



Religious Education Policy

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CONTENTS

	Page
1. Aims	3
2. Objectives	3
3. Principles of Teaching and Learning	4
4. Equal Opportunities	5
5. Health and Safety	5
6. Assessment, Recording and Reporting	6
7. Management and Administration	6
8. Role of the Co-ordinator	6
9. Resourcing	6
10. Teachers' Right Not to Teach Religious Education	7
11. Parents Right to Withdraw Pupils from Religious Education	7
12. Review	7
13. Headteacher and Chair of Governors Signatures	7

Religious education seeks to make a major contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils by helping them to acquire knowledge and understanding of major world religions, an appreciation of ultimate questions and responses to them and to develop their own beliefs and values.

Aims

- to acquire knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain
- to enable pupils to develop the ability to evaluate different responses to religious and moral issues and to make their own reasoned and informed judgements about them
- to appreciate the diversity of religious belief and practice and the rights of others to hold beliefs different to their own
- to understand the continuing influence of religious beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities and cultures
- to enable pupils to consider ways in which beliefs, values and traditions might have significance for their own lives
- to respond to what they learn so as to inform, clarify and develop their own beliefs and values
- religious education seeks to enable pupils to learn about religions and to learn from them.

Objectives

These objectives should inform planning, teaching and assessment and be identified in schemes of work.

To gain a knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of major world religions, especially Christianity.

- to identify and describe the key features of Christianity and other major religions, such as key figures, teachings, ceremonies, festivals and sacred writings.
- to identify elements common to a number of religions, such as public worship and marriage ceremonies.
- to identify features which are distinctive of particular religious traditions, such as the use of a mezuzah in Judaism or the cross in Christianity.

To enable pupils to develop the ability to make their own reasoned and informed judgements about the religious and moral issues which arise from reflection on human experience and a study of religious belief and practice.

- to engage with issues that arise from a study of religions such as the value of special times and rituals, days for worship and festivals, mourning rituals and funerals.

To enable pupils to consider ways in which beliefs, values and traditions might have significance for their own lives.

- to appreciate that much of personal value can be gained from a study of the teachings of living religions such as ideas about the way we might treat those less fortunate than ourselves from looking at stories like the Good Samaritan in the Christian Bible.
- to appreciate the value of religious ritual and practice.

Principles of Teaching and Learning

Differentiation and Additional Educational Needs

Policy and practice in religious education will reflect whole school policy and encompass the full range of age and ability including the most able. For the least able resources will be accessible and appealing.

They will focus on religious practice and are illustrated by the use of religious artifacts. The full range of strategies to achieve differentiated learning will be employed including task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping. There will be a particular concern to ensure that all tasks are challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage more able pupils.

Breadth and Balance

Although work on Christianity will predominate there will be work in depth on two other world religions, Hinduism and Judaism. Teaching will seek to bring about a deeper knowledge and understanding of religious traditions but also to develop a range of skills such as the ability to empathise and evaluate attitudes and respect for diversity. The school will follow the Kent Agreed Syllabus.

Variety

Pupils will experience a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences appropriate to the matter to be learned understanding that pupils learn best in different ways. Pupils will experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through:

- listening to the teacher
- reading of texts
- seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers
- discussion with the teacher and other pupils
- pair and group work
- using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama
- visits and visitors.

Regular opportunities will be provided for pupils to raise their own questions and to explore links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of children's own lives, for example when teaching about belonging to a particular faith learning could start by asking questions about what clubs or activities children regularly attend?

Secondly, teaching will seek to enable pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

Cross-curricular skills and links

Religious Education makes a contribution to the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, seeing the world through other people's eyes and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. Religious Education also makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It addresses issues that arise in a range of subjects such as English and History as well as personal and social education. As it is concerned with values and behaviour, Religious Education can make a significant contribution to education in citizenship.

Equal Opportunities

Religious education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. It will seek to present religions in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards that diversity.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions, for example, when children:

- handle artefacts, eg a splinter from a piece of wood
- consume food eg if tasting some of the food eaten by Jews during the Seder meal
- visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines within the school health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work
- be directly related to the attainment targets in the Agreed Syllabus as well as local and national expectations of achievement in religious education
- seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge
- recognize the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop
- employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort
- include pupil self-assessment.

Management and Administration

Religious education will be managed by the curriculum co-ordinator who will produce a policy, related to whole school policies, a detailed scheme of work and manage the resources. Planning documents will be regularly reviewed. Lessons will be observed and books will be monitored.

Role of the Co-ordinator

The Co-ordinator will:

- seek to ensure that all pupils will receive their entitlement of religious education and that sufficient time is available to deliver the Agreed Syllabus
- ensure all teachers are aware of what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each key stage
- support colleagues and develop their subject expertise
- develop strategies to monitor and review the implementation of policy and schemes of work, the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of the subject, pupils' progress and standards of achievement
- seek opportunities for professional development for themselves and other staff
- order resources.

Resourcing

Religious education will be funded to enable of a full range of resources on different religions to be purchased.

Teachers' Right Not to Teach Religious Education

From the time of the 1944 Education Act, (section 30), teachers in county schools have had the legal right not to teach religious education and any refusal to do so must not be used to discriminate against them.

Parents' Right to Withdraw Pupils From Religious Education

From the time of the 1944 Education Act, parents have had the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so.

Review

The Diversity Team will monitor classroom planning, teaching and assessment in all year groups on a regular basis.