

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 Emersons Green Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we aim to address some of the fundamental questions in life. 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. 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;
 - 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 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 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 for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the South Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus (Mystery and Meaning).

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. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali etc. to develop their religious thinking.
- 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 rites of passage or festivals.
- 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 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 Mystery and Meaning, the South Gloucestershire 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 the long- and medium-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. We teach Religious Education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.
- 4.3** Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader monitors these plans on a regular basis.

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 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 Hour have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion. We also encourage the children to record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

We use ICT where appropriate in Religious Education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet and CD ROMs. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

6.3 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.

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 curriculum, 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 work and we comment as necessary. Assessment is based on the 8-point scale recommended in *Mystery and Meaning*.

9 Monitoring and review

- 9.1** The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education. 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.

Related Policies

Collective Worship