



Religious Education Policy

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1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental things asked by people. At Gamlingay Village Primary 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.

1.2 The aims of religious education are to help children:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principle religions represented in the UK; Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Humanism, Sikhism and Judaism
 - understand the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
 - have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society
 - be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life
 - develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences
 - develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues
- (RE in Cambridgeshire: The Agreed Syllabus, 2013.)

2 The Legal Position of Religious Education

2.1 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 Cambridgeshire LEA's Agreed Syllabus, which meets all the requirements set out in that document, and is supplemented with the QCA national scheme of work. 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 & Learning Styles

3.1 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 upon 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.

3.2 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, Diwali, and 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.

3.3 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 in pairs or in groups.

3.4 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 groups
- 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 RE

4.1 We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the Cambridgeshire LEA's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in RE 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 RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE 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. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.

4.3 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 some mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By doing so, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

4.4 The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objective 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

5.1 We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the Reception Class.

5.2 In Reception Classes, RE 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 RE 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.

6 Contribution of RE to the Teaching of Other Subjects

6.1 English

RE 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 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 Computing

We use ICT when appropriate in RE. The children find, select and analyse information. They use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

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

Through our RE 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 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 RE 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 multi-cultural 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.

7 Teaching RE to Children with Special Needs

7.1 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 Assessment & Recording

8.1 We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. Teachers are continually assessing children's learning and this informs future planning. Teachers track children's progress each term using the Eight Levels for RE and this is monitored by the co-ordinator. This also enables tracking to take place across the school and reflect the progression taking place.

9 Resources

9.1 We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. We keep resources for RE in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religion. There is a set of bibles and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in RE. The school library has some RE books and we supplement this collection with books from Cambridge Library Service to support the children's individual research.

10 Monitoring & Review

10.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in RE. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, for being informed about current developments in subjects, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE subject leader informs the Headteacher of the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he meets with the RE subject governor.

Written by Emily Matthews

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Signed:

Date: