



WHEATLANDS PRIMARY SCHOOL
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Rationale

Definition of R.E

At Wheatlands Primary School we aim to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths. Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions. We aim to address some of the fundamental questions of life and enable the children to investigate and reflect on some of these questions.

Introduction and Intent

RE is a component of the basic curriculum here at Wheatlands and is taught alongside the National Curriculum for Religious Education throughout EYFS, KS1 and KS2. We follow the locally Agreed Syllabus for Redcar and Cleveland produced by SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education). Our curriculum content also takes account of the teachings and practices of the main religions and worldviews represented in our nation, including Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Humanism. Through Religious Education we aim to broaden our children's horizons of the wider world. We encourage and develop the inquisitive nature of children and build a culture of respect, tolerance and acceptance. Children are encouraged to ask questions, make links and think for themselves.

At Wheatlands we believe it is important to support our pupils in developing respectful and sensitive attitudes towards others, whether they hold similar or different religious beliefs to themselves. We believe that it is our role to do our best to provide our children with a rich variety of experiences through which they can develop the necessary attitudes and knowledge to formulate their own beliefs and social values. These can include visits to places of worship and visits from members of local faith communities, the use of artefacts, drama, dance, music and art.

We want all our children to experience the learning of Religious Education, with creativity, enquiry, practical learning and through a range of other cross-curricular links. The development of self-awareness, moral values and positive relationships with others are also elements of learning which we believe to be important in RE teaching. We believe it is important that children in the EYFS find out about different religions and celebrations from an early age and we provide our children with valuable experiences to learn about these in a fun and engaging way.

Our intent is to deliver high quality RE to all our children. We want to equip them with a developing knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews and with a growing ability to express their own beliefs, ideas and values, whilst respecting the rights of others.

Legal Requirements

Religious Education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, except to those withdrawn by their parents. Our school curriculum for RE meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act. This stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old.

Right of withdrawal

The 1996 Education Act confirms the right of withdrawal. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education, either wholly or in part. Parents are free to exercise this right and Wheatlands Primary School will give effect to such request. Parents are not obliged to state their reasons for seeking withdrawal. Although it is not a legal requirement to put such requests in writing, we would advise parents to do so. It is the duty of the school to support community cohesion and RE plays an important role in this. Parents may request alternative provision for RE, either through attendance elsewhere or through separate provision on the premises. The arrangements for this would be open to discussion between the parents and the school.

The place of R.E in the basic curriculum

Religious Education is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. It must be taught according to a locally agreed syllabus. In Wheatlands Primary School we teach Religious Education alongside the Recar & Cleveland locally agreed syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025.

The statutory requirements of the Agreed Syllabus

The Education Act 1996 states that an agreed syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of other principal religions and worldviews represented in Great Britain (Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism and worldviews such as Humanism). To ensure that the Religious Education curriculum is broad and balanced, Christianity should be studied throughout each key stage. The other principal religions and worldviews should be studied across the key stages so that by the end of Key Stage 3, pupils will have encountered all of them in sufficient depth. The Agreed Syllabus is not designed to convert or urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils. Religious Education in maintained schools must be non-denominational, in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus, but teaching about different denominations is permitted.

Guidance

The syllabus gives guidance about when and how the principal religions might be taught, but allows schools flexibility to adapt the syllabus to meet their particular context or needs. Philosophical or other belief systems such as Humanism (worldviews) that deal with ultimate questions about life and its meaning should be referred to where appropriate. Many pupils in our school have a non-faith background and their values and beliefs, including atheism, agnosticism and humanism should be explored with sensitivity.

Aims and Importance of RE

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and worldviews. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as the influence of religion and worldviews on individuals, families, communities and cultures. Religious Education encourages pupils to learn from different religions and worldviews, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious Education encourages pupils to develop their basic sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Religious Education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular for those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and helps pupils to combat prejudice.

Specific aims and objectives at Wheatlands:

At Wheatlands Primary School we help the children learn *about* religion and worldviews (developing knowledge skills and understanding) as well as *from* religion and worldviews (how pupils express their responses and insights, in light of their learning about religion and worldviews). We aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.

Religious Education at Wheatlands Primary School:

- Develops their knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, Christianity and other major world religions
- Enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- Seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others
- Helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religious beliefs in the world today and learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other.
- Explores issues within and between faiths to help them understand and respect different religious beliefs, values and traditions. Promoting religious understanding, discernment and respect.
- Challenges prejudice and stereotyping
- Explores the significance of the environment, both locally and globally, and the role of human beings and other species within it.

- Promotes each pupil's self-worth that helps them to think about their uniqueness as human beings, share their feelings and emotions with others and appreciate the importance of forming and maintaining positive relationships.

RE provides opportunities to support the school aims by:

- Ensuring opportunities are provided for children to study a range of different faiths and cultures throughout their time in Wheatlands.
- Ensuring that RE is taught in an atmosphere that embraces diversity.
- Encouraging the children to be considerate and supportive of one another during RE lessons.
- Valuing each child's contribution to discussions during RE.
- Giving a high priority to creating a close and supportive liaison between home, school and the wider community with particular regard to faith and culture.
- Providing an environment in RE lessons which enables children to work to the best of their ability continually maximising their potential.
- Ensuring that learning in RE is enjoyable and rewarding and that children are able to feel a sense of pride in their achievements.
- Fostering in children the very highest standards of achievement and behaviour during RE lessons reflecting the school's high expectations.
- Providing RE that is relevant, broad and balanced and that supports both academic and creative areas whilst appealing to all learning styles.
- Promoting the principles of fairness and justice for all within RE to encourage the children to develop as responsible members of their local community
- Ensuring that all children have access to the RE curriculum as relevant to their age group.

