



Abbots Farm Junior School

Religious Education Policy

Aims

Learning and undertaking activities in Religious Education acknowledges the 'Every Child Matters' agenda which contributes to achievement of the curriculum aims for all young people to become:

- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society

At Abbots Farm Junior School we try:

- to help our children develop respect and sensitivity for all people;
- to help our children understand faith and moral codes to guide them and develop informed opinions;
- to help our children develop an understanding of modern multi-cultural Britain and how this is reflected in their lives and local community;
- to help our children understand more about the importance of religion in today's world.

The importance of religious education in the curriculum

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about faith, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions, and other world views that offer answers to these challenging questions. It offers opportunities for personal reflection, empathy and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religious traditions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Religious Education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Key Concepts and Processes

Concepts

These underpin the teaching of Religious Education. Pupils need to understand these concepts in order to deepen and broaden their knowledge, understanding and skills. The following concepts are addressed through the programmes of study for each key stage:

- beliefs teachings and sources
- practices and ways of life
- expressing meaning
- identity and belonging
- meaning, purpose and truth
- values and commitments

Processes

The skills and processes required in the teaching of Religious Education can be categorised under two attainment targets:

1. Learning about religion

This includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. Learning about religion covers pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual traditions and how they relate to one another as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

2. Learning from religion

This is concerned with developing pupils' reflection and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religious traditions. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religious traditions. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments.

Statutory Requirements

Schools are required to:

- ensure a time allocation of 38 hours for the teaching of Religious Education per year;
- ensure that the key processes: learning about religion (AT1) and learning from religion (AT2) and their elements are addressed and linked;
- identify appropriate key concepts for pupils to explore throughout the key processes;
- select content from the Christian, Hindu and Sikh traditions and one other (Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim) of the school's choice for in-depth study;
- encounter the two remaining traditions on at least one occasion;
- use the level descriptions (appendix 1) to make judgements on pupils' attainment;
- report on pupils' attainment (as required in the NC foundation subjects).

Key concepts

There are a number of key concepts that underpin the study of RE. Pupils need to understand these concepts in order to deepen and broaden their knowledge, skills and understanding.

1.1 Beliefs, teachings and sources

- a) Finding out about teachings, sources, authorities and ways of life in order to develop some understanding of religions and beliefs
- b) Understanding and responding to beliefs

1.2 Practices and ways of life

- a) Exploring and considering how religions and beliefs influence the ways in which people live their lives
- b) Understanding that religious practices may have similarities, are diverse and can change

1.3 Expressing meaning

- a) Exploring different ways people express beliefs and values

1.4 Identity, Diversity and Belonging

- a) Exploring how individuals develop a sense of belonging through faith or belief
- b) Exploring the variety and differences that exist within and between religions, values and beliefs

1.5 Meaning, purpose and truth

- a) Exploring some of the ultimate questions that confront humanity

1.6 Values and Commitments

- a) Understanding how moral values and a sense of obligation come from beliefs and experience
- b) Reflecting on their own values in relation to those of others

Key stage processes

These are the essential skills and processes in RE that students need in order to learn and make progress.

2.1 Learning about religion

This is underpinned by the key concepts of 1.1 Beliefs, teachings and sources, 1.2 Practices and ways of life, and 1.3 Expressing meaning.

Pupils should be taught to:

2.1a Importance/impact of religion and religious diversity

- (i) investigate the significance of religions in local, national and global communities
- (ii) identify and begin to describe similarities and differences within and between religions.

2.1b Specialist vocabulary

- (i) use specialist vocabulary in communicating their knowledge and understanding

2.1c Beliefs and practices

- (i) describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others
- (ii) describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with beliefs and teachings

2.1d Sources

- (i) use and interpret information about religions from a range of sources and understand why they are important in religion

2.1e Religious/spiritual expression

- (i) interpret a range of forms of religious expression and understand why they are important in religion

2.1f Ultimate and ethical questions

- (i) describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions

2.2 Learning from religion

This is underpinned by the key concepts 1.4 Identity, diversity and belonging, 1.5 Meaning, purpose and truth, and 1.6 Values and commitments.

Pupils should be able to:

2.2a Reflection on feelings, experiences and values

- explore and reflect on the relationship between beliefs, practices, teachings and ultimate questions, communicating their own ideas

2.2b Reflection on belonging

- reflect on and respond to the challenges of commitment and how this relates to the wider world, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways

2.2c Reflection on what individuals and communities value

- reflect on the importance of religion and other world views for individuals and communities

2.2d Responses to ethical and philosophical issues

- express their own and others' views of right and wrong, belief and religious truth, including reflection on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives

2.2e Respect

- accept that other people have different views

Range and content

This outlines the breadth of the subject on which teachers should draw when teaching the key concepts and processes

Religions and beliefs

- the Christian tradition
- the Hindu and Sikh traditions and one other principal religious tradition (Buddhist, Jewish, Muslim)
- to 'encounter' each of the two remaining religious traditions on at least two occasions
- pupils should be given the opportunity to study a religious community with a significant local presence in addition to the above where appropriate
- pupils should be given the opportunity to study a secular world view, where appropriate

Themes

- Beliefs and questions:** how people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives.
- Teachings and authority:** what sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life
- Worship, pilgrimage and sacred places:** where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites
- The journey of life and death:** why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what people think about life after death
- Symbols and religious expression:** how religious and spiritual ideas are expressed
- Inspirational people:** figures from whom believers find inspiration.
- Religion and the individual:** what is expected of a person in following a religion or belief
- Religion, family and community:** how religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life
- Beliefs in action in the world:** how religions and beliefs respond to global issues of human rights, fairness, social justice and the importance of the environment

Curriculum opportunities

Pupils should be offered the following opportunities that are integral to their learning and enhance their engagement with the concepts, processes and content of the subject.

