

# Curriculum Policy for Religious Education

## The Aims of R.E

1. Children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will be promoted through the teaching of religious education.
2. Children will learn **about** religion and **from** religion, which will equip them to reflect on what they have learnt and develop the skill of evaluating and applying that knowledge to their own beliefs and values.
3. R.E will be taught starting with experiences familiar to the child. By building on and continuing the development of the pupils' experience, we aim to enable children to realize that religious beliefs and practices are an interpretation of humankind's attempts to find a meaning and purpose in life.
4. Christianity will be the main religion taught reflecting the fact that the majority of children in this school are primarily of a broadly Christian background, and broadly Christian values and teaching in school will be developed. We will also take into account the teaching and practices of two other principal religions that are represented in Great Britain, Islam and Hinduism.
5. Islam and Hinduism will be studied to help the children gain an appreciation of faiths and cultures different to their own. As we live in a multi-cultural society this knowledge will enhance the development and attitudes of tolerance and understanding of the beliefs and customs of others. Our aim is to enrich the children's knowledge in order to enable them to live and work with fellow citizens of diverse religious, language and ethnic origins.

RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children nor to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another. It is not the same as collective worship, which has its own place within school life.

## National Curriculum Requirements and Programmes of Study

The 1988 Education Act required the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus to recognise that in Great Britain the main religious traditions are Christian, and that other principal religions should be taken into consideration. It states clearly that 'pupils will be presented with material from at least three religious traditions at each Key Stage, one of which must be Christianity' (Birmingham Agreed Syllabus 1995 : 4) The Agreed Syllabus is also regarded as part of the whole school curriculum, not only promoting spiritual, moral and cultural development, but also mental and physical development. All these requirements are in line with the 1988 Education Reform Act.

In Key Stages One and Two, children study three religious traditions, one of which must be Christianity. There is no guidance as to the proportion of Christianity to be taught, but the fact that it is a compulsory subject throughout the syllabus may indicate that a high percentage of time will be spent in the study of Christianity. It should

therefore, be the responsibility of the Head Teacher and governors to decide how the proportions will be distributed. The ethnic background of the children is taken into consideration.

The Agreed Syllabus seeks to promote the pupils spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development, and is based around values. This is sought to be achieved by children learning about religion by developing their knowledge and understanding of religions and the influence religion has on people. Equally important is that the child should learn from religion by developing their own responses through religious education. This should enable the child to be able to reflect on what they believe, consider its implications and the influence it has on both their own and others behaviour. The Agreed Syllabus does not suggest that any one religion is 'right or wrong' but seeks to give a broad and balanced religious education to children.

The Agreed Syllabus provides the opportunity for each school to use it as a foundation and to develop it appropriately. The Agreed Syllabus suggests ideas and gives general outlines. It is important that it does not remain static, and that issues can be raised as and when appropriate.

The Agreed Syllabus suggests that children are introduced to religious education by using a thematic approach to study, beginning with the child's experiences and then building on knowledge gained. As the child progresses into Key Stage Three and Four, then a more systematic approach is taken where children can explore an aspect of a religious tradition in order to develop an understanding of that tradition. Although suggestions are made as to the delivery of the five core areas, teaching styles are left to individual teachers to deliver their lessons as they see fit.

The Agreed syllabus has as its main focus, Five Areas of study which form the basis of the Programmes of Study. They are:

Area 1	Making sense of our world
Area 2	Living together
Area 3	Following guidance
Area 4	Expressing meaning, belief and value
Area 5	Marking special times, places and events

These areas deal with five questions with which Religious Education in schools is concerned:

1. How are we to make sense of the world in which we live?
2. How are we to relate to other people?
3. How are our lives to be shaped by our traditions?
4. How are we to express what is most important to us?
5. How, what and why are we to celebrate?

The Programmes of study are set out in the Agreed Syllabus on pages 20-29. There are two attainment targets for both Key Stages:  
Attainment Target 1 : Learning about religion

- (a) Knowing and Understanding

Attainment Target 2 : Learning from religion

- (b) Questioning
- (c) Evaluating
- (d) Applying

### **Schemes of Work**

RE is taught according to the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. The QCA document is used as a basis for work in RE whilst at the same time the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are met through School Designed Units. (SDU)

Each scheme of work is designed to take approximately half a term (minimum 6 hours) .The recommendation for the time spent studying RE is 36 hours for Key Stage 1 and 45 hours for Key Stage 2.

