

Religious Education (RE) Policy

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 Kenmore Park Infant & Nursery School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, 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 and the local communities. (**CRC: Article 14:** You have the right to choose your own religion and beliefs. Your parents should help you decide what is right and wrong, and what is best for you). 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 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 especially in Harrow;
 - 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 and similarities in Britain today;
 - develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
 - have respect 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 1996 Education Act (EA) and the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The EA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The EA 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 for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Harrow Agreed Syllabus 2008 and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The EA 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.

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 extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions.
(CRC: Article 30: You have the right to practice your own culture, language and religion – or any you choose, minority and indigenous groups need special protection of this right). We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Eid, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize 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 creation or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.
- 3.4** 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 classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

4 Curriculum planning in religious education

- 4.1** We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Harrow Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.
- 4.2** 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 works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. Some of our topics focus on a particular religion while others focus on a theme that includes all religions.

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 designated member within each year group team writes the plans for each lesson using the scheme of work recommended and provided by the Harrow SACRE. S/he shares these plans with other teachers within the year group. The plans are monitored by the RE subject leader.

5 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 Curriculum (Development matters), 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 religious education to the teaching of other subjects

6.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in the Literacy lessons have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write their thoughts about a religious topic and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Mathematics

Religious Education lessons provide our pupils' with the opportunities to promote their knowledge and skills in many areas of Mathematics. Surveys of religious backgrounds or places of worship attended/visited make a valuable contribution to the skills of collecting, presenting and interpreting information. The study of religious festivals and religious buildings provide the opportunities to recognise and investigate shapes, patterns, symmetry and tessellation. We ensure to incorporate these activities in our maths lessons as and when appropriate.

6.3 Computing

We use computers and other technology where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet, Espresso and CD ROMs. They also use computers to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

6.4 History and Geography

Through religious education we teach our pupils about the impact of religious events and religious leaders on the history of the world that they live in. Learning about special and sacred religious places around the world contributes significantly to their geographical knowledge and skills.

6.5 Art

Religious education makes a significant contribution in developing our pupils' skills in all forms of art including performing art. We encourage them to use painting, drawing, drama and dance to retell religious stories. Through religious education lessons they are provided the opportunities to investigate and create shape, form, pattern and colour in activities such as observational drawings of religious artefacts, significant features of religious buildings, calligraphy and so on.

6.6 Design and Technology

Design and technology is an integral part of religious education in our school. Through activities such as creating collage and models of religious patterns and buildings, making cards, gifts and food for religious festivals, we help our pupils to develop their essential skills relating to design and technology. We ensure to incorporate these activities in our D & T plans.

6.7 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 such as 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.

6.8 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 develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

7 Teaching religious education to children with special needs

7.1 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).

8 Assessment and recording

8.1 We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. Each pupil keeps a diary of their RE work to record and reflect on their learning. On completion of a unit of work, we set out appropriate assessment tasks. We make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the attainment targets set out in locally agreed syllabus, and in our school reports to inform the parents and the next teacher at the end of the year.

8.2 The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. She also conducts interviews with a sample of pupils at KS 1. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

9 Resources

9.1 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 unit of work. There is a set of bibles and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and there is computer software to support the children's individual research.

10 Monitoring and review

10.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. S/he 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 subject leader presents the head teacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Signed: R. K. Mahil-Pooni

Date: Summer 2016

Date of next review: Summer 2019