

RE Policy

The Legal Position of Religious Education

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. RE is part of the basic curriculum. It is taught in accordance with the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus (Reviewed 2016). It makes contributions to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. RE is not taught to propagate religion in general or a particular religion, it is not to nurture or convert. It is an academic discipline with levels of achievements.

Parents who wish to withdraw their children, because of personal choice or religious affiliations are permitted to do so, once they have made a formal written request to the school, and this has been agreed by the head teacher and governors. A record of withdrawals is kept by the RE coordinator.

Introduction

Religious Education is a key subject in the primary school. It not only teaches children about the beliefs and lives of people from different religious cultures, but also encourages them to develop tolerant and sensitive views from people from all walks of life. Religious Education allows children the opportunity to explore their own beliefs and values and to build important links with other faiths. It enables them to grow in self-confidence and self-expression and to discover ways of relating to others with respect. It helps children to build on their social and emotional literacy.

Royal Cross Primary School recognises the importance of RE not just as an academic subject, but also as a means

- To encourage positive relationships between children of different cultures
- To foster tolerance and mutual respect for other faiths.
- To prepare children for adult life in an increasingly diverse country
- To search, as individuals, for meaning in their own lives.

Aims of Religious Education

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

1. Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews.
2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews.

3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews. (Taken from Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2016)

As a school we will:

- Provide a safe environment for children to ask questions relating to the meaning of life. Allow children to express themselves and their own beliefs.
- Allow children to learn how to sensitively respond to beliefs and values which differ from their own.
- Celebrate diversity and allow children to learn about other cultures.
- Develop children's speaking, listening, social, and emotional skills.
- Foster good relationships between children from different cultural backgrounds.
- Deepen children's knowledge of some major world religions.
- Help children to develop their own morals, beliefs and ideals.
- Aim to combat stereotypes and misconceptions, and to build respect and understanding.
- Provide rich and varied contexts for children to learn in.
- Encourage enjoyment and commitment to learning.
- Encourage creative and critical thinking in all children.
- Develop pupils' ability to relate to others and work for the common good.

Religious Education in relation to the National Curriculum

5% of curriculum time is allocated to discrete Religious Education teaching. This equates to roughly one hour a week. Religious Education at Royal Cross Primary School is based on the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus for RE (2016) which is designed around key questions.

- EYFS: Where do we belong?
- Year 1: What do people say about God?
- Year 2: How do we respond to the things that really matter?
- Year 3: Who should we follow?
- Year 4: How should we live our lives?
- Year 5: Where can we find guidance about how to live our lives?
- Year 6: Is life like a journey?

Religious Education at Royal Cross School

The RE programme has been developed in the light of

- Christianity being required for 50% of the time
- The nature of the population of the school
- The nature of the school community (Preston)

- The nature of the religious profile of Lancashire.
- The need for our pupils to be aware of their role as global citizens.

Religious Education is presently taught at Royal Cross alongside Curriculum Topics. The school embraces a Creative Curriculum based upon whole staff discussions and taking into account the linguistic and developmental needs of the children. The curriculum is covered in lessons and enhanced by assemblies for collective worship. RE is sometimes taught weekly for 30 minutes or it can be taught as a block of lessons throughout the school. In addition to this, four faith days are embedded throughout the year to celebrate key religious events that are reflective of our school population and reinforce the Fundamental British Values of tolerance and mutual respect.

Our pupils have communication difficulties arising from deafness or speech and language impairments. We are aware of the need to use appropriate communication strategies and differentiated materials in order to access information and introduce concepts at relevant linguistic levels. This influences the way in which the Religious Education Scheme of work has been developed at Royal Cross.

Christianity is recognised as the major religion represented in Britain and as the significant contributor towards British culture, history and traditions. It is therefore allotted to 50% of RE teaching throughout all year groups. At least one other religion must be studied each year.

Focus questions which relate to the year group's key question provide the starting points for specific lessons. The questions relate to the four fields of enquiry set out in the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus (2016):

- Shared human experience
- Living religious traditions
- Beliefs and values
- The search for personal meaning

Children are encouraged to investigate the answers to these questions through exploring religious texts and artefacts, common experiences, visits from local religious leaders and trips to local sacred places. The aim of this format is to allow children to begin to relate the beliefs, values and traditions of different religions to their own experience and lives.

Principles of Teaching & Learning

Teaching should aim to be engaging, relevant and challenging. Learning should be enjoyable for the children and should take place throughout RE lessons in a variety of contexts.

Some key principles:

- Teachers should communicate high expectations, enthusiasm and passion about RE to pupils.
- Teachers should ensure that pupils have a clear grasp of the purpose and direction of their learning and how it is extending their subject understanding.
- Teaching should benefit from teachers' strong subject expertise both in terms of specialist knowledge and an understanding of effective learning in RE.
- Excellent use should be made of a very wide range of engaging and imaginative resources and teaching strategies to stimulate pupils' active participation in their learning. This secures pupils' outstanding progress across all aspects of RE.
- Questioning and activities should challenge pupils to explore beyond the surface and engage with the deeper meaning and significance of religion and belief.
- Teachers should encourage pupils to ask their own questions about issues arising from their study, becoming critical enquirers into the world of religion and belief.
- Teachers should consistently plan and deliver RE very effectively to enable pupils to forge strong links between their study of religion and belief and their personal reflections on issues of meaning and purpose.
- Teaching should develop pupils' skills of enquiry and reasoned argument effectively.
- Assessment and marking should engage pupils in dialogue about their progress with the result that pupils know how to extend their understanding and skills. Planning is skilfully adjusted to meet the pupils' diverse needs.

