



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) Policy

### 1. Aims and Objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St Mary Magdalene School, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths and we address fundamental questions concerning, 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. We provide opportunities for children to develop an understanding of people who do not follow a faith. 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.

1.2 The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:-

- ✓ Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- ✓ Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other major world Religions and value systems found in Britain including values of non-believers;
- ✓ 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 make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- ✓ Have respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity in society.

### 2. The Legal Position of Religious Education

2.1 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 only after they 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 LA's Agreed Syllabus (SACRE) and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that religious traditions in

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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 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.

### **3. Teaching and Learning Style (Cont'd)**

**3.2** Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise 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 particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individual or in groups. Sometimes children share their learning of R.E in class and whole school assemblies. Whole school collective worship gives the school further opportunities to develop religious understanding and to share their developing knowledge and understanding with others.

**3.4** We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the developing abilities of the children within each class. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- ✓ Setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- ✓ Setting tasks of increasing difficulty, using Bronze, Silver, Gold and Platinum outcomes to ensure the children can choose a task to build directly on their previous knowledge and understanding.
- ✓ Providing opportunities for the children to challenge themselves by choosing their own level of difficulty.
- ✓ Providing resources of different complexity adapted to the lesson outcomes.
- ✓ Using other adults where appropriate to support the work of individual or groups of children.

## **4. Curriculum Planning in Religious Education**

**4.1** We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the LA's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and we ensure that the curriculum offers the children increasing levels of challenge as they move through the school.

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- 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 religious education topics studied in each term during each Key Stage and show skills progression. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. RE is taught in a week block to ensure skills are covered. At curriculum planning meetings teachers discuss with senior staff opportunities to teach and revisit RE skills throughout the Irresistible Learning curriculum. In Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 we teach religious education in conjunction with other subjects where a clear link exists. Often Religious education objectives are revisited and extended during topics based on historical Britain and during work based around different countries.
- 4.3** Our medium-term plans give details of the AT1 and AT2 skills to be taught during each unit of work. Levelled R.E. skills, linked to learning from and about religion, are included on the mid-term plan. These skills also inform the planning of differentiation and provide an assessment tool for the levels that are being achieved. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.
- 4.4** The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson using learning objectives and expected outcomes from the medium term plan. These individual plans are accessed electronically and often staff can discuss them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

## **5. The Foundation Stage**

- 5.1** We teach Religious Education to all children in the school including those in the Reception class.
- 5.2** In Reception class, Religious Education is taught through the topics covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the Early Years Foundation Stage we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the EYFS Statutory guidance and Development Matters, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

## **6. Contribution of RE to the Teaching in Other Curriculum Areas**

### **6.1 English:**

Religious Education 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 RE's way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. During RE lessons, children engage in drama activities. We also encourage the children to demonstrate their understanding of R.E skills through speaking, listening and drama activities. In Upper Key Stage 2 the children are offered the freedom to record their understanding in many different ways, including activities which demonstrate and provide opportunities to practice their developing writing ability. Open ended tasks within R.E give children opportunities to develop both their research skills and the use of technology, utilizing their use of the internet to research different religions and religious ideas.

**6.2 Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship:**

Through our Religious Education 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 smoking, drugs 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 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. We encourage children to approach other beliefs with sensitivity.

**6.3 Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Through 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. RE and ICT**

**7.1** Information and Communication Technology enhances Religious Education wherever appropriate in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using the Internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation. Older children use iPad apps to help them present their work on various topics. Younger children take photographs of the class acting out Bible stories and record their findings using Picwall and other apps. The imagination studio can be used to give the children experience of places of worship or settings of religious significance, offering opportunities for the children to experience events, celebrations and places of worship not in the direct locality. Other resources including the use of DVDS and clips continue to provide real life examples of celebrations and religious practices.

**8. RE and Inclusion**

**8.1** At our school, we teach Religious Education to all children whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school's 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 good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with Special Educational Needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents and those learning English as an additional language and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Inclusion; Disability Non-Discrimination and Access; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

**8.2** 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 a child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

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**8.3** Pupil Provision Plan (PPP) are created for children with Special Educational Needs and are used as appropriate to support their work in R.E..

**8.4** We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in Religious Education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to a Sikh temple, for example, that involves a journey) we carry out an EVOLVE trip form and any necessary risk assessments prior to the activity to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all children. Parental permission is received if necessary.

## **9. Assessment for Learning**

**9.1** Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might produce a presentation or video based on their investigation into significant figures. As in all subjects the teachers and staff use assessment for learning techniques to ensure work is well pitched and provides the necessary challenge for all learners. Higher order questions are planned and used to deepen thinking and teachers check regularly throughout the lesson the progress of all learners. Teachers will assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or verbal feedback to help guide progress and further understanding in line with the school Marking Policy.

**9.2** The RE subject leader monitors books and looks at samples of children's work. This demonstrates the expected level of achievement in RE in each year of the school. Feedback is given to staff which includes areas of strength and areas of development.

## **10. Resources**

**10.1** We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep resources for Religious Education in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religious faith. There are Bibles for both Key Stages and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. Visual, sensory and spiritual resources are available for different learning needs.

## **11. Monitoring and Review**

**11.1** The RE curriculum leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education. She/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school. The leader contributes, when necessary, to school development and improvement aims. The RE leader informs the Headteacher and Governors of current areas of achievement and future areas for development.

**11.2** This policy will be reviewed at least every 3 years.

**Signed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_