



Newhall Primary Academy and Nursery

“Aiming high; Reaching higher”

Religious Education (RE) Policy

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Honesty Respect Responsibility Resilience Aspiration Reflection



Religious education contributes 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 they learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They 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 our 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 learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

Aims

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

- A. 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.
- B. 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 or a worldview.
- C. 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.

Teaching and Learning

Curriculum Planning

The Essex Agreed Syllabus states which subject areas must be taught. Within individual lessons there may also be subsidiary learning challenges if this is deemed the best way to approach a given subjects. Encompassing the block of teaching are the pre-learning challenges, establishing the class' prior knowledge and informing the planning, and the reflection time which once completed may lead to

presentation of the learner's new knowledge to others. As stated above RE lessons are frequently cross-curricular as this gives greater opportunities to deepen as well as broaden understanding.

Religious Education in the National Curriculum

The National Curriculum (2014) states the legal requirement that:

All state schools are also required to make provision for a daily act of collective worship and must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage.

Essex Agreed Syllabus: exploRE

At Newhall Primary Academy we follow the Essex Agreed Syllabus (2015): exploRE (detailed below).

Requirements for agreed syllabuses:

- Agreed syllabuses must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking into account the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.
- Agreed syllabuses should indicate at what ages or stages the particular subject matter in relation to each religion should be taught, ensuring that as a whole and at each key stage the relative content devoted to Christianity predominates.
- Agreed syllabuses should not be designed to convert pupils or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils.

Legal Requirements set out in exploRE:

- With certain exceptions, all children of compulsory school age in reception classes in maintained schools must be taught RE in accordance with the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. This does not include children in nursery classes or early years settings, or children who have been withdrawn from RE by their parents.
- Consistent with the requirement at later stages of learning, teachers must ensure that the relative content devoted to Christianity predominates (more time should be devoted to Christianity than any other single religion). In determining what other religious material to include, teachers should take into consideration the religious backgrounds of the children in the class.

'Learning about' and 'learning from' Consistent with the national framework, this agreed syllabus has two attainment targets for RE: 'learning about religion' (AT1) and 'learning from religion' (AT2). Related to each attainment target are level descriptions which set out the knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils are expected to develop as they progress through the different key stages. This syllabus recognises the importance of rigorous assessment in RE, and a full description of the assessment requirements is given in Section 5.

Learning about religion includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its 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. In this syllabus, learning about religion covers pupils'

knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion. Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, and values and commitments. In learning about and learning from religion, pupils should be provided with a range of experiences and opportunities that can enrich and broaden their learning in RE. These are prescribed in the programmes of study for Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Foundation Stage

The Early Years Foundation Stage is aptly named, for what is covered in the EYFS provides a foundation on which later learning can build. EYFS practitioners and reception teachers are required to construct learning experiences and assessment opportunities in relation to statutory early learning goals (ELGs). The ELGs set out what most children are expected to achieve by the start of Year 1, when the EYFS ends. The ELGs are categorised according to the following seven areas of learning:

- communication and language
- literacy
- physical development (not regarded as directly relevant to RE)
- personal, social and emotional development
- mathematics (not regarded as directly relevant to RE)
- understanding the world
- expressive art and design

There are 17 ELGs in total, and RE can make an active contribution to most of them. The subject has a particularly important contribution to make to the 12 ELGs as identified below. For convenience these are referred to in this agreed syllabus as 'RE-related ELGs' (see section 3 of *explORE*).

Key Stage 1

During Key Stage 1, children learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families. Children ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imaginations. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

Six study units are to be explored in each year (two per term):

- Special people
- Special places
- Special words and stories
- Special things in nature
- Special symbols and objects
- Special ways of living

In Year 1, each of the six study units will be explored in relation to the home. In Year 2, each of the six study units will be explored in relation to the local community (in the UK and other countries). Learning and teaching will need to be rooted in the experience of the child and so will naturally focus on personal experience (learning from religion). (See section 4 of exploRE)

Key Stage 2

The study units in this programme of study prescribe the religious and Humanist content that must be covered. The study units have been designed to provide a systematic introduction to six major world faiths (Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) and secular Humanism.

There are 24 study units, which works out at two study units per term. It is recognised that there is far too much material in most of the study units to allow everything to be covered in depth. In order to allow some aspects to be covered more fully, other aspects will necessarily receive briefer and less detailed treatment. A key issue for schools when planning RE is to determine which elements in the units will be the main focus for study and which elements will be covered in a more superficial way. Medium-term and short-term planning will need to make clear where the main emphasis will lie. (See section 4 of exploRE)

Teaching and Learning styles

- There is, wherever possible, a strong emphasis on primary sources (local church visits, visiting speakers, artefacts).
- Children use a wide range of resources.
- There should be opportunities for music, dance, drama and displays to be linked to Religious Education and cultural diversity.
- Where appropriate activities should use pupils own interests or questions either as starting points or as further line of development.
- Activities should, where appropriate, involve both independent and co-operative work ~ activities should enable pupils to develop a positive attitude towards Religious Education.
- Activities should be balanced between different modes of learning: doing, observing, talking and listening, discussions, reflecting, drafting, reading and writing etc.
- Activities should involve Religious Education teaching through story, the use of artefacts, video, role play, active learning, written work, a study of festivals, visits, visitors etc.
- Pupils should understand what they are expected to do and know how well they are progressing.