(Taken from the 2013 OFSTED subject-specific guidance for RE)

Our objectives in the teaching of RE are:

- To promote community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance within a diverse society.
- To study the festivals and ceremonies, traditions and rituals that mark the stages of life.
- To link basic religious concepts to practices of everyday living and to examine the roles of family life in religion.
- To appreciate the similarities and differences between religions and to enrich their understanding of religious vocabulary.
- To respond imaginatively to religious ideas and consider the different ways in which individuals may come to a personal faith and commitment.
- To study the beliefs, instructions and organisations of particular faiths.
- To be sensitive to the feelings, beliefs and actions of others and to explore the ideas that caring should come before personal interests.
- To help children explore the awe, wonder and joy of life in all its forms, particularly new life and growth.
- To help children with experiences of encountering change such as death, suffering, inequality and conflict.
- To examine ideas of right and wrong and to discover the importance of silence and reflection.

- To distinguish between religious and other forms of understanding, for example, scientific, historical.
- To reflect on their own experiences and to develop a sense of religious understanding.
- To appreciate the value of their own personal faith/beliefs and have confidence to be able to discuss them with others.

Relationship to other subjects

RE is a subject which lends itself well to cross-curricular links as religious tradition is rich particularly in art, history, literature and music. Additionally, RE provides children with a brilliant opportunity to explore the fundamental British values in more detail. Cross-curricular links should be made explicit in RE planning, but only when this will enhance the children's exploration of RE.

Examples of cross-curricular learning within RE could include:

- Fundamental British Values – democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance of these with different faiths
- Computing – researching on the internet, recording work, taking photographs and videos
- Art – observational drawings of artefacts, religious symbols and art work
- PSHE & Citizenship – developing children's sense of self and belonging
- Geography – learning about the origins of religions
- English – presentation of work through recording, speaking/sign & attending/listening skills
- History – how religion has developed through the passing of time

Teaching and Learning Style

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.

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, and Eid etc. to develop their religious thinking.

We recognise that in all classes, children have a wide range of differing abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this by:

- Setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks.

- Sometimes grouping children by ability in the room (depending on the task).
- Setting different tasks for each ability group.
- Providing resources of different complexity, depending on the ability of the child.
- Using classroom assistants to support children individually or in groups.

Language and Communication

Pupils develop language skills through:

- Modified style and pace of curriculum delivery in appropriate communication modes
- Talking about their work and presenting their own ideas in pictures and writing
- Studying stories, role play and themes
- Visits within the community
- Visitors from the community
- Finding information from sources such as books, CD – ROMs and the internet

RE can be taught through:

- Role play and drama
- Story telling
- Discussion and debate
- Topic work
- Reflection
- Use of visitors
- Use of local community
- Tapes, films and videos.
- Handling artefacts and visual stimuli
- Visits and visitors

Religious Education and Inclusion

In line with the other school policies, RE aims to meet the needs of all children through planned differentiation and resources. This will take into account the need to adapt lessons to account for children's different learning styles and Specific Special Educational Needs.

Assessment for Learning

Children demonstrate their ability in religious education in a variety of different ways. Younger children in Key Stage 1 might, for example, concentrate on learning through a range of speaking and listening activities, whilst older pupils may write a 'question and answer' style report on what it may be like to be a member of a religious community in Britain today and outline what impresses them about this religious identity and community. Teachers will assess children's work by making informal judgements during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and uses this information to plan for future learning.

Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide his or her progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they can improve their own work.

Subject leader collects samples of pupils work, annotated against B Squared and used to generate whole staff moderation discussions. These are transferred to a developing portfolio of work.

Resources

There are sufficient resources for all religious education teaching units in the school and are able to be ordered from Lancashire's Library Service. The library in school also contain a good selection of religious books.

Monitoring and Review

The coordination and planning of the religious education curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also: Supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments and in religious education and by providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject.

The quality of teaching and learning in religious education is monitored and evaluated by the Subject leader as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluating.

Closing Statement

In Royal Cross we believe that practical experiences are a valuable tool and are essential for our pupils each with their specific learning needs. We try to develop a wide range and variety of experiences such as visiting places of worship, receiving visitors, handling religious artefacts, self-expression and role play. It is acknowledged that specific learning objectives may take longer to achieve and productive repetition of some ideas will be vital for reinforcing each concept. Depending on the level of need the pupils may not achieve all the objectives within the prescribed key stage. Teachers are encouraged to adapt ideas and strategies from a range of schemes of work in order to allow access to religious education to every child.

It is our belief that recognition and appreciation of achievement of any objective, from any key stage, irrespective of the chronological age of the pupil is very important for self-esteem. At Royal Cross we celebrate the school's cultural and spiritual diversity in an atmosphere of mutual respect and tolerance for individual beliefs.

Equal Opportunities

All members of the school community should be aware that every individual has a right to be considered of equal value and be given equal opportunities regardless of:

- Ethnicity
- Gender (including transgender)
- Social background
- Disability status
- HIV/ AIDS
- Religion and belief
- Age
- Marital status
- Nationality/ citizenship
- Sexual orientation

In the context of the school we feel the most appropriate definition is that: Equal Opportunity is the right of everyone to equal chances. Each individual is respected for who they are, free from discrimination.

Health and Safety

Royal Cross School for Deaf Children follows LA advice. This is outlined in the school's Health and Safety document. School staff are responsible for checking that there are no obvious breaches in Health and Safety.