



Deanshanger Primary School

Religious Education Policy

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE Subject Leader and teaching staff.

National and Legal Framework

RE at Deanshanger Primary will be provided in line with the legal requirements.

These are that:

- the basic curriculum will include provision for Religious Education for all pupils on the school roll;
- the content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain;
- the RE which is provided shall be in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus for Northamptonshire (SACRE 2011-2016).

*This policy should be read in conjunction with our 'British Value' and 'Prevent' policies.

Whole School Aims and Objectives

RE has an important contribution to make towards our mission statement by providing a caring environment where children feel secure and able to express their views and beliefs. They are encouraged to value their own opinions, whilst developing respect and sensitivity for the views of others.

Pupils are encouraged to understand the importance of the role that each individual has to play in the life of the school and of the wider community. Links are made with a variety of faith groups to help develop this aim.

Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, our aims in RE are for pupils to:

- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in the United Kingdom;
- develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, from the local to the global;
- develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in the United Kingdom;
- enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
- developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings and other beliefs can relate to them;
- responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience; -reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs.

Right of Withdrawal

In keeping with the law, parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education provided they give written notification to the school. The school will ensure that suitable supervision is provided. Please refer to the Subject Leader or Head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. There are no pupils withdrawn from RE at present.

We note that teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching RE if they wish to do so but must give notice of their intention in writing to the Governing Body. RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children or staff, or to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another.

We hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the open Religious Education being taught at our school and we encourage the participation of all.

Other School Policies

Equal Opportunities

In keeping with the aims of the school policy for equal opportunities, the teaching of RE endeavours to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to educational opportunities regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, race, ability, social background or physical capacity. Care is taken in RE to avoid the reinforcement of negative or stereotypical images and RE aims to celebrate and appreciate cultural diversity through a variety of materials, tasks and experiences, in order to reflect the cultural diversities of our society.

Computing

Computing contributes towards the objectives of RE by the use of:

- Interactive whiteboards;
- Internet;
- CDs/Video and other multimedia;
- Digital photography;
- Power-point presentations etc.
- PSHE, Citizenship and British Values.

Religious Education looks at moral codes and values that underpin people's behaviour. It promotes values and attitudes that develop respect and sensitivity for others and enables discussion of a range of views, opinions and beliefs which help to prepare children to become valuable citizens in a culturally diverse society. We try to ensure that visitors from different Faith Communities and cultural backgrounds and visits to places of worship both within the immediate community and the wider community are planned into the RE Programme of Study where possible. This helps to develop community cohesion through Religious Education.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education plays a key role in pupils' spiritual and moral development, and makes a distinctive contribution to their social and cultural development. This is outlined in detail in the Agreed Syllabus.

English

RE embeds skills of English in a variety of ways. For example, speaking and listening skills, drama conventions, reading different texts and writing in different genres.

Collective Worship

Religious Education is different in nature to both Worship and Assembly. The aims and objectives of RE are different and distinct from those of Collective Worship. RE is about developing skills, knowledge and understanding in order to make decisions about the important questions. Worship is about being given the opportunity to participate in an experience which can lead to a heightened sense of spiritual awareness. Assembly can emphasise the more ritual and ceremonial aspects of worship and can be used as a springboard from which to launch a project or inspire a larger number of children at one time.

Religious Education cannot be taught wholly through assemblies. The assembly context does not give the opportunity for the exercise of many skills; for example, research, which is a part of Religious Education for which a classroom context is essential.

Assembly, Worship and Religious Education are distinctive activities which help the school deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

Context

The context of RE at Deanshanger Primary is that of a large semi-rural primary school, serving children in the age range 4-11

We work to the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus.

We recognise the variety of religious and non - religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome the diversity and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities in RE and in general.

We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas. We feel that it is important that the children are not only introduced to the faiths of those within their school community but also to those faiths represented in the wider community.

An introduction to the key beliefs, practices and impact of faith will hopefully lead to understanding, sensitivity and respect for fellow humankind. Religious Education helps this by welcoming visitors from other cultures and beliefs to talk to the pupils and by pupils experiencing visits to diverse places of worship themselves. Pupils also have the opportunity to experience the celebration of different cultures and festivals other than their own, within RE and other areas of the curriculum and Collective Worship.

Time Allocation

RE is part of the basic curriculum and all schools are required to teach RE to all pupils on the school roll, except where parents exercise their right of withdrawal. The QCDA recommended and exemplified a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two, a recommendation endorsed by the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus. The time allocated at Deanshanger Primary will be 36 hours per year at Key Stage One and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two.

RE will form part of the planning in the EYFS; the time allocation expected is equivalent to 30 hours of direct teacher input over YR. RE curriculum time does not include assembly or Collective Worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work.

Scheme of Work

A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers and other interested people alongside this policy. It has been written in the light of the Agreed Syllabus. RE will be based around termly themes or cross curricular units in Key Stage One, where Christianity and Judaism will be the major religions studied.

At Key Stage Two pupils will learn about Christianity throughout the key stage, and will also have major learning opportunities with regard to Islam in Years 3 and 4, and the Hindu and Sikh traditions in Years 5 and 6.

No teacher can be an instant expert in six religions. Staff who feel the need to build up their own subject knowledge can use the “Beginner’s Guide to religions” in the Agreed Syllabus Support Materials. Further materials are available from the RE Subject Leader.

