

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND COLLECTIVE WORSHIP POLICY

### RATIONALE

Religious Education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. It is legally required for all pupils and is a core subject of the curriculum for all pupils. Although there is not a National Curriculum for RE, the National Curriculum does state that: **'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based', and which:**

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

In maintained community schools such as ours, without a religious character, the RE curriculum is determined by the local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE), which is responsible for producing the locally agreed syllabus for RE. We follow the Rochdale Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Agreed syllabuses used in schools, which are not designated with a religious character must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. All schools must recognise diverse religions and systems of belief in the UK both locally and nationally.

### PURPOSE

- Religious Education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- In RE pupils learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.
- Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue, so that they can participate positively in society, with its diverse religions and worldviews.
- Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

### THE AIMS OF RE

The purpose of RE is captured in the principal aim, which is intended to be a short-hand version for day-to-day use. Teachers should use it for short-term and long-term planning, to remind them of the purposes articulated above.

#### Principal aim

The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

RE explores big questions about life, in order to find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can make sense of religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

The threefold aims of RE elaborate on the principal aim. The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

**1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:**

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses, offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

**2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:**

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.

**3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:**

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

Teachers consider how their teaching contributes towards the principal aim of RE and how they help pupils to achieve the threefold aim above.

These aims incorporate the former attainment targets of 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'.

## **MAIN PRINCIPLES AND RIGHT OF WITHDRAWAL**

Religious Education at our school is inclusive and for every child across the primary phase. The delivery of our curriculum supports the aims of the Agreed Syllabus and fundamentally encourages children to have an awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings and practices and it seeks to develop in the children, a respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.

Religious Education does not seek to force or urge religious beliefs on pupils nor compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another. The Right of Withdrawal was first granted when religious education was religious *instruction* and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE has been very different to this for some time. It is inclusive and wide ranging, exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. However, in the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education. (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S71 (3)). This will be the parents' responsibility. However, we always talk to parents to ensure that they understand the aims and value of RE before honouring this right.

In line with the law, it is a requirement that the children learn from the diversity of religions and beliefs represented locally, nationally and globally. The children learn about **Christians, Muslims and Jewish people in KS1** and **Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people in KS2**.

## CURRICULUM ORGANISATION

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus effectively, the expectation is that there is a minimum allocation of 5 per cent of curriculum time for RE. This is set out below, and based on the most recent national guidance.

- Early Years: 36 hours of RE, e.g. 50 minutes a week or some short sessions implemented through continuous provision
- Key Stage 1: 36 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week, or less than an hour a week plus a series of RE days)
- Key Stage 2: 45 hours of tuition per year (e.g. an hour a week, or a series of RE days or weeks amounting to 45+ hours of RE)

RE is different from assembly. Religious Education taught in lessons is distinct from the time spent on collective worship or in school assemblies. The above allocated times are separate to any time spent on collective worship or assemblies.

RE is taught in a clearly identifiable time. All children in KS1 and KS2 are taught three or four RE units from the Rochdale locally agreed syllabus, depending on the length of each unit, focussed on exploring a Key Question. These are organised to cover the three strands of the locally agreed syllabus: Believing, Expressing and Living.

The area of Alkrington sits within Middleton, which itself is within the diverse borough of Rochdale, close to the border of Manchester and with easy access to Oldham and Bury. Therefore, units and learning objectives have been carefully selected to represent our local context and wider issues which are important for our pupils to explore. This diversity is highlighted in the 2021 census figures:

