

Religious Education Policy

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE Subject Leader & staff.

The importance of RE in our school

RE is a vital element in the curriculum in our school in a rapidly changing society. We teach RE to develop children's understanding of Christianity and other world religions. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures. Within the context of our locality, RE has an important part to play in preparing pupils for life in a multi-ethnic society.

Aims for RE Along with other subjects of the curriculum, we aim to

- Provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve
- Promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.
- Encourage pupils to learn from different faiths, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning.
- Enable pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths are different from their own, promoting an ability to combat prejudice.
- Encourage pupils to develop their own sense of identity and belonging to enable them to flourish individually in their own communities and as citizens in a plural society.
- Challenge children to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses

RE at Hawthorn Tree School will be provided in line with the legal requirements.

[Based on 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory Guidance', DCSF, 2010]

- the basic curriculum will include provision for religious education for all pupils on the school roll;
- the content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain;
- the RE that is provided shall be in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus for Lincolnshire LA (published in 2012).

Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, our aims in RE are:

- to enable each child to explore our shared human experience and the questions of meaning and purpose which arise from our experiences;
- to enable pupils to know about and understand the beliefs and practices of some of the great religions of the world, particularly those represented in Lincolnshire and the UK. Among these religions, Christianity has a particular place, and is taught in each year of the primary phase.
- to promote respect, sensitivity and cultural awareness by teaching about the religions represented in the region and the country;
- to affirm each child in his/her own family tradition, religious or secular;
- to provide children with opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;

- to develop the ability of pupils to think about, and develop for themselves, beliefs and values by which they can live through studying concepts like celebration, the sacred, authority, religious belief and lifestyle, and through exploring the fundamental questions of life.

Context

We work to the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus (2012). We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome the diversity, and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities in RE and in general.

We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas. We understand that RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens.

The main changes in 2012 from the 2006 syllabus include:

- Increased clarity and support material to bridge the gap between syllabus and Classroom.
- Increased clarity and guidance about assessment of RE;
- Greater clarity and guidance about RE in church schools and special schools;
- More emphasis on learning through concepts and enquiry – (See Section C - Appendix 4:
- Developing enquiry in RE).

Time Allocation

Religious Education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010 states that there is no particular time allocation specified for the teaching of RE. However, recommendations made by the Dearing Review of the Curriculum (1996) were a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two. This recommendation was endorsed by the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus, 2000. The time allocated at Hawthorn Tree School will be one hour per week at Key Stage One (5% of taught time) and one hour ten minutes per week equivalent at Key Stage Two (5% of taught time). RE curriculum time does not include assembly or collective worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work. RE is delivered on a weekly, fortnightly or blocked basis.

Whole school aims

Worship at Hawthorn Tree Primary School will make an important, but not exclusive contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of the pupils. It will give children time for reflection and opportunity to respond to spiritual and moral issues. We would aim to foster a community spirit with shared values. Collective worship should encourage consideration of the beliefs and views of all within the school community.

At Hawthorn Tree Primary School, each pupil's contribution to an act of worship will be valued. Pupils will be invited to join in an act of worship with phrases such as "be still and think about these words". Acts of worship should be appropriate for pupils from both Christian and non-Christian backgrounds. Each week the assemblies will be linked by a common theme. These will be set for the school year with reference to the significant dates for the major religions, seasonal change and experiences of the children. Assemblies themes form PSHE thread throughout the school and link to the SEAL structure and British Values. Collective worship will take place during assembly times. Assembly should be regarded as a time to share with the group, whether a class, year group or whole school.

On Monday the Head Teacher and allocated Classteacher will introduce the theme for the week in a class assembly. It will be a time when children are in a smaller group and may have the opportunity

to offer their own thoughts and responses. The theme will often tie in with the SEAL programme followed in PSHE throughout the school.

The act of worship in school is to be regarded as primarily an educational rather than a liturgical experience. Worship in school should provide some experience and understanding of what worship is, so that it remains an option for those who wish to choose it. It should not compromise the integrity of staff or pupils. The parental right to withdraw a child from the act of worship is recognised. When withdrawal is required parents should consult with the Headteacher.

Scheme of Work

A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers and other interested people alongside this policy. It has been written in the light of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus and also refers to the QCA Scheme of Work for RE (2000). RE will be based around termly themes in Reception and Key Stage One, where Christianity and Judaism will be the major religions studied. At Key Stage 2, pupils will learn about Christianity throughout the keystage and will also have learning opportunities with regard to other major religions, Muslim, Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism according to the two-year programme accommodating vertically-grouped classes.

No teacher can be an instant expert in six religions. Staff who feel the need to build up their own subject knowledge can take up some training opportunities. CPD funds are available annually and the RE co-ordinator is available to provide introductory reading/ computing related, material and guidance for staff.

Teaching and Learning Styles

OFSTED reports nationally suggest that the range of teaching and learning strategies in use in RE is often too narrow, in over-using stories and a limited range of drawing and written tasks. Our policy is to aim to increase the use of RE in art, drama, talking activities, visits, posters photos, videos, display work and other active learning strategies. Within a topic homework can be set to encourage further research or discussion at home. Cross-curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning. We recognise the importance of teaching to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus in a balanced way.

Resources

Resources are stored in the new resource base (staff room), and should be returned after use in tidy and timely order. The school has invested in new books, religious artefacts, DVD's, picture packs and posters, and staff may need to familiarise themselves with the new materials. We maintain an RE story file in the library, which offers many stories from different traditions which teachers have used in RE. There is a range of RE 'big books' which can be used across the age range as well. Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

Visits to places of worship

We are able to visit different Christian churches in the immediate vicinity of the school, where clergy and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in RE. We have close contact with the clergy from Fishtoft, Freiston and St Botolphs churches and parishes. It is also possible to go further afield to look at places for worship for other religions. We shall aim to use these valuable resources for all classes. We also intend to enable children at key stage one/ two to visit a place of worship from one of the other major religious traditions while studying the unit on 'religion in the neighbourhood'. The RE co-ordinator will work alongside class teachers and key stage Coordinators to organise this educational visit.

Educational visits

The school has a strong commitment to the added value of learning outside the classroom. All visits will benefit from an exploratory/preliminary visit if the visit is not a regular event. This subject does not usually involve practical, investigative work which will prove dangerous. However, if technology was involved as a part of Religious Education activity the safety precautions relating to that subject would apply. In the event of an outside visit the Lincolnshire Educational Visits Guidance must be followed (the necessary Risk Assessment documentation will be completed with the support of the Educational Visits Co-ordinator).

Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

Whole school policy with regard to special needs and differentiation applies to RE: teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their general educational 'ability'.

Assessment

We report on pupils' progress and attainment in RE to parents, as required by law. The Agreed Syllabus provides descriptions of levels of attainment, which the school has agreed to use as a basis for reporting at the end of each key stage. We will intend to make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's progress in RE, based on regular monitoring of work with regard to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us.

A folder of examples of pupils' work, which is designed to help teachers make judgments about attainment and progress, is in preparation. Staff are asked to add to it copies of pupils' work that provide clear evidence of achievement. This approach to exemplifying standards aims to clarify our understanding of what makes for quality in learning about religions and learning from religions.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next 4 years (unless there are changes to national or local guidance in the interim), and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that the policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to add to it copies of pupils' work that provide clear evidence of achievement/ progress. This will be returned to the RE subject leader each term. The co-ordinator's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice.

Withdrawal

We note the rights of parents to withdraw their children from RE and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum, which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff. Please refer to the co-ordinator or head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals.

Named Co-ordinator: Mrs T Millane

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE subject leader and teaching staff. It was approved by governors in term 5, 2016 and will be reviewed in 2018.