

Religious Education (RE) Policy

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Firs Farm Primary School, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the six major world faiths and address the challenging questions that RE raises about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

We encourage pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. RE enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular, those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

- 1.2 The aims of religious education are to help children:

- to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today, supporting and promoting the British values
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other five 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 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.
- develop a community of enquirers.
- to develop understanding of respecting others rights whilst valuing their own.

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 withdraw from the teaching of 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, social and cultural teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship.

Firs Farm Primary School's RE curriculum and scheme of work is based on a locally agreed syllabus by the London Borough of Enfield (updated 2012), which sets out the statutory entitlement to religious education for pupils.

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 (AT1) and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them (learning from religion AT2). 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, Eid, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship (see grid) and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children e.g. Pathways (a Christian based group) who attend our school twice a term to present lively interactive assemblies. All visitors to the school are given 'Guidance for Visitors' sheet and are required to meet the class teacher before their visit to discuss the level and needs of the pupils.
- 3.3** At Firs Farm, we teach using a range of pedagogies, including 'Enquiry Based Learning' where children are given the opportunity to *enquire*, plan their own investigations and ask 'big' questions in a safe and respectful environment. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children are given the opportunity to work as a whole class, in groups, pairs or individually and are given the opportunity to prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies. Where appropriate, RE lessons can be blocked.
- 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 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.
 - Scaffolding work for less able children and providing extension work for more able pupils.
 - Taking photos of activities as evidence or recording children talking.

4 Curriculum planning in religious education

- 4.1** We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Enfield Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning (see framework overview). We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we

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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. RE is cross-curricular and is often taught in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1.
- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis ensuring that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but that they do not repeat topics.
- 4.4 Short term plans include individual lesson plans for each unit and detail learning objectives, learning outcomes, teaching input, resources and activity details. The teacher keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader. All plans are available electronically on the Staff shared drive.

5 Foundation Stage

- 5.1 Religious education is taught to all children in the school and in Reception classes it is taught through various festivals as they take place throughout the year. The document 'Development Matters 2012' outlines the RE which can be found under one of the four 'specific' areas of development 'Understanding the World' and the goal 'People and Communities'.
- 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 under the 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' area 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, extended writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in the Literacy Hour have religious themes or content (Nicholas Roberts pack), which encourages discussion and promotes the skills of speaking and listening. Children are often encouraged to make books and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Computing

ICT is always used in religious education. Teachers use the IWB to project posters, DVD clips and other software. 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 the main six faiths. Teaching high quality RE in

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accordance with The Enfield Agreed Syllabus, ensures that the British Values are promoted as follows:

Mutual Tolerance

RE challenges children to be increasingly respectful and to celebrate diversity, with that tolerance as a starting point.

Respectful attitudes

Exploring diverse faiths in RE lessons requires a positive attitude towards diversity

Democracy

The RE classroom must be a democratic place where all pupils have the right to be heard.

The rule of law

In RE, pupils examine different codes for human life e.g. Commandments, rules.

Individual Liberty

In RE, pupils consider questions about identity and belonging. Religion is a good case study of the balance between freedom and restraint.

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

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide many opportunities for spiritual development (See SMSC folder). 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 educational needs

7.1 At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

7.2 When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

7.3 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a Sikh temple, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils (see Trips folder).

8 Assessment and recording

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- 8.1** We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons using the Attainment Targets in the Enfield Agreed Syllabus; both attainments targets are used:

Attainment Target 1 (AT1): Learning about religion

Attainment Target 2 (AT2): Learning from religion

Teachers 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 national curriculum levels of attainment. This is used as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, report writing and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

- 8.2** 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.

9 Resources

- 9.1** At Firs Farm, we are very well resourced, with all RE resources stored in a dedicated RE room. This allows for easy access and enables us to teach all our religious education units successfully and in an interesting way, which enriches the teaching of RE. Some resources are in labelled boxes, whilst most artefacts are displayed on shelves. There are separate areas for software and teaching reference and a set of Bibles for both key stages. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books. In addition to this, the school has a link to the Espresso Website which has several RE activities and links that support the children's individual research. All units are easily accessible on the staff shared drive and are organised in year groups with accompanying electronic resources.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1** The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education three times a year. 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.

Following an annual work scrutiny, the RE subject leader presents the headteacher with a report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. The RE subject leader is also responsible for leading RE training and INSET and the maintenance, ordering and upkeep of all the RE resources.

Signed:

Date: