

St Matthew's High Brooms CE Primary School

Powder Mill Lane
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN4 9DY



Religious Education Policy

Headteacher: Mrs Judith Holt
Chair of Governors: Mrs Karen Stevenson

Ratified: April 2015
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*Distinctive Christian values-
Honesty, Kindness, Respect, Responsibility*

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 Matthew's Church of England Primary 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 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.

1.2 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 consider ways in which beliefs, values and traditions might have significance for their own lives
- develop an understanding of religious traditions
- 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 religious education

2.1 Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1996 Education Act through implementing the Kent Agreed Syllabus 2006.

2.2 Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old however, parents have the right 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. Teachers may refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors.

2.3 The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian but at the same time, takes into account 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.

3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in RE 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.

3.3 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.

3.4 To reflect that we are a church school work on Christianity will predominate however, there will be work in depth on other world religions. The split will be 60%

Christianity and 40% other religions. The other religions taught will be Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism.

4. Curriculum planning in religious education

4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Kent Agreed Syllabus and supported through the units produced by Canterbury Diocese. 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.

5. Foundation Stage

5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

6. Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

6.1 Information and communication technology (ICT)

We use ICT where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet and CD ROMs. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

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 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. We begin each term with units from the SEAL scheme which form part of whole school assembly.

6.3 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 religious education to children with special educational needs

7.1 At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education 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.

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, 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.

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

8. Assessment

8.1 We assess children's work in religious education 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 use one activity as an assessment and record the outcome.

8.2 The RE subject leader will develop a portfolio with samples of children's work. This will demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

9. Resources

9.1 . We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. We are developing resources in our school to be able to teach all the units for the new Kent Agreed Syllabus.

10. Monitoring and review

10.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, 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. She will order and maintain necessary resources.

11. Equal Opportunities

11.1 Religious Education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about religion. It will seek to present religions in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards that diversity.

Updated April 2015 by Nicola Deacon RE Subject Leader