CENSUS 2021 Area name	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Jewish	Muslim	Sikh	Other religion	No religion	Religion not stated
<b>Rochdale</b>	104,841	398	613	218	42,121	191	675	64,349	10,366
	47.00%	0.20%	2.00%	0.10%	19.90%	0.10%	0.50%	25.80%	4.60%
<b>Bury</b>	94,669	508	874	10,734	19,243	575	649	57,008	9,591
	48.80%	0.30%	0.50%	5.50%	9.90%	0.30%	0.30%	29.40%	4.90%
<b>Manchester</b>	199,873	3,291	6,048	2,632	122,962	2,718	2,736	179,037	32,713
	42.60%	0.20%	0.50%	0.00%	0.40%	0.30%	0.50%	49.90%	5.50%
<b>Salford</b>	128,785	1,022	2,113	10,373	13,542	728	1,068	96,140	16,152
	47.70%	0.40%	0.80%	3.80%	5.00%	0.30%	0.40%	35.60%	6.00%
<b>Bolton</b>	139,144	576	5,887	159	58,997	219	979	76,244	13,758
	46.90%	0.20%	0.30%	0.10%	18.80%	0.10%	0.30%	28.80%	4.60%
<b>Wigan</b>	206,870	831	995	84	4,155	122	1,099	99,784	15,390
	62.80%	0.30%	0.30%	0.00%	1.30%	0.00%	0.30%	30.30%	4.70%
<b>England and Wales</b>	27,500,000	273,000	1,000,000	271,000	3,900,000	524,000	348,000	22,200,000	3,600,000
	46.20%	0.50%	1.70%	0.50%	6.50%	0.90%	0.60%	37.20%	6.00%

In further recognition of this diversity, each year we hold a 'Cultural Celebration Week', where connections are made with faith communities within our local area, enabling our pupils to gain an even deeper understanding of their place in society.

The children in Early Years are taught RE through the six areas of learning, particularly through personal, social and emotional development and knowledge and understanding of the world.

The long-term curriculum plan details the overarching units taught each term. The medium-term plans provide detail of each RE unit of learning and the key objectives to be taught in order to fully explore the Key Question. Each unit of learning identifies which faiths are being taught.

## **APPROACH TO TEACHING**

To support teachers in exploring the selected religions, the syllabus sets out a number of key skills to be developed throughout the lessons:

### **Investigating:**

- asking relevant questions
- knowing how to use different types of sources as ways of gathering information
- knowing what may constitute evidence for understanding religion(s).

### **Reflecting:**

- reflecting on religious beliefs and practices and ultimate questions
- reflecting upon feelings, relationships, and experiences
- thinking and speaking carefully about religious and spiritual topics.

### **Expressing:**

- explaining concepts, rituals and practices
- identifying and articulating matters of deep conviction and concern, and responding to religious issues through a variety of media.

### **Interpreting:**

- drawing meaning from, for example artefacts, works of art, poetry and symbols
- interpreting religious language suggesting meanings of religious texts.

### **Empathising:**

- considering the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others
- developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow
- seeing the world through the eyes of others, and to see issues from their point of view, deepening understanding of beliefs and practices.

### **Applying:**

- using RE learning in new situations
- making the association between religions and individual community, national and international life
- identifying key religious values and their connections with secular values.

### **Discerning:**

- developing insight into personal experience and religion
- exploring the positive and negative aspects of religious and secular beliefs and ways of life
- relating learning to life making thoughtful judgements about the personal value of religious beliefs and practices.

### **Analysing:**

- distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact
- distinguishing between the features of different religions
- recognising similarities and distinctiveness of religious ways of life.

### **Synthesising:**

- linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern
- connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole
- making links between religion and human experience, including the pupil's own experience.

### **Evaluating:**

- debating issues of religious significance with reference to experience, evidence and argument
- weighing the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience
- drawing conclusions which are balanced, and related to evidence, dialogue and experience.

Progression over time and in lessons is to be recognised as an essential part of our RE offer and it is the teacher's responsibility to ensure that learning is progressive, where prior knowledge and skills competency is recognised as a foundation to build upon.

Teachers teach the key vocabulary specific to the faith being taught throughout each unit of learning. They use this vocabulary throughout their teaching and encourage its use by the children.

