

Ashford CE Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Approved by FGB: 4 March 2014

Religious Education Policy

Vision and Values Statement:

We are a caring Christian community where everyone feels valued, safe and adopts an "I can" attitude. All we do is underpinned by our Christian values which means we celebrate individuality and achievements through mutual respect and high aspirations. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential and dreams, through a journey of life-long learning.

Principles

At Ashford Church of England School we believe that all children are entitled to equal access to learning in accordance with their need regardless of race, sex, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability or age.

“A Church School nourishes Christians in their faith,
encourages those of other faiths and
challenges those with no faith.”

Archbishop Robert Runcie

Religious Education throughout the school provides a foundation of Christian teaching relevant to the needs of the present day. It aims to give an appreciation of all that is embraced by the term 'religion' in its widest sense. We hope to do this in such a way that children in our school will be supported and encouraged as they practise their faith and that they will grow in the virtues of love, understanding and tolerance.

RE is taught in accordance with the aims of the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education and *Excellence and Distinctiveness*, Guidance on RE in Church of England Schools.

Our Aims

Our RE curriculum aims to support and contribute to the vision of the school as a whole by:

- encouraging and enabling children to express and explore their own beliefs
- developing children's knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity and other principle religions, their beliefs, values and practices
- helping children to understand and appreciate the beliefs of others
- assisting children in their personal search for the meaning of life
- assisting children in developing self-worth and a respect for others
- encouraging spiritual awareness of people and the natural world
- encouraging positive Christian values and helping children to explore them for themselves
- ensuring that RE is intrinsic to the whole curriculum and life of the school

Legal Requirements

In accordance with the law we provide religious education for all pupils registered at the school. The teaching of RE comprises 5% of the curriculum timetable as recommended by *Excellence and Distinctiveness*. This equates to 1hr per week in KS1 and 1hr 15 minutes per week in KS2. During the Early Years Foundation Stage, children explore RE throughout their curriculum.

The Scheme of Work

The Scheme of Work is drawn from many sources and is influenced by the guidelines of the Diocese of London and the Local Authority's Religious Education Guidelines. Christianity has a central role in the scheme taking up approximately 60% of the curriculum. In addition to Christianity KS1 children also learn about Judaism with some teaching on Sikhism and Islam. In KS2 children learn about Judaism, Sikhism, Islam, Hinduism and Buddhism. Each year group has a unit which explores our responsibility to the local or world community or the environment.

RE is taught in half-termly units through books, use of the Internet, discussion, drama, music, art, dance, religious artefacts, school visitors and visits to places of worship.

Learning and Teaching

Planning for Religious Education is based on the two Attainment Targets

1. Learning *about* religions
2. Learning *from* religions

Learning about religion includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion, its key beliefs and teachings, practices, their impact on the lives of believers and communities, and the varying ways in which these are expressed. 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.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupil's reflection on and response to their experiences and their learning about religion. It develops pupil's skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth and values and commitments, and communicating their responses.

Through RE children have the opportunity to develop many key skills such as thinking, researching, evaluating, reflecting and empathising. Teaching and learning styles are varied throughout the school and include some whole class, group, paired and individual learning experiences. Understanding and learning is assessed at the end of each unit.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as PSHCE and our Collective Worship, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important.

Religious Education introduces children to the significance of belonging to a community and to the diversity of communities in the wider world. It teaches respect for values such as freedom and democracy, and the fundamental equality of all people.

Within each classroom there is an area for reflection with a Bible, Cross, a copy of the Lord's Prayer and the school vision and values statement. There is also an ongoing class RE book that is a record of learning and experiences which is added to during the course of the year.

Details of the school's work in SMSC development can be found in appendix 1 of this document.

Inclusion

In all our planning and teaching, it is the aim of the school to develop an inclusive curriculum. We aim to ensure that the RE curriculum is accessible to all children regardless of gender, race and ability.

Ashford Church of England School is committed to valuing diversity and to equality of opportunity. We aim to create and promote an environment in which pupils, parents and staff are treated fairly and with respect, and feel able to contribute to the best of their abilities.

The Governing Body recognises that it is unlawful to take into account anyone's gender, marital status, colour, race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, disability, religious beliefs, age or sexual orientation. Full consideration has been given to this during the formulation of this policy as it is the governors' aim that no-one at Ashford Church of England School should suffer discrimination, either directly or indirectly, or harassment on any of these grounds.

Right of withdrawal

Our Christian ethos pervades all areas of school life but we welcome those from all faiths to become part of our community. At the beginning of a person's relationship with the school, for example on a tour of the school for a new child or at an interview for a new member of staff, it is explained that by becoming part of a faith community, there is an agreement to embrace and accept our ethos by taking part in RE lessons and acts of worship. Of course, we accept that in some cases, parents may wish to exercise their statutory right, under section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, to withdraw their children from this, and that parents are not obliged to give a reason for requesting withdrawal. Teachers may wish to do the same with regard to the teaching of RE. Such requests should be made to the headteacher in writing. We trust, however, that through open communication at the outset and a clear message about the vision and values of the school, such situations will be rare.

Assessment and Reporting

Children will be assessed in RE each half term. The area for assessment is highlighted in the scheme of work and is linked to the attainment targets for religious education. This can be used by the teacher to inform future planning. Parents are informed of the pupil's progress during parents meetings and in the end of year reports.

The majority of pupils are expected to be at level 4 when they reach the end of Key Stage 2:

AT1. Pupils use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences. They make links between them, and describe some similarities and differences both within and between religions. They describe the impact of religion on people's lives. They suggest meanings for a range of forms of religious expression.

AT2. Pupils raise, and suggest answers to, questions of identity, belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments. They apply their ideas to their own and other people's lives. They describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.

The Role of the RE Leader and Monitoring

The teaching, monitoring and resourcing of Religious Education is led by the RE Leader in close collaboration with the Head Teacher and Senior Leadership Team. RE planning, teaching and the quality of work in children's books is monitored regularly through learning walks, book scrutiny and planning reviews. This is to ensure we continuously strive to develop and improve on planning, the quality of RE teaching and the achievement of pupils.

Changes to the scheme of work will be made as and when necessary to respond to school monitoring and the national picture. The governing body has a key role in monitoring the effectiveness of RE teaching around the school as detailed in the Governors' Monitoring Policy. It is the role of the RE Leader to work with teaching staff in developing the confidence and skills necessary for teaching.

Diocesan support

Support from the London Diocesan Board for Schools (LDBS) is highly valued and intrinsic to the work of the school. It is delivered in a variety of methods: training; advice; moral and spiritual guidance to leadership and staff. The LDBS provides a programme of training for both Newly Qualified Teachers and more experienced staff seeking leadership and pedagogical development in which the school actively participates. The LDBS works in close collaboration with the school, highlighting opportunities for development and celebrating successes which can then become models of good practice for other schools.

Resources

Resources are stored in a central location for ease of access by all staff. A continual review of available resources enables them to be updated and refreshed regularly.

First agreed by Governing Body: March 2014

S.Seymour
Dec 2013