

## **Religious Education (RE) Policy**

### **Background**

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Milton Parochial 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 children learn from religions as well as about religions.

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act and the Education Act 2002. These stipulate that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The school also pays due regard to the latest government guidance on the teaching of RE in schools (2010), see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010>

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 to become familiar with the stories from the Bible and the life of Jesus Christ;
- develop knowledge and understanding of other major world religions;
- 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.

### **Right of Withdrawal**

Parents are allowed in law 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 should be aware that RE teaching is educational and not evangelistic.

Children who are withdrawn will be supervised and engaged in purposeful teaching and learning. Children who are withdrawn will not be made to feel different or isolated in any way.

As a condition of appointment to our Church of England Primary Academy all staff are expected to teach religious education.

### **Curriculum Planning and Organisation**

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus. Long term planning is organised on a two year rolling programme to ensure progression and challenge as the children move through the school.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader monitors and reviews these plans on a regular basis. Termly evaluations and assessments are carried out and monitored by the subject leader.

In order to keep planning to a useful minimum teachers highlight and amend medium-term plans as necessary to identify a progression of lessons within each unit.

School designed units are planned by the curriculum co-ordinator in consultation with the relevant members of staff. These units are designed to provide cross-curricular links and are relevant to the experiences and understanding of each age phase.

Each unit of work is designed to coverage of -

Attainment Target 1 - Learning about religion

Attainment Target 2 - Learning from religion

Wherever possible the starting point for each unit of work reflects the personal experiences of the children which then leads on to an in depth exploration of the specific content.

In general the time allocation is achieved through the teaching of RE for an average of approximately one hour each week at Key Stage 1 and one hour and five minutes in Key Stage 2. Occasionally the time allocation may be blocked together to provide a short intensive unit. Where activities are cross-curricular the time allocation may be exceeded.

We aim to draw on a variety of speakers/representatives from relevant faith groups and off site visits to places of worship to enrich the curriculum experiences provided. We will also draw on our close links with our local community and the Church of the Holy Cross, Milton Malsor.

## **Foundation Stage**

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

In the reception class, 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 where appropriate to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

## **Cross Curricular Links**

### English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children have the opportunity to write in different contexts and to take part in class and group discussions.

### 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.

### Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through our religious education 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 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.

### Art and Music

Art and music contribute significantly to the teaching and learning of religious education.

### Values based curriculum

We are introducing core Christian values into all areas our curriculum to ensure that a Christian approach is evident in everything we do.

## **Teaching and Learning**

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 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, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups.

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 class and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using learning support assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Children will be encouraged to identify and clarify their own personal beliefs as they learn about and from religion.

## **Dimensions**

Due to the multi-cultural nature of some of the units, a sensitive approach to the curriculum content and delivery will be vital. Factual information about the roles, responsibilities and religious practices will be provided and opportunity for discussing these issues will be encouraged. At no time will the children be asked to make value judgements in relation to cultural practices.

Wherever possible, the multi-cultural content will draw on experience from the lives of our pupils. However, in the absence of this resource in our particular school community, the use of artefacts, visitors, visits and audio-visual materials is very important. Children will be expected to handle artefacts in the correct manner and show

respect for property, procedures and the personal beliefs of others. The promotion of the multi cultural element of this work will endeavour to avoid stereotypical images.

### **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 so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

### **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. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Termly end of unit assessment allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

### **Assessment, recording and reporting**

It is the class teacher's responsibility to maintain up to date formative records on each child's progress in RE. Summative records will be kept in the school's electronic tracking system. Parents will be informed of the units of work being taught in the termly curriculum newsletters. The children's achievement in relation to these units might include –

- The interest level shown.
- The level of participation.
- The ability to show respect for others' beliefs.
- Level of knowledge and understanding.
- Quality of written and pictorial responses.
- Quality of thoughtful, questioning and verbal responses.

Assessment opportunities are highlighted within each unit of work and in most cases activities are suggested.

## **Resources**

We aim to build up sufficient quality and quantity of resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education units of work. We keep resources for religious education in a central store and in the school library.

### Resources include:

- Bibles
- CD roms/DVDs
- Internet resources
- Poster Packs
- Photocopiable Resources
- Photographs
- Planning Files
- Books
- Contacts for Visits/Visitors
- Religious Artefacts

Resources are maintained and updated by the curriculum co-ordinator who also organises the loan of artefact collections.

## **The role of the RE Subject Leader**

The subject leader for RE will be expected to:

- Offer advice and in-service training to staff members as required, either on an individual or group basis.
- Attend relevant in-service training and keep informed of current development.
- Conduct an annual review of the curriculum area, including the policy and scheme of work, it's content, delivery and resources.
- Document annually a subject action plan to the Governing Body via the Curriculum Sub-Committee.
- Maintain existing resources and purchase additional material within the budget allocated by the Governing Body.
- Monitor the quality of teaching and learning in RE in consultation with the Headteacher.
- Contribute, with the support of staff, to the regular updating of the Diocesan Self Evaluation Document.

**Reviewed by the Foundation Governors and Curriculum Sub-Committee and approved by the full governing body – Date – 1<sup>st</sup> July 2015**