

Religious Education 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 Bridstow Church of England Primary 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 endeavour to enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. 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 Education Act 1996. The Act stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The Act 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 Act 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 Herefordshire's Agreed Syllabus (2011 – 2016) and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The Education Act 1996 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 styles

- 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, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. Where practical, we organise 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 in key religious questions. They study aspects of particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using ICT, working individually or in groups.
- 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;

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- 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 guidance included in the Herefordshire 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.
- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. As we have mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.
- 4.4 The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.
- 4.5 In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the Herefordshire Agreed Syllabus, it is recommended that there is a minimum allocation of 5% of curriculum time for RE.

This means in practice that schools are recommended to allocate:

Foundation Stage 2: 36 hours per year (both teacher-led and child-initiated activities)

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year (On average, 1 hour per week)

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year (On average, 1 Hr 15 mins per week).

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 of the National Curriculum, 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. Additional RE topics covered throughout the year are outlined in the long-term plan and taught weekly within the reception classes.

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 our literacy sessions have religious themes or content, which encourage discussion, and this is one method for promoting the skills of speaking and listening.

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 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 smoking, drugs and 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.

6.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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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.

- 6.5 The staff at Bridstow CE Primary School firmly believe that the consideration of important questions about life, its origins and meaning cannot be separated from the study of science, and that due consideration of religious ideas and concepts can contribute much to our understanding of the importance of scientific study and vice versa. This has proven particularly truthful for children who would state that they have no faith or belief.

7. Assessment and recording

- 7.1 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. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the expectations of the unit. We record the attainment grades in our assessment files, which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.
- 7.2 The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

8. Resources

- 8.1 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 separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. Bibles aimed at different maturity levels are available in school, and from the Bishop Maskell Centre, Ludlow.

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. 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.

Policy approved by Governing Body on _____

Signed _____ Position _____

Policy due for review _____