



Marshbrook First School Religious Education (RE) Policy January 2015

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1** Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Marshbrook First School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address fundamental questions concerning, 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, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.
- 1.2** The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
 - develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems 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 of life;
 - develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
 - develop investigative and research skills, and make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
 - have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity in society.

2 The legal position of religious education

- 2.1** 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 the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. 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 LEA'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 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 Teaching and learning style

- 3.1 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.
- 3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Christmas etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.
- 3.3 Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations on a computer and share these in assemblies.
- 3.4 We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, 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 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 the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
 - providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
 - using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

4 Curriculum planning in religious education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the LEA's Agreed Syllabus. Which reflect the national the aims of Religious Education which fall into two broad categories:-

- Learning about religion (knowledge and understanding of religion)
- Learning from religion (applying this knowledge and understanding to pupils' own experiences and values)

In the Staffordshire syllabus, each of these two aims is further expanded into two areas of learning, making four attainment targets:

1. Learning about religion
 - Religion - Exploring and understanding religious beliefs and practices their influence on society
 - Meaning - Finding meaning in religious language and imagery

Learning from religion

- Issues - Exploring and understanding and understanding spiritual, moral and social issues
- Life stance - Developing personal stances on related issues

- 4.2** We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned 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 three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on the study of religious themes and topics in their own right.

- 4.3** Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.
- 4.4** The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes.

5 The Early Years Foundation Stage

- 5.1** We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.
- 5.2** In reception classes, 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 to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

6 Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

6.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, drama and speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in the Literacy Hour have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is RE's way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to record information, in order to develop their writing ability. Further cross curricular links are made in relation to Geography, Art, ICT, D&T, History and Music.

6.2 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 related to 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.

6.3 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through 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.

7 RE and ICT

- 7.1** Information and communication technology enhances religious education, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information using the Internet. They also use ICT to review, modify, improve, evaluate and present their work. Digital cameras and video cameras are used to record a visit to a place of worship and pupils can also find the various artefacts in churches by doing virtual tours on church websites.

8 RE and inclusion

- 8.1** At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school's 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 good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Disability Non-Discrimination and Access; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language (EAL).
- 8.2** When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education.
- 8.4** We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to a place of worship, for example, that involves a journey) we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

9 Assessment for learning

- 9.1** Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might produce a presentation based on their investigation of sacred texts. Teachers will assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or verbal feedback to help guide progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future. The teacher will record attainment at the end of a unit of work.

10 Resources

- 10.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each faith that is taught. There is a set of bibles for both key stages, and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education along with a supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research.

11 Monitoring and review

- 11.1** The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school. The subject leader will make annual recommendations for the future development of the RE curriculum as part of the school self review and evaluation procedures .
- 11.2** This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.