

Weston Turville CE School



Inspire, Believe, Achieve - Together

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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Aim

“How we behave affects other people and the world we live in. This is why our behaviour is important. Our behaviour is influenced by our beliefs and attitudes which grow out of our experience. RE is the opportunity to reflect on our experience and explore the beliefs, values and attitudes that guide us through life... through exploring the beliefs, values, practices and ways of life of the principal religions, other faiths and non-religious world-views. We all play a part in creating the world we live in. What we believe, whether religious or not, contributes significantly to this. RE helps pupils (and the school as a whole) to reflect on the ways in which beliefs influence how people live their lives.”

The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education

The Legal Background

The national requirements for Religious Education are set out in the 1944, 1988 Education Acts and section 375(3) of the 1996 Education Act.

“Every Agreed Syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”

Christianity should have more time devoted to it than the other religions taken together.

This is further explained in DofE circular 1/94 from which the following paragraphs are taken:

“Religious Education is required to be included, alongside the National Curriculum, in the basic curriculum which all maintained schools must provide for their registered pupils; this includes those in reception classes and sixth forms, and is not confined to pupils of compulsory school age.” Para 20.

“If the parent asks that a child should be wholly or partly excused from Religious Education at the school, then the school must comply.” Para 44.

“As a whole and at each Key Stage, the relative content devoted to Christianity in the syllabus should predominate.” Para 35.

The Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England has published requirements for the provision of RE in church schools which is reflected in this policy and is attached as an appendix.

Main Objectives

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils’ own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

Statement of Entitlement

Thus there are two main educational purposes to RE:

1. So pupils can learn **about** religions and beliefs which have influenced the lives of millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures. This is developing their religious literacy, which is essential to understand the modern world;
2. So that pupils can reflect more deeply on their own and others' sense of identity, meaning and purpose in life **from** their study of religion and belief. This develops their understanding of human values and mutual understanding.

Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus

RE supports the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) education of our children. It enables pupils to develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own, and toward living in a society of diverse religions and people who have no faith.

As a church school we recognise that the children come from a variety of backgrounds, some with recognised faith, others without. We believe it is the responsibility of parents to determine the development of faith, and religious observance, within their family. Parents do have the right to withdraw children from RE lessons in school if necessary although we recommend against this. We have strong links with the local church: the clergy both visit the school on a weekly basis for assembly and one of them runs a choir, which is linked to the church choir. The children go up to the church every year for Christmas and Easter services, while the Harvest Festival is held at the school with the clergy in attendance.

Skills, Attitudes and Dispositions

Effective RE will develop a range of skills including:

Skills	Attitudes and dispositions
Explore new avenues of enquiry	Appreciation and wonder
Apply their learning to different contexts	Respect for all
Express deeply held beliefs, feelings and experiences	Self-awareness
Interpret meanings of language, text and ritual	Open-mindedness
Evaluate the coherence of beliefs and lifestyles	Empathy
Analyse increasingly complex concepts and religious phenomena	Curiosity
Create links between experiences, beliefs and forms of expression	Discernment

Expectations

Appropriate to age at the end of their education the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

Statement of Entitlement

Knowledge and Understanding

As a Voluntary Aided school, we follow “The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education”. This specifies the units of study to be covered. The School’s six year topic plan specifies in which term each unit is taught, while the RE scheme of work specifies content and activities to be included. Each class has their own scheme of work, including Reception where they use the Foundation Stage programme of work.

According to the Statement of Entitlement 2/3 of the programme of study must be Christianity, while 1/3 should be about other faiths. At this school we look at Christianity and Judaism in Key Stage 1, Christianity and Hinduism in Years 3 & 4, and Christianity and Islam in Years 5 & 6. However, where appropriate, other religions are included.

The KS1 and KS2 Frameworks provide questions for enquiry, through which knowledge, understanding and reflection are explored and developed.

Timing and Organisation of RE in the classroom

The Statement of Entitlement expects RE to be taught for 5-10% of the timetable. RE is usually taught at this school as a distinct subject for one hour per week, and also through other areas of the curriculum. The class teacher is responsible for ensuring coverage of the appropriate units of study during the course of each academic year. In some terms, especially before major Christian festivals, the amount of time devoted to RE is higher than this.

Methods of Teaching and Pupil Recording

It is vital that a variety of teaching and learning methods are used. These include drama, music, art, visits, artefacts, visitors, discussions and video clips. Written opportunities may include newspaper reports, cartoons, poetry, diaries, questionnaires, interviews, labelled diagrams, surveys and posters.

Teacher Assessment

Assessment is carried out according to the school assessment policy by filling in the skills-based assessment grid. Expectations from the RE Bucks Agreed Syllabus are entered onto the grid and those children who exceed the expectations are written into one column, while those who do not attain them are written into another column. It is then assumed that all others reached the expected standard.

Resources

Resources are stored in two main places – the RE Resources Room and the Headteacher’s office. There are also further resources aimed specifically at staff on the top shelf of the Library. Sets of RE books for each junior class are stored in the classrooms.

Multi-Cultural Issues

RE is a fundamental means of making children aware of the diverse nature of human life, both within this country and the wider world. It should be structured to facilitate this growing awareness as the children move through the school. This should be approached in such a way that children are enabled to gain insights for themselves rather than just receiving instruction.

Equal Opportunities

We are committed to a policy of equal opportunities for all pupils. RE is an entitlement for all pupils regardless of their own particular beliefs or lack of belief. RE is not just for members of organised religions or those who wish to pursue a study in theology.

Monitoring by the Co-ordinator

Monitoring takes the form of evaluation of termly plans, work scrutinies by the staff, and visits to see RE lessons in action. Issues are also discussed on a more informal basis during staff meetings and are followed up by the Co-ordinator where necessary. Where appropriate, targets are made from these monitoring processes and are included within the School Development Plan. These are monitored and reviewed by governors.

Staff Training

Staff have access to inservice training on a regular basis provided by the Diocesan RE advisor.