Elveden Church of England Primary Academy



Religious Education Policy

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Religious Education Policy-Elveden CE Primary Academy

1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Religious education makes a central contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils. This enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Elveden CE Primary Academy we foster an attitude of fair minded enquiry towards religious and non-religious convictions and encourage a willingness to respect other people. Recognising its historic Christian foundation, the school preserves and develops its strong Christian ethos and religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with Elveden church and the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The school aims to serve its community by providing an excellent education, which is inclusive and distinctive and of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers to all its pupils. 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 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.
- to have a positive attitude towards life and the confidence to express personal ideas and values.

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 this should only be done once the parents have given written notice 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.

2.2 At Elveden CE Primary Academy, religious education is taught in accordance with the trust deed, or with beliefs or denomination specified in the designation of the school, to reflect the religious character of the foundation.

2.3 A governing body may accept a recommendation from their diocese to adopt the locally agreed syllabus. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Suffolk LA's Agreed Syllabus 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.

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 and from religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. This is done through using a window to learn about a religion and a mirror to reflect upon and learn from the religion. 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, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. Where possible we organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. Teachers are encouraged to extend their own knowledge and understanding through relevant inset opportunities. They also use a variety of teaching methods to engage the different learning styles that the children will have.

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 discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school community in assemblies.

3.4 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.

4 Curriculum planning in religious education

4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Suffolk LA'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.

4.2 We use the new Suffolk R.E. units of work (written in 2013-14) which have been written by teachers in the county. The long-term plan maps the religious education themes studied in each term, during each key stage. We teach R.E. throughout the curriculum so that is embedded in school life. We have a Literacy week dedicated to R.E. to ensure high quality writing.

4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

4.4 The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and they are monitored weekly by the senior teacher. The R.E. subject leader will look at these as part of the monitoring process.

5 Foundation Stage

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

5.2 In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the early years curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Framework which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

6 Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

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 Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Computing

We use computing where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use computing to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation. Videos are also viewed on the interactive whiteboard so that children can experience events / rituals that they may otherwise never encounter.

6.3 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. 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.

6.4 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. Each year, children take part in 'Festivals and Celebrations' week which provides an opportunity for pupils to learn about a range of cultures from around the world.

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 attainment targets allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected standards.

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.

7.3 Intervention will lead to the creation of an Individual Support Plan (ISP) for children with special educational needs. The ISP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education.

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 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.

8 Assessment and recording

8.1 Assessment is mainly through ongoing teacher assessment by making informal judgements as we observe children during lessons and marking a piece of work once it has been completed, commenting as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the expected standard of attainment from the Suffolk RE syllabus. Attainment levels are passed on to the RE subject leader so that she can monitor standards across the school for both AT1 and AT2.

8.2 Each class teacher keeps samples of children's work in an assessment portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school.

9 Resources

9.1 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 unit of work. There is a set 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 computer software to support the children's individual research.

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. S/he 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 RE subject leader presents the head teacher with subject leader SEF which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. S/he has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject.