

# Hawkshead Esthwaite County Primary School

## Religious Education Policy

Reviewed Sept 2022

Religious Education is part of the basic curriculum alongside the National Curriculum. There is a legal requirement in the Education Act 1944 that states that there must be a provision for RE for all registered pupils in a county school. Also the 1988 Education Act stated that a school should 'ensure that RE has an equal standing in relation to the core and other foundation subjects within the curriculum'. This document lays the foundation for the teaching of RE in this school according to the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for RE (1998) in a non-denominational way.

This policy is in accordance with the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. As a County school the teaching of RE will:

- a) be non-denominational, although teaching about denominational differences is permitted by the 1998 Education Act;
- b) reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking into account the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in this country.

Religious Education occupies 5% of our teaching time and contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our children. We aim to foster an attitude of fair-minded enquiry towards a range of religious convictions and encourage respect for those holding different beliefs.

Our school is situated in a small village in a rural area, which means that we are a considerable distance from other faith communities or places of worship. Our children's everyday experience of the multi-faith nature of British society is therefore restricted.

All staff were involved in writing this policy in consultation with the Cumbria Advisory Teacher for Primary RE and subsequently with the school governors.

### What is Religious Education?

Religious Education is concerned with helping pupils understand the nature and influence of ethical and religious beliefs and traditions on the lives of individuals and of society.

### Aims

Our main aim is to enable children to understand the nature of religious beliefs and practices and the importance of these in the lives of believers. We aim to help children learn more about their own religious tradition and heritage, including:

- the nature of Christianity and its historical and continuing influence on individuals and cultures;
- other principal religions and their influences on the lives of individuals and cultures.

We aim for an open and reflective approach to Christianity and other world faiths and an appreciation of what it might mean to be a member of a faith community.

We aim to explore values by which to live and those aspects of human experience which raise questions about life.

We aim to foster respect, tolerance, empathy, awareness and understanding of self and others in our teaching.

The aims and approaches are outlined in more detail in the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus, page 3, a copy of which is available for viewing.

### Principles

Religious Education is important because:

- over three quarters of the world's population is involved with a religion one way or another;
- for thousands of years the religions of the world have been celebrating, teaching and telling stories of their faith;
- religions try to answer the questions that most people wonder about from time to time, such as 'What happens after death?'

### Content

The broad content of our RE is taken from the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for RE. RE is taught as a separate subject most of the time but where it is part of a cross-curricular topic, the specific RE content is clearly defined. The topics are changed each half term. Each topic reflects both Attainment Targets that concern *learning about* and *learning from* RE.

Christianity is studied in depth through both Key Stages. We also focus on aspects of Islam at K1. We focus on Islam and Hinduism at KS2, plus knowledge of aspects of Judaism and other faiths that naturally enhance cross-curricular work. The whole school RE Long Term Plan seeks to ensure breadth, balance, continuity and progression.

Children take part in celebrating the festivals of the Christian year. Christmas, Easter and Harvest are covered with each class in a progressive manner with different emphasis to avoid repetition.

We ensure that each class follows an appropriate scheme of work so there is progression.

### **Organisation and Delivery of RE:**

We teach RE both **implicitly** and **explicitly**.

1. **Explicit** religious practice (ie what religious people do) by using their senses. Give children first-hand experience when discovering more about religious buildings, clothes, food, artifacts and so on. Make a collection of artifacts; organise a visit or visitors to provide first-hand experience.

2. **Implicit** religious ideals (ie what religious people believe, how they feel, why they do the things they do) by encouraging children to ask questions. This involves them in the exploration of their own spiritual dimension by comparing it with the views and attitudes of others.

Spiritual concerns are explored in the classroom in a way, which is non-confessional, interactive and meaningful for young children.

We have specific RE lessons each week but RE is sometimes linked to cross-curricular themes and along with visits out or special days in school this takes up 5% of the timetable.

Our teaching is person-centered and engages with children's everyday experience. It presents opportunities for children to learn both about and from religion. We teach using a variety of styles and strategies incorporating periods of quiet reflection, art, drama, pictures/ posters, stories, poems, videos, DVDs, visits, food, discussion and interviews.

RE is planned so children use all their senses and are prompted to think, question, explore, experience, reflect, wonder, enjoy, and value.

Practical activities such as making simulated artifacts or the simulation of ceremonies is encouraged.

Pupils with special needs in RE receive extra support in the classroom. They include:

- pupils with difficulties in reading are given help when researching or are given worksheets with appropriate levels of vocabulary.
- pupils with particular ability and flair for RE who work more quickly are extended through researching other areas of the topic, perhaps at a higher level, to report back to the group.

**HOMEWORK** is used to support RE through tasks such as extra research, following individual interests or collecting artifacts.

### **Resources**

Our main resource is our experiences and ourselves. Visits and visitors to school are encouraged. Usually included in our RE planning. We are building our own collection of artifacts, videos, posters books, CD-ROMs and music. We also borrow books and artifacts from a variety of sources such as the School Library Service.

We are fortunate enough to be in walking distance of the Anglican Church and churchyard. During their time with us the children visit 3 or 4 other local churches - Methodist, Quakers, Baptist and Catholic. Very good community links have been made with local church leaders. We use outside resources for multi-faith information such as visits to a Hindu temple in Bradford and a mosque in Bolton.

### **Coordination, Monitoring, and Review**

The RE coordinator aims to keep abreast of new publications and developments in RE at K1 and 2. She attends courses and reads the Primary RE Newsletter sharing insights with the rest of the staff. She is responsible for reviewing this policy and informing staff of any significant changes.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in RE contributes towards the development of effective continuity and progression in our children's learning. We assess children's knowledge and awareness of RE by observing their interactions and relationships, by questioning and listening to them and by assessing individual or group pieces of work.

Written comments on a child's strengths and areas for improvement are made to parents in the end of year report.

**Information Technology is used when appropriate.**

### **Withdrawal**

In accordance with the 1988 Education Act, parents are allowed to withdraw their children in order to receive religious education of "a kind which is not provided in the school", provided that the LEA is satisfied that the pupil could not reasonably attend a school where the desired RE is provided.

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from RE if they wish. If this situation was to arise, appropriate alternative arrangements would be made for supervision of such children.