

Hexham First School

Religious Education (RE) Policy



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Written by: EB
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Aims and Objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Hexham First School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. 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.

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.

THE LEGAL POSITION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE):

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 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 Northumberland SACRE Agreed Syllabus and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA 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.

Teaching and Learning Style

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.

Hexham First organises visits to local places of worship and invites representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

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;
- Grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group providing scaffolding where necessary;
- Providing resources;
- Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children and extend that of other pupils.

Curriculum planning in Religious Education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Northumberland SACRE'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.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases long-term , medium-term (on each year groups Medium Term Plans) and short-term (weekly/daily planning). All plans are available to staff on the shared network for ease of access and modification.

Foundation Stage

Religious Education is taught to all children in Years One-Four. In the Foundation Stage, children are taught through festivals that are relevant to the specific cohort as they take place throughout the year. As the Reception Team work under the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, we relate the Religious Education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out under the Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW) areas which are crucial to the development and progress of all pupils at this stage.

Contributions of RE to other subject areas

English

RE 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 English lessons have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

We use ICT where appropriate in RE. The children find, select and analyse information, using the Internet and CD ROMs and also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve presentation. Teachers use interactive whiteboards for whole class or group teaching.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

Through our RE 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 personal safety, influences of media 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.

Teaching RE to children with SEND

At our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. RE 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.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have Special Educational Needs (SEN). Our assessment process looks at a range of factors - classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, 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.

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 we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Monitoring and review

Class teachers are responsible of assessing and monitoring pupil's progress in this subject area. The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the pupil's work and the quality of the teaching in RE through annual work scrutinies, pupil interviews and lesson observations. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE on request and through staff meetings. The RE subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. The RE subject leader is also responsible for the maintenance, ordering and upkeep of RE resources.

Withdrawal from RE lessons/trips

Parents have the legal right to withdraw pupils from RE but this must be discussed with the class teacher, RE Coordinator and Head teacher. A class teacher cannot make the decision to allow a child/parent to withdraw from RE lessons. If the parent chooses to go ahead and withdraw their child from RE this must be given to the school in writing by the parent. Staff should refer to the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus for information about speaking to parents and withdrawing pupils from RE and the issues surrounding this, including the negative implications, must be highlighted to the parent (for example, missing lessons that may link to other subject areas, for example, Literacy lessons, which may have an impact on the pupil's progress and learning), as well as issues of discrimination. The withdrawal of a child from RE lessons should be the last resort as RE is an important part of learning and understanding about the world and community.