The curriculum should provide opportunities for pupils to:

- encounter people from different religious and cultural groups
- visit places of worship and religious significance where possible, to develop and enhance learning at this key stage
- develop the use of ICT, particularly in enhancing pupils' awareness of religions and beliefs globally

- d) discuss religious, ethical and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- e) reflect on their own and others' beliefs and values
- f) use a variety of forms of expression to express and communicate their own and others' insights
- g) identify and explore the connections between RE and other subject areas
- h) begin to recognise diversity within religious traditions and human experiences

Expectation in RE

RE is assessed using level descriptors, (appendix 1). The Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus contains 8 levels.

By the end of Key Stage 1 most children will be expected to achieve level 2.

This means that they can use religious words to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. They show awareness of similarities in religions and can identify how religion is expressed in different ways. They ask and respond sensitively to questions about their own and others experiences and feelings. They recognise their own values and those of others and are aware that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer.

By the end of Key Stage 2 most children will be expected to achieve level 4.

This means children can describe both similarities and differences within and between religions. They make links between different aspects of religions and can describe the impact of religion on peoples' lives. They suggest answers to questions of identity and meaning. They apply their ideas to their own and others' lives. They can also describe what inspires and influences themselves and others

In RE we provide annual reports based on the assessment of children's learning. Reports provided a brief summary of the work covered, a summary of the standards achieved and how the child can improve their learning.

Approaches to teaching and learning in RE

RE is an exciting curriculum subject and we employ a wide range of learning methods in our teaching. These include:

- visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities
- using art, music, dance and drama
- 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 forms of expression
- discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- developing the use of ICT (particularly DVDs and the internet) in helping children's awareness of religions and beliefs.

Rights of withdrawal

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning. We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE on the grounds of conscience. The school asks parents/carers to contact the Head teacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school.

Learning resources

We encourage the use of a wide range of resources to enrich children's learning. These include books, DVDs, music, artefacts, ICT, visitors and visits. We strive to ensure RE is a lively, stimulating subject which evokes interest and engages all children. Learning is planned to meet the individual needs of the children. We have also some specific resources to support children with special educational needs and those with specific talent in RE.

RE and the use of ICT

We help children to make effective use of the internet and IT programmes to investigate and learn from different religions beliefs, teachings and ideas. They may use e-mail and video conferencing to link with other schools and communities in different local, national and global locations. They use multimedia and presentation software to communicate their own ideas and those within religions and beliefs

The contribution of RE to the wider curriculum

Some aspects of the RE curriculum has its own distinctive subject matter and is therefore taught as a separate subject. Learning at Abbots Farm Junior School is taught through cross curricular themed topics, the RE provision makes good use of the important contribution to other aspects of children's learning.

The key ones are:

RE contributes to children's spiritual development by:

- discussing and reflecting on questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, good and evil, life after death, beliefs about God and humanity and values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- learning about and reflecting on important concepts and experiences such as love, trust, forgiveness, obedience and sacrifice.
- valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging.
- considering how religions and beliefs regard the value and purpose of human beings, the importance of the environment and the significance of emotions such as love, anger, joy, jealousy, happiness and pain.

RE contributes to children's moral development by:

- enabling children to value themselves and others.
- exploring the influence of family, friends and other sources on moral choices.
- considering what is of ultimate value both to children and within religious traditions.
- developing an understanding in key beliefs and teachings in religion and values and moral choices.
- considering ethical issues especially justice which promote racial and religious respect.
- reflecting on the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

RE contributes to children's social development by:

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns.
- reflecting on the importance of friendship and positive relationships.

RE contributes to children's cultural development by:

- encountering British people of different faiths
- encountering people, stories, artefacts and resources from differing cultures.
- promoting respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination.
- challenging stereotypes of religion and beliefs.

RE and the use of language

RE can also make an important contribution to children's use of language by enabling them to:-

- acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- use this vocabulary to help communicate and explain their thoughts / feelings with clarity.
- listen and respond to the views and ideas of others.
- be inspired to want to ask and respond to questions.
- write in different styles / forms - such as poetry, diaries, reports and extended writing.

Equality of opportunity

The RE curriculum of the school is planned in such a way as to fulfil the intentions of the Agreed Syllabus with regard to equality of opportunity. The subject will be taught in a way which ensures that children are encouraged to respect each other's beliefs, practices and values and those found in the wider world.

Religious traditions will be studied as represented both within Britain and later in their international settings. Religious traditions are specified as a focus for each unit of work in the scheme but this should not preclude the individual pupil's exploration of personally held life views, and the sharing this.

Pupils will be encouraged to express their opinions secure in the knowledge that these will be valued although we are required to study the Christian tradition in greater depth than other faiths, this should not be taken to imply that it is in any way superior to the others. Non-religious stand points are to be valued equally with those of religious traditions in order to meet the variety of individual needs. In line with the school's policy, a broad variety of learning opportunities and experiences will be offered and the resources provided will aim to cater for the full range of ability.

It is recognised that children will explore, reflect and respond in a variety of ways and opportunity will be given for this to happen, with outcomes on a wide spectrum of levels, appropriate to individuals, being equally valued. All children, regardless of disability, have the right to access the curriculum

RE at Abbots Farm Junior School does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children, or to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another. It is not the same as collective worship, which has its own place within school life.

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Date reviewed: January 2017 by J.Andrews

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