RE is a statutory part of the core curriculum for *all* pupils, including those with learning difficulties. Pupils with SEND are found in all contexts, and all teachers are teachers of pupils with SEND. We ensure good quality teaching in RE tailors the planning and delivery of the syllabus carefully to the special needs of all pupils. RE provision for different groups of pupils will vary but all pupils are included in RE. Teachers ensure their lessons are fully inclusive of all children, including those with SEN, through carefully considered adaptations and support mechanisms.

## **ASSESSMENT**

RE attainment and progress is assessed through formative assessment processes, using a wide range of sources such as questioning, listening, observation and work scrutiny. Feedback is an essential part of education and a crucial tool in the assessment process. At its heart, it is an interaction between teacher and child: a way of acknowledging children's learning, checking the outcomes and making decisions about what teachers and children need to do next, with the primary aim of driving pupil progress. Consequently, a significant element of our approach to formative assessment is through the use of our Feedback Files. These ensure misconceptions are addressed before becoming embedded, work is celebrated and shared, and key knowledge is revisited in subsequent lessons.

Summative assessment takes place at the end of each term against the key knowledge identified within the units taught. This information is used by the class teacher to support them in making end-of-year judgements for each pupil. Equally importantly, this assessment also enables the teacher and RE subject lead to evaluate the success of their teaching and make adaptations to future learning opportunities, both on an individual-class and whole-school basis.

## **COLLECTIVE WORSHIP**

### **Aims:**

Through collective worship at Alkington Primary School, we aim to:

- Provide opportunities for reflection on values and beliefs that are important within our school and wider community.
- Foster a sense of belonging and shared identity.
- Encourage spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Celebrate pupils' achievements and special events in the school calendar.
- Promote respect and understanding for different faiths and worldviews.
- Create space for reflection and exploring values in a way that is inclusive for everyone.

### **Organisation:**

Collective worship takes place daily and is mainly of a broadly Christian character.

- Whole-school assemblies include:
  - Reflection on a story, event or current issue
  - Discussion of a moral or topical theme
  - Celebration of pupils' achievements
  - Exploration of festivals, world events and values such as kindness, perseverance or respect, linked to the school's Qualities and Characteristics
- Throughout the week, teachers and pupils collectively reflect in class on the themes and values explored during these whole-school assemblies.

## **Inclusion**

- Collective worship is planned to be meaningful for all, whether or not pupils or families hold a particular faith.
- Children are encouraged to contribute to and sometimes lead exploration of spiritual, moral, social and cultural questions

## **ROLE OF THE SUBJECT LEADER**

Our subject leaders ensure that all pupils can develop their ability and knowledge, and learn the skills required to make good progress.

They plan improvements that builds our school's curriculum, raises standards for our pupils and leads colleagues to teach the subject better.

### **RE leaders:**

- keep up to date with broad developments in RE education, and consider how to share these with colleagues and pupils where appropriate;
- are aware of, and take responsibility for, developments that affect school RE policy, including health and safety;
- evaluate personal leadership and management skills, and effectively address areas for development in religious education;
- appreciate the importance of developing the subject knowledge of the team for confident and consistent teaching in all lessons;
- understand how to assess the quality of teaching, including addressing learning gaps, and manage difficult conversations on performance;
- recognise the importance of putting in place primary religious education resources necessary for effective curriculum delivery and assessment of its impact;
- ensure that they access continuing professional development (CPD) for leadership of RE and that colleague's access CPD to address their requirements too;
- coordinate and support the organisation of enhanced activities such as themed days, celebration of festivals, visits to places of worship.

## **CONCLUSION**

The successful implementation of this policy will assist in ensuring our pupils are exposed to a quality RE curriculum as specified in the RE Agreed Syllabus. It aids teachers to draw upon broad-ranging content that helps children develop their knowledge and understanding of those who live around them, with whom they share their daily lives and from whom they can develop a greater understanding of the beliefs and cultures or their neighbours. Our RE curriculum policy will help the children to shape their own personal values and teach them to grow into members of society that uphold, care and respect the diversity of others.

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