Organisation of RE at Wheatlands Primary School

The delivery of Religious Education

R.E. is generally taught through dedicated weekly Religious Education lessons across the school. Where relevant and appropriate, however teachers may teach R.E. as a distinct block of work. In EYFS, Religious Education is delivered in dedicated sessions or in the continuous provision and under the umbrella of 'Knowledge & understanding of the World'.

Monitoring and Review

The Religious Education policy is reviewed on an annual basis by the subject leader for RE. 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. Religious Education will be monitored through looking at planning and the Children's work in books, talking with children about their learning in RE and through visiting some lessons. Examples of children's work will also be displayed on a whole school RE display, celebrating current topics.

Curriculum planning in RE

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Redcar and Cleveland LEA'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 link the topics taught where relevant to the children's topics.

EYFS

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in the Foundation Stage. Foundation Stage children are made aware of cultural differences and religious traditions as set out in the Early Years Outcomes. In the Foundation Stage, Religious Education is taught under the heading 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' and 'Understanding the World' under the sub-category 'People, culture and Communities'. By the end of the Foundation Stage our children work towards achieving the Early Learning Goal and these areas. We teach Religious Education as an integral part of the topic work through child-initiated and adult-led activities.

Cross Curricular Opportunities

English

Religious education contributes 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 Literacy for example may have religious themes or content, which encourage discussion and dramatic presentation. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

Computing

We use computing where appropriate and relevant in R.E. lessons. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet and other IT based resources. They also use IT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

Personal, Social and Health Education, Citizenship and British Values

Through our Religious Education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. 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 society. There are strong natural links between R.E. and the promotion of British moral values. This is particularly poignant with regard to developing mutual respect for, and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs and those without faith in our society. One of our major British values is the 'freedom of faith' and 'religious belief' for all citizens, which is protected by law.

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.

More specific links are outlined below:

Spiritual Development

The RE curriculum supports children's spiritual development by providing opportunities for children to reflect on their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life. It also supports the knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values.

Social Development

RE provides direct links to children's social development as follows:

- It gives children the ability to be reflective about their own beliefs (religious or otherwise) and perspective on life.
- Provides knowledge of, and respect for, different people's faiths, feelings and values.

Cultural Development

The RE curriculum can also support our children's cultural development through interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity and the extent to which they understand, accept and respect diversity. This is shown by their respect and attitudes towards different religious, ethnic and socio-economic groups in the local, national and global communities

Personal, Social, Health and Economic Development

RE supports PSHE by providing opportunities for children to find out about different groups and communities and support children in learning to respect equality and learn that they are members of a diverse community.

Teaching Religious Education to children with special needs

In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We ensure all pupils make progress by setting suitable learning challenges to all and responding to each child's differing needs.

Progression in Religious Education

We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in RE 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 planned progression is built into the scheme of work. Our RE scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school. In Reception classes, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the Religious Education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in Early Learning Goals entitled 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' and 'Knowledge & Understanding of the World - People and Communities'.

Equal Opportunities

We believe that it is important for all children to experience a rich and varied RE Curriculum. We will use opportunities within RE to challenge stereotypes. We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and that the children have different experiences of religion. We provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child, and by providing a wide range of activities to address all learning styles. We use teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children where relevant and available.

Assessment and Record Keeping

All assessments are made in line with our school assessment policy. Teacher assessments are made against the Statements of Attainment for each Key Stage as contained in the agreed syllabus. Children are assessed at the end of their year on their progress in RE, and this is reported to parents. We continually assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements based upon their understanding during lessons. Where written work is involved, we mark a piece of work once it has been completed and identify if each child has achieved the learning objective, making comments when necessary. The RE subject leader looks at children's books regularly to monitor the children's work. Children use recall sessions at the start of each lesson, topic or year.

Resources

We maintain a good range of resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep resource in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religion covered. There are a range of bibles for both key stages and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in Religious Education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and internet access is available to support the children's individual research.

Health and Safety

Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example visits, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Teaching and Learning Style

Through our Religious Education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We support children in retaining their knowledge and skills over time, through the use of our 'knowledge mats'. We encourage them to engage in Religious Education by drawing on their existing knowledge, skills and understanding in each particular topic through recall sessions. We try to provide our pupils with opportunities to learn about Religious Education in many different ways and where possible, provide opportunities for them to experience different Religions through sensory and first-hand experiences, such as looking at artefacts, visiting places of worship, drama, role-play and through the use of visitors. Pupils also have access to secondary sources such as non-fiction books, Religious stories, holy books, photographs, internet resources and videos.

Role of the curriculum Leader

- Provide guidance to individual members of staff
- Keep up to date with local, diocesan and national developments in RE and disseminate relevant information.
- Attend trust network meetings and disseminate information to staff.
- Review the position and use of RE resources and regularly update staff on new resources, ideas, materials etc.
- Review and monitor the success and progress of the planned units of work
- Reviewing policy statements and schemes of work.

Associated Policies:

Teaching and Learning Policy

e-safety Policy

Tackling Extremism and Radicalisation Policy

Safeguarding Policy

Educational Visits

Policy Status and Review Written by: Claire O'Malley (Religious Education Subject Leader)

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