



Bedenham and Holbrook Federation of Primary Schools



Religious Education Policy January 2015

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 The aim of Religious Education (R.E.) is to foster in pupils a reflective approach to life and to enable and enrich this process through their study of living faiths, acknowledging the fact that whilst the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, there is an increasing cultural diversity and traditions of the other principal religions are represented in the country. Through this approach at Bedenham and Holbrook Federation of Primary Schools we aim 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 and to develop understanding, empathy and respect the right of people to hold and practise beliefs different from their own.

1.2 The aims of R.E. 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 R.E.

2.1 Our school curriculum for R.E. 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 refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The R.E. curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school R.E. curriculum is based on "Living Differences" the LA's Agreed Syllabus and it meets all the

requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the R.E. 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 style

3.1 We base our teaching and learning style in R.E. on the key principle that good teaching in R.E. 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 concepts and religious contexts studied in the R.E. curriculum.

3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in R.E. 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. We organize 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 into religious topics. They study concepts relevant to a variety of religious faiths or to a particular faith and also have the opportunity to compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as remembering or sacred. Children discuss religious and moral issues working as a class, individually or in groups and with access to computers and other relevant sources.

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.

4. Curriculum planning in R.E.

4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the latest edition of “Living Difference” the LA’s 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 concepts and world religions 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 based on R.E. level descriptors and the planning cycles. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the R.E. subject leader.

4.5 Each unit of work is based on a key concept and planning follows the learning cycle given in “Living Difference” the LA’s Agreed Syllabus as follows:

Communicate, Apply, Enquire, Contextualise, Evaluate beginning with Communicate or Enquire.

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, R.E. 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 R.E. 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 R.E. topics covered throughout the year are outlined in the long term plan and taught in blocks planned each half term within the reception classes.

6. Contribution of R.E. to the teaching of other subjects

6.1 English

R.E. 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 the Literacy Hour have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion and this, is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write in a variety of genres such as letters and recounts and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Information and communication technology (ICT)

We use ICT where appropriate in R.E. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet and network resources. As in any subject 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 R.E. 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 sharing and relationships. 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

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.

7. Teaching R.E. to children with special educational needs

7.1 At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. R.E. forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our R.E. 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 Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to R.E.

7.4 We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning R.E. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a religious building, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8. Assessment and recording

8.1 We assess children's work in R.E. 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.

8.2 Level descriptors are available for each step of the learning cycle.

8.3 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 We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our R.E. teaching units. We keep resources for R.E. in a central store where there is a separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. Each class also has its own Bible in the classroom appropriate to the age group.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 The R.E. 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 R.E., for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The R.E. subject leader presents the headteacher with an annual action plan that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

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.

Agreed at the Policy Committee on 26.01.15

Governing Body Meeting on: 09.02.15

Minute Reference: 9g

To be reviewed: November 2017



Chair of governors:

Head of School Bedenham:



Head of school Holbrook

