



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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Introduction

The importance of religious education in the curriculum

'RE is a statutory subject of the school curriculum of maintained schools. Academies and free schools are contractually required through the terms of their funding to make provision for the teaching of RE to all pupils on the school roll. Alongside the subject's contribution to pupils' mental, cognitive and linguistic development, RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE lessons should offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate. Lessons should also allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global.' - NATRE

Religious education (RE) provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

RE offers children opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It considers the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Purpose of RE

The purpose of RE is to enable children to:

- Understand religions and beliefs in the world in which we live
- Understand people from different backgrounds
- Read, understand and interpret religious sources, for example, texts, art, artefacts etc
- Develop own understanding of identity, beliefs and ways of living
- Develop their own considered ideas
- Participate positively in a diverse, pluralistic society
- Engage in productive dialogue and debate with people of diverse views and outlooks

Aims of RE

RE aims to enable children to:

- Know about different religious traditions and non-religious worldviews
- Understand the main beliefs and practices of these traditions
- Understand how religious identity influences people's lives
- Express views about the nature, value and significance of religion for people and the planet
- Consider challenging questions of meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments, and the answers offered by religious and non-religious worldviews
- Develop skills of enquiry, analysis and evaluation and articulate their own considered ideas in relation to those challenging questions

The Torbay, Devon and Plymouth Agreed Syllabi

RE in Torbay, Devon and Plymouth schools and academies develops children's knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews that are represented in Great Britain. The syllabus reflects the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian and it also takes into account other principles religions. Worldviews such as Humanism are also studied as part of the syllabus.

The Torbay, Devon and Plymouth agreed syllabi have combined the two previous central attainment targets of AT1 (Learning about Religion) and AT2 (Learning from Religion). The attainment target Engaging with Religions and Worldviews now brings these aims together.

Through engaging with religions and worldviews children learn about :

- Beliefs, Teachings and sources of Wisdom and Authority,
- Expressing Meaning,
- Questions of Meaning Purpose, Truth,
- Ways of Living,
- Identity; Diversity and Belonging,
- Values and Commitments

Additional resources from the local Diocese, the Church of England and RE Today may also be used to support the teaching of Religious Education.

Key Skills in RE

RE is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. It seeks to develop children's skills in investigation, enquiry, questioning, communication/dialogue, interpretation, application, analysis, evaluation and creativity. These are important skills for children to develop.

Skills may be explored in some of the following ways:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live, the impact of religion and belief upon communities and the different ways people express their beliefs).
- Communication/dialogue (sharing their ideas about religions and beliefs in a lively, informed, respectful way including different styles of writing, oral contributions, debate and the use of ICT).
- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts).
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others, using sources of wisdom and authority to inform their thinking and understanding).

Key Attitudes in RE

As with skills RE has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote. These include self-esteem (so that every child feels valued and significant), respect (including being sensitive to the beliefs, feelings and values of others so that children have a safe space in which to explore and discuss ideas and issues), open-mindedness (being willing to learn and gain new understanding), and an appreciation and wonder (developing children's imagination and curiosity).

Assessment and Expectation in RE

Religious Education will be assessed regularly by the class teacher. Assessment will be used for two purposes:

- A. to promote pupils progress in RE over time
- B. To ensure that pupils are meeting the expected standard as set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the expectations of SIAMS

Assessed work will be moderated annually to ensure that all teachers are working towards the expected standards in their teaching.

Occasionally teachers' marking and assessment will be scrutinised to inform the improvement of practice across the Multi Academy Trust.

By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus. This means that they can use religious words to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. They show awareness of similarities in religions and can identify how religion is expressed in different ways. They ask and respond sensitively to questions about their own and others experiences and feelings. They recognise their own values and those of others and are aware that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer.

By the end of Key Stage 2 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus. In RE this means children can describe both similarities and differences within and between religions and worldviews. They make links between different aspects of religions and can describe the impact of religion and worldviews on peoples' lives. They suggest answers to questions of identity and meaning. They apply their ideas to their own and others lives. They can also describe what inspires and influences themselves and others

Approaches to teaching and learning in RE

RE is an exciting curriculum subject so we employ a variety of teaching methods. These include:-

- Visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities
- Using art, music, dance, drama and multi-media techniques
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas
- Using story, pictures, art, photographs and a range of sources/texts to interpret meaning and explore ideas in order to deepen understanding
- Using artefacts to help children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and forms of expression
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- Developing the use of ICT (particularly DVDs and the internet) in helping children's awareness of religions and beliefs
- Developing their skills of communication, including debate, in order to be able to respond in an informed and respectful way

Organisation of RE

RE explores Christianity and other principle religions and worldviews represented in Great Britain. It is taught through a range of key themes as outlined in the locally agreed syllabus and Diocese guidance.

Time allocation

It is recommended that 5% of curriculum time be allocated to clearly defined religious education. This is in line with the guidance given in DfES circular 1/94. The programmes of study in this Agreed Syllabus have been written with this in mind. Approximately this amounts to:

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

Recording

Work in Religious Education can be recorded in a number of ways which capture the learning and progress made within units of work. This work provides evidence of progress made by the children and identifies points for support and extension. A portfolio of children's work is built up over a period of time and this also supports evidence of progress within RE.

We also recognise that some of the most important learning in RE (e.g. how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed in the same way. What we do assess is children's progress against the level descriptors in the local agreed syllabus.

Rights of withdrawal

RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered pupils, including pupils in Reception.

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning; it is an inclusive, broad minded subject.

We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE. We do encourage parents to contact the Academy Head if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the academy. The Learning Academy Partnership does not support selective withdrawal from RE.

The contribution of RE to the wider curriculum

While RE has its own distinctive subject matter it does make an important contribution to other aspects of children's learning. It contributes towards pupils SMSC development and it can be explored through other curriculum areas as part of a cross-curricular approach. This will not replace or incorporate the time allocated for the distinctive teaching of RE.

Conclusion

In essence we are aiming to provide the knowledge and skills for our children to have an increased sense of confidence in their own beliefs and values. In turn this will mean that they may respect the religious and cultural differences of others so that they may be able to contribute positively within a pluralistic society and to hold respectful, informed discussions with people whose views may be different to their own.