

Galley Common School

Religious Education (RE) Policy

Aims and objectives

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Galley Common School we begin to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths. We address the fundamental questions in life as they relate to children of infant age and in ways they can begin to understand. We enable children to begin to consider knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world faiths, by also studying Islam and Judaism. We aim for our children to begin to be able to 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.

The aims of Religious Education are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- 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 and throughout the wider world today;
- to have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

Children in our school are of such an age that we will only be able to begin to address many of the above issues.

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 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 this should only be done once the parents 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 regarding Fundamental British Values. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Coventry and Warwickshire 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.

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.

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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 Harvest, Christmas and Diwali 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.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and 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 common 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 teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Curriculum planning in Religious Education

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the new joint Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017. The new syllabus offers increased flexibility and extra support for planning as well as providing practical strategies, guidance and resources for teachers. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education are suitable for the age of the children. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit.

We carry out the curriculum planning in Religious Education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan (Appendix 1) maps the Religious Education topics studied in each term during Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1, including visits to sacred buildings. When teaching Religious Education units we make links to other subjects, wherever possible, such as through writing, speaking and listening and art activities.

Our medium-term plans give detailed ideas and plans for each unit of work for each learning unit. From those plans, teachers print out a lesson and either highlight the activities that will work best for their class and will cover the learning objectives, or type these onto their own daily planner. All units are taught as a series of weekly lessons, lasting between half a term (KS1) and a whole term (FS). KS1 may also teach the unit as a week's block. The RE Curriculum Team reviews these plans when RE is the focus for that curriculum team on our subject cycle.

Foundation Stage

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in the Reception Classes. In Reception Classes, Religious Education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. It is covered in groups of focus weeks throughout the year and pervades all classroom areas, as well as being taught explicitly through Class teaching times. As the Reception Classes are part of the Early Years Foundation Stage, we relate the Religious Education aspects of the children's work to the learning intentions set out in that curriculum. These are found within the area of 'Understanding The world' and the Early Learning Goal is 'People, Culture and Communities'.

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Contribution of Religious Education to the teaching of other subjects

English

Religious Education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. The texts that we use with religious themes/content, stimulate and encourage discussion and this, is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to discuss and record information about aspects of religious stories in order to develop their writing ability.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE)

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 may talk about giving to charity or environmental issues. We also promote the values and attitudes required to live in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility.

SMSC

Spiritual development

Pupils' spiritual development involves the growth of their sense of self, their unique potential, their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses, and their will to achieve. As their curiosity about themselves and their place in the world increases, they try to answer for themselves some of life's fundamental questions. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to foster their own inner lives and non-material wellbeing.

Moral development

Pupils' moral development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the difference between right and wrong and of moral conflict, a concern for others and the will to do what is right. They are able and willing to reflect on the consequences of their actions and learn how to forgive themselves and others. They develop the knowledge, skills and understanding, qualities and attitudes they need in order to make responsible moral decisions and act on them.

Social development

Pupils' social development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities (local, national and global), and an ability to relate to others and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities.

Cultural development

Pupils' cultural development involves pupils acquiring an understanding of cultural traditions and an ability to appreciate and respond to a variety of aesthetic experiences. They acquire a respect for their own culture and that of others, an interest in others' ways of doing things and curiosity about differences. They develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes they need to understand, appreciate and contribute to culture.

British Values

Through both the curriculum and collective worship, children are taught in a positive manner to be tolerant of people of all faiths and beliefs.

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Teaching Religious Education to children with Special Educational Needs

At our school we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious Education forms part of the school 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 progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

Our Special Needs policy sets out the ways in which we identify, assess and support pupils with Special Educational Needs across the whole curriculum. We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Religious Education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a place of worship, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. In KS1, we mark pieces of work once they have been completed and we comment as necessary. Assessment is carried out alongside each lesson as an on-going practise, recorded on cube sheets which last for an entire unit of learning, building a picture of a child's understanding in RE. At the end the academic year, teachers use the cube sheets from across the year to complete the summative assessment. This places children on a chart for emerging, expected or exceeding in that particular RE unit of learning. At this point, the class teacher and then, the RE subject leader draw conclusions and action from this data for the next academic year. This information is passed onto the next class teacher.

The RE Curriculum Team monitor samples of children's work when RE is the focus for this curriculum team. This demonstrates and documents the variety of experiences provided for RE work in each year group.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep books on the RE shelf in the library and resources for Religious Education in Class 2 where there is a selection of equipment for each unit of work. Resources include books, posters, videos, teacher guidance material such as faith information cards and a collection of religious artefacts.

Monitoring and review

The RE Curriculum Team 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 the teaching of Religious Education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE Curriculum Team Leader produces an action plan when RE is identified on the monitoring cycle for the school. This evaluates the developments in the subject over the previous period and indicates areas for further improvement. The job description for Curriculum Team Leaders sets out other responsibilities and is also subject to annual review as part of the performance management process.

Date: July 2023

Review Date: December 2025