



Red Hall Primary School

Religious Education Policy

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By:	SMSC Team
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BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined, the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. It is this Darlington Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2016 which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

School Context

Religious representation at Red Hall Primary School is currently (2022):

Christians = 57/216

No religion = 150/216

Muslim = 6/216

Refused = 3/216

RE is taught, as in other curriculum areas, by starting from the pupils' own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community and in the wider national and international community. The vast majority of pupils appear to have little experience of any strong faith or belief.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from RE. Where parents are wishing to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that the parents meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, parents need to apply to the Governing Body in writing to withdraw their child from RE lessons. If a pupil is withdrawn, the school has a duty of care to look after them but not to provide alternative education. This time should not be used for other subject curriculum areas such as extra maths.

It is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. These include Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, and Sikhism, each of which is represented in Darlington;
2. develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, including the local community;
3. develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions;
4. enhance their own **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** development by:
 - a. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;

- b. responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - c. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - d. expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
5. recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within an ethnically and socially diverse society.

OBJECTIVES

Learning

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. Religious Education should encourage all participants to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to acknowledge that others hold beliefs different from their own.

Religious Education has two closely related aspects:

Learning about Religion (AT 1) and Learning from Religion (AT 2)

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum. RE is at its most effective when these two attainment targets are closely related in the learning experience.

AT1 Learning about Religion

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

AT2 Learning from Religion

- respond to religious and moral issues in an informed and considered manner;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the question of meaning within religion.

Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas:

- **Beliefs and teachings** - e.g. stories, religious leaders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death;
- **Religious practices and lifestyles** - e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, actions, effects on individuals;
- **Ways of expressing meaning** - e.g. sacred texts, art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, forms of religious and spiritual expression, silence/stillness;

- **Human identity, personality and experience** - e.g. belonging, preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people;
- **Questions of meaning and purpose** - e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, making sense, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences;
- **Values and commitments** - e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, morality.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches. Providing a balance between these two key attainment targets underpins the teaching of RE at this school.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect and questioning whilst deepening knowledge
4. parents; by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, artefacts, visits and faith visitors, pupils are actively engaged in learning.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined following the Darlington Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2008-2013. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing. (*note 3*).

Through activities for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and the RE report is written with reference to the records made or pieces of work retained.

Assessment

As RE involves a process of personal development and emerging/changing views, it is difficult to formally assess all but the ability of children to recall facts and to be able to express a view about religions.

The Darlington Agreed Syllabus states that;

“Assessment tasks should provide opportunities for achievement in both AT1 and AT2.

Not all work is assessable or measureable. It is not appropriate to assess pupil beliefs and emotions as this would be intrusive.”

TIME ALLOCATION

In line with the requirements of the Darlington Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2008- 2013, RE will be delivered flexibly according to the statutory requirements of the EYFS at Foundation Stage. At Key Stage 1 pupils spend 72 hours over 2 years (approximately 12 hours per term) and 90 hours over 2 years (approximately 15 hours per term) at Key Stage 2. Time allocation does include visits and RE curriculum days but not school productions related to festivals or collective worship time. (See Collective Worship policy).

PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage, the school follows the Darlington Programme of Study for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. This scheme shows how we have planned that pupils have learned about and from “the six principal religions through the EYFS and Key Stages 1 and 2”. We have used a combination of teaching RE through the creative curriculum, RE days and as a separate subject, depending on the material which has to be covered.

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE Subject Leader is available to help with this and keeps a range of teacher’s resources as a guide. (When planning each unit of work, the teacher will identify which parts of the programme of study are to be the focuses, the learning objectives for the unit, the learning tasks planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of the pupils). Planning should be part of a child-initiated process, beginning with children’s’ current levels of understanding and following areas that children would wish to explore further. Examples of work produced, videos, photographic experiences should also be kept as an evidence base for making evaluations about the teaching of RE and the successful levels of learning that have been achieved. This should be straightforward and manageable.

CROSS CURRICULAR ISSUES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality. Children’s skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

Equal Opportunities

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or special need or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multi-cultural society which we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any pupil.

Health, Safety and Well-Being

Visits to places of worship and other RE related venues are encouraged as an important part of developing a child’s understanding of the role religion plays in communities. Prior to all visits, staff will carry out a formal risk assessment, if necessary, visiting the venue prior to creating the risk assessment. Staff will ensure that the context of the learning that will take place during the visit, will not undermine a child’s own faith or challenge their belief and will only be presenting a knowledge base about a faith. Permission will be sought from parents/carers for each child to attend the visit. We acknowledge the sensitivity that some families may have with regard to their child visiting another place of worship, staff must ensure that they do all they can to assure parents and encourage pupil participation.

Time-Tabling for RE

The children in the Foundation Stage are taught RE through the area of Knowledge and Understanding of The World, Personal social and emotional development, communication, language and literacy and Creative development.

In KS1 and KS2 RE may be taught either discreetly or as part of a cross-curricular approach eg through PSHE, history, geography, art or as part of a focus day or period of time eg Christmas and Easter.

(Collective Worship is separate to the teaching of RE, though strands of Collective Worship may be used to enhance the RE curriculum.) See Collective Worship Policy

Teaching and Learning

A variety of teaching methods should be used to teach RE, such as role play/drama, stories and music. Visitors to school should also be encouraged to give children the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about another person's experiences of living/celebrating through different faiths. The Foundation Stage and KS1 forms the basis of children's future understanding and therefore should begin with children's own experiences and feelings, particularly around 'special times, people, places and objects/symbols. Many opportunities should be given for thinking, talking, listening and responding to others respectfully. Much emphasis should be placed on valuing and caring for other people in our local community and also for children to relate their understanding to a wider/global community. In KS2, similar opportunities should be offered and children should be encouraged to openly discuss their understanding, opinions and attitudes about religion.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The RE subject leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders. There is a named co-ordinator responsible for co-ordinating the teaching of RE throughout the school. Their role is to:

- Provide support, advice and resources to members of staff
- Monitor the teaching of RE and outcomes for all children, revising policies and supporting staff with planning of RE where necessary.
- Monitor the teaching of RE across the school highlighting the continuity and progression of the areas taught across the school
- Attend relevant training and support staff through relevant INSET sessions
- Monitor the use and need of resources throughout the school.

Monitoring

In order to ensure continuity and progression, it will be necessary to monitor the teaching of RE across the school. This should be done through liaison with staff to be able to observe lessons, through INSET sessions, book scrutinies monitoring planning and coverage, carrying out pupil interviews. The result of any monitoring should be discussed with the Headteacher/SLT and any actions resulting from this should be acted upon within a given time frame.

Resources

Resources are centrally stored in the RE store cupboard and books, pictures, artefacts, posters. All materials should be handled very sensitively and with respect.

NOTES

DFE Circular 1/94 paragraphs 44-49.

See Darlington Agreed Syllabus pages 22-2.