Teaching and Learning Styles

OFSTED reports suggest that the range of teaching and learning strategies in use in RE is often too narrow, in the over-use of stories and a limited range of drawing and written tasks. Our policy is to aim to ensure that a variety of teaching and learning styles are adopted by teachers in Religious Education to allow access by all pupils. The variety enables pupils to encounter their preferred learning style as well as to develop a broad repertoire. The teaching and learning styles used promote a range of skills such as thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and research. Examples of active learning strategies and activities which we use are:

- Dramatic conventions;
- Group work;
- Individual reflection;
- Use of music and art;
- Artefact handling;
- Multi - sensory approaches;
- Visits and visitors;
- Use of ICT;
- Use of photos, posters, DVDs.

Cross curricular work is encouraged, in line with whole school policy on teaching and learning. We recognise the importance of teaching to the Attainment Targets of the Agreed Syllabus in a balanced way.

We have strong links with Bridgebuilder Trust and one of their Primary School Team Leaders comes into present half termly whole school assemblies on key themes. In addition Bridgebuilder have supported Prayer Space sessions in year 4 and year 5.

Resources

A wide range of resources are in place for each topic area within Religious Education. These are all individually boxed according to religion. Resources are stored in above the old staffroom, and should

be returned after use. We maintain an RE story shelf in the library, which offers many stories from different traditions. Teachers may choose to use these in RE. There is a range of RE 'big books' which can be used across the age range as well. Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

Visits to Places of Worship

We are able to visit Holy Trinity Church and the Methodist Church in the immediate vicinity of the school, where faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in RE. We shall aim to use these valuable resources for all classes. We will aim to visit other places of worship, where appropriate. For example, the Hindu temple at Neasden and Gurdwara in Milton Keynes. The RE Subject Leader will support you to organise these educational visits. Guidance for planning visits is provided on the CD Rom of Support Materials which accompanies the Agreed Syllabus. All visits should follow the Northamptonshire guidance for organising school visits. Please see the head teacher if you need further guidance.

Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

Whole school policy with regard to special educational needs, the gifted and talented and differentiation applies to RE. Teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This, of course, may not relate to their general educational 'ability'.

Special Educational Needs

RE contributes towards the policy by ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are able to:
Develop their self-confidence and awareness;

- Understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups;
- Bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom;
- Develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience;
- Reflect on and consider their own values and those of others;
- Deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour.
- Access to RE for pupils with learning difficulties can be improved by:
- Using sensory materials and resources through sight, touch, sound, taste or smell, for example, music, tactile artefacts, plants in a sensory garden;
- Giving pupils first hand experiences, for example, visitors to schools, visits to religious buildings, involvement in festivals;
- Organizing a range of activities to give personal experiences, for example, dance, drama, visits to a range of environments;
- Helping pupils to understand and appreciate their world and its diversity;
- Using a range of resources, for example, interactive/sensory stimuli, information and communication technology (ICT), to increase pupils' knowledge of religions and the elements in them;
- Using specialist aids and equipment;
- Providing support from adults or other pupils when necessary, while allowing pupils the space, time and freedom to develop skills for themselves;
- Adapting tasks or environments and providing alternative activities where necessary, for example, tactile story books, puppets, role-play, music making, presenting work as a painting instead of writing.
- Being aware of the pace at which pupils work and of the physical and mental effort required.
- Balancing consistency and challenge, according to individual needs.

Very able and/or talented

Very able and/or talented in Religious Education is not the same as being religiously gifted. Very able and/or talented pupils in RE are identified by teachers as those pupils who:

- Show high levels of insight into and discernment beyond, the obvious and ordinary;
- Make sense of and draw meaning from religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices;
- Are sensitive to, or aware of, the mysteries of life and have a feeling for how these are explored and expressed;
- Understand, apply and transfer ideas and concepts across topics in Religious Education and into other religious and cultural contexts.

It is important that the full range and scope of Religious Education activities and learning experiences give pupils access to high levels of attainment. For example, pupils who are very able in Religious Education should be appropriately challenged by:

- Using a variety of challenging questioning strategies to explore religious phenomena;
- Setting extension tasks to encourage greater depth of understanding; Using authentic materials from a faith;
- Focusing on interpretation of symbol, metaphor, text and story and the ways in which these stimulate reflection on meaning and discernment;
- Challenging and developing use of spoken and written religious language with both sacred texts and general literature;
- Teaching pupils correct terminology and language needed to handle sophisticated religious, spiritual, ethical and philosophical questions ideas and materials;
- Using questions and tasks from later key stages to stimulate responses through argument, analysis and prediction;
- Encouraging pupils to make connections between their work in RE and other subjects.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

In line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for RE, we use age related descriptors to help make judgements about pupil progress and attainment. As part of our statutory duty we make end of Key Stage judgments at Y2 and Y6. These we share with the local authority annually. Pupils' work in RE is assessed by making informal judgements both by staff and the pupils themselves during lessons and at the end of a unit of work. These judgements are used by the teacher to decide 'where next' within a lesson and within the unit, as well as the next time that particular skill, attitude or knowledge is encountered. In addition, a limited number of more formal assessments take place during the year where the pupils will be given a level of attainment.

All teachers have the descriptors, which they can draw upon for setting lesson objectives, end of unit evaluations and for reporting to children, parents and staff as appropriate. An annual report for RE informs parents of their child's progress and attainment, as required by law. We will make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's progress in RE in this report, based on regular monitoring of work with regard to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next year and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. The coordinator's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We will maintain a 'self-evaluation' of our RE work in readiness for inspection.

Self-Evaluation, RE and Inspection

The Subject Leader will maintain an active awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, in line with OFSTED guidance about self - evaluation and review.

Transition to Secondary Education

We use the final term in Year 6 to review learning in RE. We provide the schools our pupils move on to with a simple statement of the religions and topics they have been studying as part of their transition information.

Named RE Subject Leader: Emma Neville

Head Teacher: Rachel Rice

Link Governor: Rev Stephanie Hibberd