

Dewhurst St Mary CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy March 2017

School Vision

Dewhurst St Mary CofE is committed to nurturing learners who think creatively and achieve their potential reflecting our core values of independence, confidence and respect.

Dream Believe Achieve

Introduction

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined, the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for schools to follow in their planning and delivery of RE. We use the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2012 - 2017, which reflects the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, whilst taking into account the teaching and practices of the other main religions represented in our communities.

Children learn about the beliefs, traditions, festivals and writings of Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, although the emphasis is on Christianity and its principles. By exploring and responding to religions and the natural world, children also engage with social, cultural and moral issues.

As a church school, we have close links with St. Mary's Parish Church and their clergy. By visiting the church building children learn about the practices and traditions that have informed the local Christian community in the past and which influence worship today.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian or from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with "learning about religions" and "learning from religion" and it is not the policy of this school to preach or proselytise at any time, rather to inform the children and encourage a positive engagement with faith. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

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Provision in Religious Education is compulsory for all children in maintained schools. However parents have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Education. