

UPTON SNODSBURY CHURCH OF ENGLAND FIRST SCHOOL



Religious Education Policy

1 Introduction

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Upton Snodsbury C of E First 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 Judaism and Hinduism. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *about* religions (AT1) as well as *from* religions (AT2), which in the Worcestershire agreed syllabus is known as the *search for meaning and purpose*.

The aims of Religious education are to help children:

- ❖ develop awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- ❖ develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religious traditions 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 in 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 people's views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

2 The legal position of Religious Education

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 reception classes who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to 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 Worcestershire 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.

3 Delivery of Religious Education

The teachers of this school deliver Religious Education to their own classes. It is not a requirement that any teacher involved in Religious Education here should have a personal religious commitment; the only necessary commitment is a belief in the educational validity of RE and a conviction that what it offers pupils is distinctive and beneficial.

4 Time Allocation

Teaching of Religious Education is statutory. The time allocation in the new Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus is broadly in line with the recommendations made in the 'Dearing Report' to the subject review groups of the Model Syllabuses for Religious Education (SCCA 1994). Therefore the expectation is that the minimum hours devoted to religious education in this school will be

At Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year approximately 1 hour each week

At Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year approximately 1 and $\frac{1}{4}$ hours each week

Religious Education is timetabled each week for all classes. However, the timetable can be used creatively to provide a block of time, perhaps two whole afternoons or four hourly sessions in one week to fulfil the requirements of four weeks' Religious Education.

Alternatively a text about or from a faith can be studied in Literacy and the Religious Education lesson developed further at another time during the week.

5 Balance between Christianity and Other Faiths

The legal requirement of the Education Reform Act 1988 is that an agreed syllabus must:

'reflect the fact the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain (section 8(3))'

Christianity, consistently with this requirement, is to be the predominant religion and is taught as such within each key stage. As required by the Worcestershire Agreed syllabus the other principal religions to be taught in this school are:

Key Stage 1: Christianity, Judaism and one other religion (Foundation & Years 1 and 2)

Key Stage 2: Christianity, Hinduism and one other religion (Years 3 and 4)

It is not required by the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus that teachers in any key stage should confine themselves exclusively to the specified religions in their teaching. Examples may be chosen from other faiths when appropriate, but teachers know they should avoid systematic study of the faiths, which are

specified so as to avoid unnecessary repetition for the pupils later in their education.

6 The Programmes of Study

There are four strands within the programmes of study. These are

Beliefs

Expression and Celebration

Living and Belonging

The Search for Meaning and Purpose

The first three relate to knowledge and understanding of religions. The fourth relates to the wider context of experience of religion. It is by reflecting upon questions about meaning and purpose in life that pupils embark on their own spiritual journey and develop moral understanding.

7 Objectives

- ❖ Children begin the process of acquiring knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism
- ❖ Children receive a balanced approach to these religions by learning about the **Beliefs** of Christians, Jews and Hindus.
- ❖ Children are taught how Christians, Jews and Hindus worship by learning about **Expression and Celebration** in these faith communities.
- ❖ Children are introduced to the way in which religion affects the lives, behaviour and relationships of believers. They are encouraged to consider what it means to **Live and Belong** to a faith community and to reflect upon their own feelings, actions and codes of conduct at home and at school
- ❖ Children have the opportunity to reflect upon their own and others' experiences especially in relation to key events in human life and have opportunities to **Search for the Meaning and Purpose** in life.
- ❖ Children learn that there are questions in life to which there are no agreed answers and have opportunities to reflect upon and to investigate some of the answers given to these questions by Christians, Jewish and Hindu religious groups.

8 Teaching and learning style

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, Divali and Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. Children are given opportunities to ask questions about topics and sources. They are encouraged to communicate their understanding, ideas and feelings in a variety of ways, such as in music, art and craft, dance or drama and involvement in role-play.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths. They have opportunities to learn about religions and beliefs from a range of sources, including artefacts, pictures and photographs, music, members of faith communities talking about their beliefs and practices, sacred writings, literature for use in Literacy lessons, visits to places of worship, through ICT. Children discuss religious and moral issues, when appropriate they use computers, work individually or in groups.

9 Curriculum planning in religious education

Our religious education has been planned in accordance with the Worcestershire LA's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that units 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 two phrases (long-term and medium-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. Our medium-term plans give details of each unit or work for each term. Where possible they are linked to topics eg Hinduism/India, celebration/healthy eating, if they are not stand alone.

10 Foundation Stage

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

As the reception class in part of the Foundation Stage, 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, specifically through *personal, social and emotional development* and *knowledge and understanding of the world*.

11 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 search for 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 identify 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 and those of others.

12 Teaching religious education to children with special needs

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 and balanced 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 Education Plans (IEPS).

13 Race Equality and Cultural Diversity

To fulfil our duties under the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, we are guided by three essential principles:

Every pupil should have opportunities to achieve the highest possible standards, and the best possible preparation for the next stages of their life and education;

Every pupil should be helped to develop a sense of personal and cultural identity that is confident and open to change, and that is receptive and respectful towards other identities;

Every pupil should develop the knowledge, understandings and skills that they need in order to participate in Britain's multi ethnic society, and in the wider context of an interdependent world.

This policy was approved by the Learning & Teaching Committee in June 2011

The policy will be reviewed in 3 years