

Cavendish Primary School



Religious Education Policy

AIMS

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Cavendish School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other 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

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 Hounslow's Agreed Syllabus (Widening Horizons) 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

Most of what is taught and learnt in R.E. can be divided into two areas – learning about religion and learning from religion.

Core Areas

The Hounslow Agreed Syllabus identifies seven core areas, **Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and Humanism** (as an example of a non-theistic belief system). This selection reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Britain are mainly Christian whilst taking into account the teaching and practices of other religions. More material is drawn from Christianity than any other core area.

Areas of Exploration:

- Worship & Celebration
- Rites of Passage
- Key Figures
- Writings
- Stories
- Language and Symbolism
- Places & Communities
- Values & Social Actions
- Beliefs

The style in which R.E. is taught is crucial to the pupils' enjoyment and understanding of the subject. A wide variety of different learning and teaching techniques should be used. In this way, the pupils' skills will be built upon and they will be offered a wider range of opportunities for understanding.

ACTIVE LEARNING

- Active learning within R.E. is extremely important. As with other subjects, pupils learn more readily and show greater enthusiasm when they are actively involved in their learning. There are a great number of opportunities for active learning within R.E. For example:
 - Drama/role play
 - Discussions/debates
 - Dance
 - Music/song

Other practical activities such as cookery, art and craft, design and technology etc. may incorporate RE elements and can be linked to a study or celebration of religious festivals.

VISITS AND VISITORS

These enable R.E. to be brought to life for the children. When undertaking an RE visit, pupils should understand why the place is special and why it is important for them to respect the laws and customs of a particular group of people. Likewise, when a visitor has been invited in, all efforts should be made to prepare the children for what to expect well in advance. In this way, any laughter, embarrassment, confusion etc. should be kept to a minimum. Members of the school community, including parents, are used to enhance RE teaching by sharing their beliefs and practices.

RESOURCES AND ARTEFACTS

Many of the religious practices and beliefs taught in school will be unfamiliar to some of the children. It is therefore crucial that artefacts, posters, videos, online resources etc. are used whenever possible in order to extend the children's understanding of the religion. As well as our own supply of artefacts, the Hounslow Education Centre has a large and readily available collection. All religious artefacts should be treated with respect, as they can be aids to worship and in some cases represent a divine being. They can be used in the classroom as starting points for discussion and role-play. In addition, they can help pupils understand about the rituals in which they are used, the stories they tell and what they represent to the members of that particular faith.

Religious Education plays an important part in helping our school to foster the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils. We therefore plan and provide opportunities for children to ask questions about and reflect on their own experiences and their responses to these experiences, and to consider questions of meaning and purpose.

THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The importance of an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect for the teaching of R.E. is recognised. We understand that children must feel relaxed, secure and comfortable when talking about their own beliefs and values.

SKILLS IN R.E.

a) INVESTIGATION

- asking relevant questions
- knowing how to use different types of sources as a way of gathering information

b) INTERPRETATION

- the ability to draw meaning from artefacts, art, poetry and symbolism
- the ability to suggest meanings of religious texts

c) REFLECTION

- the ability to reflect on feelings, relationships, experience and fundamental questions

d) EMPATHY

- the ability to consider the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others
- developing the ability to identify feelings such as love, wonder, forgiveness and sorrow
- the ability to see the world through the eyes of others

e) EVALUATION

- the ability to debate issues of religious significance
- weighing up the respective claims of self-interest, consideration for others, religious teaching and individual conscience

f) ANALYSIS

- distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact
- distinguishing between the features of different religions

g) SYNTHESIS

- linking significant features of religion together in a coherent pattern
- connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole

h) APPLICATION

- making the association between religions and the individual, community, national and international life
- identifying key religious values and their interplay with secular ones

i) EXPRESSION

- the ability to explain concepts, rituals and practices
- the ability to identify and articulate matters of deep conviction and concern and to respond to religious issues through a variety of media

ATTITUDES IN R.E.

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern should be promoted through all areas of school life. However, there are some attitudes that are central to religious education. These include the following:

a) **COMMITMENT**

- understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values by which to live
- willingness to develop a positive approach to life

b) **FAIRNESS**

- listening to the views of others without prejudging the response
- careful consideration of other views
- willingness to consider evidence and argument
- readiness to look beyond first impressions

c) **RESPECT**

- respecting those who have different beliefs from one's own
- recognising the rights of others to hold those views
- avoidance of ridicule
- appreciating that people's religious convictions are often deeply felt
- recognising the needs and concerns of others

d) **SELF-UNDERSTANDING**

- developing a mature sense of self-worth and value

e) **ENQUIRY**

- curiosity and a desire to seek the truth
- developing a personal interest in metaphysical questions
- an ability to live with ambiguities and paradox
- the desire to search for the meaning of life
- being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself

PROGRESSION AND CONTINUITY

Progression and continuity is ensured through our use of the LEA Scheme of Work outlined in Widening Horizons which details the knowledge and skills to be developed in each year group and ensures that each year group's units build on knowledge acquired during previous years. Visits to places of worship should be planned into the curriculum, with each year group having a designated place of worship to visit which is relevant to one of the units studied that year. This system will ensure that, by the time the children leave our school at the end of Year 6, they will have visited the places of worship of each of the six main world religions: A Buddhist Temple, a Christian Church, a Hindu Mandir, a Muslim Mosque, a Jewish Synagogue and a Sikh Gurdwara

