

Culworth CE Primary School

Religious Education (RE) Policy

1 Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Culworth School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. 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.

We also link this with our Values Education which we think is a framework for living: tightly woven into the positive ethos of our school

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. We encourage the children to learn about religion and learn from religion. Our school RE curriculum is based on a combination of the National Curriculum and the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus which 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 linked to the 'Values Education' 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 to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children can investigate religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also look at the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues 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 Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus, linked to the national Curriculum and our Values Education. 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 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 co-ordinator works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each Key Stage.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE co-ordinator keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have some mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics. Our short-term plans cover what each class will learn each week.

5 Foundation Stage

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

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 and the section entitled Knowledge and Understanding of the World. The Early Learning goals underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

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 have moral themes or content, which encourages discussion and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening outside the Literacy Hour. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

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. Each class has a list of useful websites appropriate for religious education.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

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 doing so they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives and of others currently outside their experience in a contrasting locality e.g. Muslims in Banbury

7 Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. 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 including those with special educational needs. We do this by

- clearly defining the learning outcomes
- differentiating by task
- use of visual and tactile stimulus material
- activities are broken down in to small achievable steps
- relevant and broad learning outcomes

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.

8 Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informative judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. We pass information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio.

9 Resources

We are building our resources in our school so that we will 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 religion of work. There are Bibles for both key stages and we use a resource centre in Banbury if we need any religious artefacts to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and a list of websites is available to support the children's individual research

10 Monitoring and review

The RE subject co-ordinator is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. She 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. The RE co-ordinator (presents the head teacher with an annual report) evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. She has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. She will set targets each year such as,

- Ensuring time is allocated for appropriate inset training.
- Ensuring there are suitable and up-to-date pupil and staff resources, including lists of websites.
- Suitable and accessible teachers' materials available.
- Resources and inset training are within the School Development Plan budget.