### **R.E in the Foundation Stage**

RE is required to be taught to all registered children in schools. This includes those in Reception classes. The QCA scheme includes three units for Reception children. These units aim to build on children's early experiences by developing their knowledge and understanding of celebration and familiar feelings and experiences, including friendship and obedience. In addition, school designed units are used to ensure that both the Agreed Syllabus and Early Learning Goals are met. The Early Learning Goals for personal, social and emotional development are set out as follows:

By the end of the foundation stage, most children will:

- have a developing awareness of their own needs, views and feelings and be sensitive to the needs, views and feeling of others.
- have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people.
- respond to significant experiences, showing a range of feelings when appropriate.
- understand what is right and wrong and why.
- understand that people have different needs, views, cultures and beliefs, which need to be treated with respect.
- understand that they can expect others to treat their needs, views, cultures and beliefs with respect.

These values are encouraged through all aspects of the curriculum and form part of the ethos of the school.

## Planning

Long-term planning for RE has taken into consideration the requirements of the Birmingham Agreed Syllabus. The QCA document forms two thirds of the curriculum, and school designed units form one third of curriculum. The long-term plan shows how the teaching units of the QCA document and school designed units are distributed across the years of both key stages in a sequence that promotes both curriculum continuity and progress in children's learning.

Medium term plans are written using the QCA document. These identify learning objectives and outcomes for each unit, and suggest activities that will enable these to be achieved. A sequence of activities is followed which promote progression and an estimate of time each unit will take.

Short term planning is the responsibility of individual teachers, who build on the medium-term plan by taking account of the needs of the children and identify ways in which ideas might be taught. Teachers consider where literacy, numeracy, ICT and key skills can be developed. Children of different abilities are challenged and opportunities for assessment are included.

## Teaching

RE is taught once a week in both Key Stages. Key Stage 1 consists of six 1hour lessons per half term and Key Stage 2 consists of six 1hour 15 minutes lessons per half term. RE is timetabled and is taught at a regular time each week.

The teaching style, resources, pace and content are matched carefully to suit each child's needs.

The teaching of RE is more than just transmitting information. Teachers endeavor to help children to seek meaning and develop understanding. Good teaching incorporates an interesting variety of tasks and allows children time to discuss and ask questions about the subject matter. Teaching and learning in RE consists of more than reading a story and writing about it. When thinking about activities for RE it is useful to have the following three words in mind.

**Motivate** - What am I going to do to motivate or stimulate the children's interest?

**Explore** - How are they going to explore this topic?

**Express** - In what form are they going to express what they have explored?

It is always beneficial for the pupils to have as direct an experience as possible of religion. Activities to facilitate this could include visits to places of worship, meeting religious people and handling religious artefacts.

Teachers must not try to force their own religion or beliefs onto any child or imply one religion is superior to another.

## **Special considerations**

There are some sensitive issues that teachers need to be aware of:

How far can you go in encouraging children to experience types of worship? At what point will simulating for example Muslim worship, actually become worship? Do you need to check these matters with the local religious communities?

How far and to what extent should children be encouraged or allowed to participate in a festival of another faith?

Are there any special considerations involved in handling artefacts so as not to offend religious communities?

## **Marking and Assessment**

Teachers need to be aware that when marking work, they are looking for content and evidence of understanding. Work is not be graded according to punctuation or spelling, as this does not give a fair assessment of the child's learning.

The national expectations for RE are based on an eight-level scale. This scale is set out in the QCA document and is used to assess the children's progress. The end of unit expectations provide broad descriptions of achievement within each unit. The learning outcomes in each unit show how children might demonstrate what they have learnt. The work the children do will serve as a record for classes working on each unit. Marking follows guidelines as set out in the school Marking Policy.

## **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RE Curriculum Manager monitors the planning books each term and looks at a sample of children's work from three ability levels. Teaching staff are encouraged to give feedback on the successes and areas that need development at the end of each scheme of work.

## **Use of ICT**

Opportunities to use ICT are indicated in the QCA units of work. ICT can help children's learning in RE by :

- enhancing the skills they use to communicate with other schools and members of faith communities;
- provide a range of information sources to enhance their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, practices and expression;
- support the development of their understanding of the role religion plays in the lives of individuals and communities;
- provide access to images of religious buildings and people actively expressing their faith;
- contribute to pupils' awareness of the moral impact of ICT on the changing world.

Many units may be enhanced by source material from a CD-ROM or the internet.

### **Equal Opportunities and special Educational Needs**

All pupils, regardless of their needs, are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum, including Religious Education. The experiences of all pupils are valid and the experiences of special needs pupils are valued equally. Religious Education encourages pupils of all abilities to reflect, explore personal feelings and thoughts, and to consider religious attitudes and values. Teachers ensure differentiation, and that appropriate resources are presented in accessible forms to enable all pupils to be challenged appropriately.

### **Policy Review**

The RE policy will be reviewed every 2 years.

Signed

Date