

Putnoe Primary School

Religious Education (RE) Policy

VALUE STATEMENT

At Putnoe Primary School we value R.E. because;

- It promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.
- It prepares pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.
- It allows children to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others and express these beliefs using the arts.
- It underpins the school's values based education with links to the fundamental British values. It makes an important contribution to the school's duty to promote community cohesion.

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 Putnoe Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other major world faiths. 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. In an era of globalisation, religion and belief form a crucial part of their culture and identity. Therefore, this confirms the importance of RE in the children's development and cultural awareness.

1.2 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 concepts and mastery of skills to make sense of religion and belief.
- 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 to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- develop respect and tolerance for other peoples' views and to 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 1993 Education Act which states that religious education is compulsory for all children. Parents are allowed 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 head teacher. No teacher can be required to teach RE, if he/she does not wish to do so but he/she must give notice of their intention to do so to the school governors.

The Religious Education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching and also promotes education for citizenship. It is based on the Bedfordshire Agreed Syllabus and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.

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 which enable children to build their own sense of identity and belonging. This is also reinforced through the implementation of Values Education. We have high expectations of pupils, ensuring that all children have access to mastery learning. To learn creative content to a level of excellence, we encourage children to take a creative approach to RE, through enquiry based learning and links to the Arts.

3.2 RE is an exciting curriculum subject, so we employ a variety of teaching methods. These include: -

- Visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities
- Using art, music, dance and drama to express beliefs
- Providing links to Literacy for children to further develop their writing and poetry skills
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas
- Using story, pictures and photographs
- Using artefacts to help children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and use enquiry to gain a deeper understanding of the symbolic meaning of these artefacts
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others

- Developing the use of ICT, including the use of the internet, videos and the Green Screen to help children's awareness of religions and beliefs.
- Promoting curiosity about world religions and providing children with opportunities to ask questions.

3.3 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:

- Providing open-ended questions and presenting children with challenging issues to discuss.
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- Grouping the children by ability and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- Providing a range of activities to support all types of learners including kinaesthetic activities(VAK)

4 Key Skills/ The Four R's in RE

4.1 RE is more than just developing children's' knowledge and understanding. It seeks to develop children's skills in investigation/enquiry, communication, interpretation, analysis and evaluation. RE enables children to use the Four R's which underpin learning across the curriculum. These are resourcefulness, reciprocity, reflectiveness and resilience. Opportunities to use these include:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live and the different ways people express their beliefs).
- Communication (sharing their ideas and those within religions and beliefs in a lively, informed way including different styles of writing, oral contributions and the use if ICT).
- Reflecting on own beliefs and those of others- learning from others.
- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others).

5 Curriculum planning in Religious Education

5.1 The RE long-term plan maps out the year themes and the topics studied in each term in each year group.

Planning the curriculum map for RE has taken into account the guidance given in the Agreed Syllabus. The RE medium-term plan

maps out six lessons each term for each year group and what objectives and activities should be covered within these lessons. All lessons allow children to use their higher level thinking skills by using open ended questions and appropriate challenge. The use of open-ended questions and big questions to get the children thinking is a vital feature of all RE lessons taught in school.

5.2 The production of the medium-term plans is the responsibility of the subject leader and short-term plans are the responsibility of the classroom teacher.

The current recommendation for time allocation for RE is:-

KS1 - 36 hours per year

KS2 - 45 hours per year

Learning about a different religious festival each month is embedded into the curriculum and is an integral part of RE learning. To enhance children's RE experiences further, events such as the faith and cultural festival and Easter crafts are arranged throughout the year.

Visits to various places of worship and visitors to the school are incorporated into many aspects of the RE curriculum too.

5.3 All parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of the content of RE. In such circumstances, work should be provided by the parent/carer, which has a focus upon belief. Children must be supervised by an approved adult.

Mastery of the RE Curriculum

5.4 Throughout lessons, enquiry based learning and effective questioning linked to Blooms Taxonomy is used to encourage mastery of the subject and to develop higher level thinking for the most able children. This allows children to work independently and encourages them to think outside of the box. The use of religious vocabulary is used within RE lessons to promote a deeper understanding of religious beliefs. Enquiry based learning within RE allows the children to take ownership over what they want to know and helps them to move into their next stage of education with confidence. Children are provided with verbal and written feedback which enables them to understand their next steps and know what they need to do to achieve these.

6 Foundation Stage

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

6.2 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.

7 Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

7.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Children have the opportunity to express key religious beliefs through poetry and drama activities too.

7.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

We use ICT where appropriate in religious education. The children are able to gain a deeper insight into world religions and beliefs, using the internet, CD's and videos.

7.3 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. We promote values and attitudes which enable children to develop tolerance and understanding of other people, in order to prepare them for becoming positive members of our multicultural society.

7.4 Mental health and well being

Religious Education contributes to children's mental and emotional, development by allowing them to freely share and discuss their thoughts, beliefs and ideas about religion. Children are able to ask questions about puzzling ideas and ethical concepts allowing them to develop their own opinions. Within RE, children are also encouraged to gain awe and wonder about the natural world around them. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life and we help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong. As they become more confident, children develop a growing self-awareness and a commitment to self-improvement so they can make informed decisions that lead to happy and healthy lives.

7.5 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 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 and others around them. We encourage all children regardless of religious and ethnic backgrounds to attend a faith tour. This encourages tolerance and understanding of other cultures and beliefs.

8 Teaching religious education to children with special needs

8.1 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).

9 Assessment and recording

9.1 Children's work in RE is assessed by making informal judgements as they are observed during lessons and at the end of a unit of work. Children demonstrate their ability in R.E. through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might take part in hot-seating and other drama based activities. Children are encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future. Teachers complete a termly assessment/level record sheet based on Learning about Religion (AT1) and Learning from Religion (AT2). This data is collated and analysed by the subject leader.

9.2 The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

10 Resources

10.1 We keep resources for Religious Education in a central resource cupboard. There are a wide range of books to support teaching in RE and a selection of artefacts and objects for each of the key world religions. These artefacts help to promote enquiry based learning in RE and help to develop a more practical approach to learning.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 The RE subject leaders is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. Each term, the RE subject leader presents the governors

with a subject report to keep them informed about this subject area. The RE subject leader also regularly reviews the standard of achievement and teaching in RE, through learning walks and book checks.

12. Assessment

Within RE, we use KWLH grids as a way of formative assessment to establish the children's prior knowledge, what they want to find out and what they have learnt at the end of a unit. Children are assessed against their understanding of learning about religions (AT1) and learning from religions (AT2). As summative assessment, in lessons, children are assessed by their ability to engage in discussions and reflect on the beliefs and practices of others. We also encourage children to reflect on their own lives when making links between different religions.