed syllabus states:

When pupils from Reception are taught with KS1 pupils they should follow the KS1 programme of study (the programmes of study for Reception and KS1 mutually support each other).

This means that the Reception and KS1 teacher will differentiate activities and outcomes for Reception children in line with the Early Years Foundation Stage requirements.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term, each unit of work is based around a key question which encourages the children to explore their skills of enquiry, it also promotes their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Medium term planning is the responsibility of the class teacher. The class teacher uses the medium term plans for each lesson and highlights the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

5. Foundation Stage

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

In reception, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As reception is part of the Foundation Stage, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage Guidance which underpin the curriculum planning.

6. Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

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 English 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.

Computing

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.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE)

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, racial, 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.

7. Teaching religious education to children with special needs

In our school inclusion is paramount, therefore 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. Assessment and recording

Staff use key question assessments, learning about religion and learning from religion. Each class has an assessment folder and assessment and monitoring examples currently being used in school.

9. 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 and computer software to support the children's individual research. We also receive resource boxes from the diocese to support our Values collective worship themes. Roots and Fruits, Jack in the box and Out of the box resources have been purchased to support worship in school.

10. Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. 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. She also carries out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. The RE leader also liaises with the Ethos committee and the governor responsible for RE. The Headteacher will ensure that the principles set out in the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for RE are implemented.

Reviewed Dec 2015

For Governor Approval at the next FGB meeting in January 2016.

Approved by Governors:

Chair of Governors: Rev B Messham

Date:

Head teacher: Jayne Neveu

Date: