

Weaverthorpe Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Aims and objectives

We believe that Religious Education provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster awareness of differences within our school and the wider world. It is a subject that celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes.

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Rillington Community 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. 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.

RE is taught in accordance with the aims of the Agreed Syllabus produced by North Yorkshire Local Authority, with the support of SACRE. The LA has been working with a leading national consultant in developing the syllabus and we are confident that the new syllabus promotes exciting, engaging and challenging RE.

The new syllabus should be taught by schools from September 2013.

Legal Requirements

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. Parents who choose to withdraw their children from Religious education lessons are required to meet and discuss this with the Head teacher.

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 North Yorkshire 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.

In accordance with the law we provide religious education for all pupils registered at the school.

Teaching and Learning

Planning for Religious Education is based on the two Attainment Targets in the Agreed Syllabus:

1. Learning about Religions
2. Learning from Religions

Learning about religion includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion, its key beliefs and teachings, practices, their impacts on the lives of believers and communities, and the varying ways in which these are expressed. It also includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own experiences and their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth and values and commitments, and communicating their responses.

Equal opportunities/SEND

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);
- 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.

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, balanced and creative 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 Provision Maps (IPMs).

Curriculum Planning

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the North Yorkshire 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 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 subject leader works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects and as a discrete subject.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader 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 so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he discusses them with the RE subject leader.

Foundation Stage

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

In reception classes, religious education 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 religious education 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.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as PCHSE and our Collective Worship policy, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important.

We encourage children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within society and their own experience.

Religious education also strongly supports the school's citizenship programme by introducing pupils to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider communities, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice.

Recording, Marking, Assessment and Reporting

Assessment takes place at the end of each unit in the scheme of work. This indicates what most pupils should know and understand. Judgements about children's achievements are made through formal/informal assessment and regular marking of pupils' work. Pupils are guided about what they have done well, what they need to improve and ways in which they might make that improvement. Assessments should indicate what students know and understand.

Management

The teaching, assessing and resourcing of Religious Education is managed by the RE curriculum leader, in close collaboration with Senior Management.

The curriculum leader attends regular training and professional development, and organises INSET and training for other members of staff when necessary. RE planning

is monitored and a sample of work looked at regularly throughout the year. The scheme of work is evaluated especially in light of the proposed changes to the Agreed Syllabus. **The new syllabus should be taught by schools from September 2013.**

Signed _____ **Date** _____
(RE Coordinator)

Signed _____ **Date** _____
(Chair of Governors)

Review date: Nov 2014