FOUNDATION STAGE

Within the context of ‘Knowledge and Understanding of the World’, Reception children should be given opportunities to help them “to become aware of, explore and question issues of differences in gender, ethnicity, language, religion and culture.” This can be done by:

- Introducing children to a range of cultures and religions, for example, tell stories, listen to music, dance, eat foods from different cultures and use resources in role play that reflect a variety of cultures, such as clothes, cooking implements, vegetables, symbols, candles and toys.
- Looking at pictures and videos of the cultures of children within the setting and other cultures outside the children’s experience.
- Looking at books that show different languages, dress and customs.
- Deepening children’s knowledge of cultures and beliefs, for example by looking at books, listening to simple short stories in different languages, handling artefacts, inviting visitors to the setting from a range of religious and ethnic groups, and visiting local places of worship and cultural centres where appropriate.

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.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

All children irrespective of their race, gender, religion or ability will be given opportunities to increase their knowledge and explore their own beliefs and those of others, whether religious or not. Diversity of religious belief will be treated sensitively and the value of the children themselves as a resource is recognised and utilised.

Religions have many common elements, concerns and values e.g. tolerance and justice. Where possible, these will be emphasised but care will be taken not to compromise the integrity of individual faiths.

Efforts will be made to ensure that major faiths are shown in a worldwide context and that where studies of people are made or stories told, that these represent a range of ethnic and cultural backgrounds.

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.

Children who are identified as gifted and talented in Religious Education will be identified by the class teacher who will also inform the G&T coordinator.

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.

ASSESSMENT

In the Foundation Stage assessment will be against the Early Learning Goals for knowledge and understanding of the world and will be recorded on the Foundation Stage Profile.

At Key Stage One and Two, assessment is against the three Attainment Targets set out in the Hounslow Agreed Syllabus:

- AT1 Knowledge and Understanding of Beliefs and Values
- AT2 Knowledge and Understanding of Practices and Actions
- AT3 Knowledge and Understanding of Religion and Belief in their contexts

Statements of attainment appropriate for each key stage are listed in the Hounslow Agreed Syllabus (see Appendix A). Learning activities should include assessment activities related to the attainment target being addressed. In

addition to the attainment targets the Hounslow Agreed Syllabus provides level descriptors that can be used by teachers to assist assessment judgements. Pupil attainment is reported to parents through the end of year report.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is the role of the R.E. coordinator:

- To monitor the teaching of R.E. and to identify strengths and weaknesses in this subject in order to raise standards.
- To improve the quality of teaching by planning training and providing support to address areas for development, e.g. aiding staff development through the organisation of INSET.
- To be familiar with the legal requirements for R.E. in schools, to keep staff informed of these and to ensure as far as possible that they are being met.
- To liaise with other schools, members of the community and religious organisations where appropriate.
- To assist in implementing units of work and lesson plans if requested and to monitor the quality of the delivery of the R.E. curriculum.
- To ensure that teachers have access to the resources needed to support the units of work.

It is the role of the class teacher to ensure that the subject is well planned and taught and to assess individual pupil progress.

It is the role of the Headteacher and governors to ensure effective curriculum delivery.

BUDGET AND RESOURCES

It is the role of the coordinator to organise R.E. resources in the school so that they are accessible and to make staff aware of what is available. It is also the role of the coordinator to draw up a budget and to provide, in consultation with the staff of the school, new resources to enable teachers to deliver R.E. in their classrooms effectively.

POLICY REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed by the curriculum committee of the governing body on a three-year cycle of policy review.

Anne-Marie Inwood
Summer 2006.

APPENDIX A

ATTAINMENT TARGETS FOR KEY STAGE ONE

AT1 Knowledge and understanding of beliefs and values
a) I know that people believe in different things.
b) I can tell you things that I believe.
c) I can ask questions and discuss possible answers.
d) I know that people show what they believe in different ways.
AT2 Knowledge and understanding of practices and actions
a) I know that people act in different ways because of what they believe.
b) I know that celebrations are important for me and other people.
c) I know that people change as they get older.
d) I can name some religious objects.
e) I know that religions have different signs.
AT3 Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief in their contexts
a) I know about some important religious people.
b) I know that people everywhere have always had different beliefs.
c) I know that we have to look after our world.
d) I know that some things like pictures, music and nature can make me feel different.

ATTAINMENT TARGETS FOR KEY STAGE TWO

AT1 Knowledge and understanding of beliefs and values
a) I know that people believe in different things.
b) I can explain some of the things that I believe and value.
c) I know that important questions have different answers.
d) I know about some of the ways in which people show what they believe.
AT2 Knowledge and understanding of practices and actions
a) I can describe things that people do because of what they believe.
b) I can explain why some celebrations are important to religious people.
c) I can describe some of the religious ceremonies that mark changes in peoples' lives.
d) I know some of the objects which are used by different faith communities and how they are used.
e) I can explain what some religious symbols mean.
AT3 Knowledge and understanding of religion and belief in their contexts
a) I know why some religious people are important.
b) I know something about the history of religions – I know that people in different parts of the world believe different things.
c) I can make suggestions about how we can make things better for ourselves, our community and the world.
d) I can describe ways in which religious ideas have been shown.