Special Educational Needs; Inclusion; Equal Opportunities; Education for a culturally diverse society.

All pupils in our school, irrespective of ability, faith and background will have appropriate differentiated access to the Religious Education programme. The materials used will be representative of the Religious and Cultural influences being taught.

The Essex Agreed Syllabus states: Parents can choose to withdraw their child(ren) wholly or partly from RE, and teachers have the right not to teach this subject.

Learning Across the Curriculum

RE can make an important contribution and offer a stimulating context for the development of pupils' learning in many other areas. Where appropriate it is linked with other subjects including Literacy, Philosophy, Geographical, History, Art, Music and Dance.

Use of ICT

Pupils will be provided with opportunities to develop and apply their ICT capability to support their learning in RE. They will use the Internet selectively to find information, e-mail to communicate with people in other places and to present information.

Time Allocation

The Essex Agreed Syllabus states: In order to cover the content specified in the programme of study for Key Stage 1 in a meaningful way, the equivalent of at least 40 minutes of curriculum time per week should be devoted to RE.

In order to cover the content specified in the programme of study for Key Stage 2 in a meaningful way, the equivalent of at least 50 minutes of curriculum time per week should be devoted to RE.

Assessment recording and reporting

Assessment

This will be in accordance with the schools assessment policy which is followed throughout the school. Levels for assessment are based on the Essex Agreed Syllabus. The assessment of pupils work can provide information for pupils, teachers and parents:

- 1) to enable pupils to reflect upon and celebrate achievement;
- 2) to help plan for progression, continuity and target setting for pupils, and to inform planning for future work of whole classes and individual pupils.
- 3) to communicate achievement and identify areas for further development to pupils, parents and teachers.
- 4) to evaluate the effectiveness of teaching and learning.

Assessment is an integral part of teaching and learning and based upon teachers' judgements of pupil attainment and progress. Assessment is built in to the planning of learning experiences and clearly related to the learning outcomes that are proposed. Assessment activities should be wide ranging and matched to the pupil's ability ie differentiated by task or by outcome, through appropriate support and resource provision.

Forms of Assessment

A wide variety of assessment procedures should be used to provide opportunities for pupils to achieve across a range of contexts. Activities resulting in written or oral outcomes, project material, models, role-play, video/audio presentations factual recall, observations display work may provide a basis for assessment. Pupils will be encouraged to evaluate their own work.

Recording and Reporting

Assessment and recording begin in Reception against age specific learning outcomes (see above) and continue throughout the school. An end of year judgement using the best-fit level descriptor is recorded.

Feedback and Marking Policy

Feedback to pupils should be provided on their attainment against the objectives of R.E. Pupils are encouraged to improve their own learning performance through the school marking policy.

Refer to schools feedback and marking policy

Role of the Co-ordinator

- To be responsible to the Headteacher and colleagues for the monitoring of teaching, assessment and planning of Religious Education based on the development of the children at each stage. Monitoring occurs in order to support staff and should include classroom observation, book scrutiny, planning and discussion with pupils.
- To manage resources and facilities for Religious Education.
- To attend appropriate in-service training for Religious Education, keep up-to-date with current developments and feed these developments back to staff.
- To advise individual colleagues and induct new members of staff as required on the Religious Education process and teaching methods.
- To track data and use this, in consultation with the Headteacher, to set realistic targets in R.E.
- To ensure that cross-curricular concerns such as literacy skills, multi-cultural issues, equal opportunity, the use of Information Technology and PHSE are reflected in Religious Education.
- In consultation with the Headteacher, to communicate with parents, governors and the community regarding issues associated with Religious Education.
- To liaise with other primary and secondary colleagues.

To maintain a Subject Leader's file containing:

1. The Religious Education Policy and Guidelines
2. Medium term plans which represent schemes of work in school.
3. Assessment and monitoring procedures for teaching and learning and evidence of that monitoring.
4. Audits and reports to Headteacher about progress made in R.E.
5. A record of Staff Professional Development in R.E.
6. Data and current action plan for R.E.

Working with the Headteacher and colleagues, to undertake a regular audit/review of Religious Education in line with the school development plan.

To be familiar with the current inspection framework and to consult with the Headteacher to complete the school's SEF document.

Staffing

The school's curriculum for R.E. is implemented by individual class teachers under the guidance of the R.E. co-ordinator using the resources available.

Resources and their management

Each of the major religions studied has a resources box containing some artefacts, factual books and teaching material. Many of the resources used are pulled from the rich wealth of current and engaging sites available on the internet. These are scrutinised by the teachers to ensure their accuracy and relevance to the topic in hand.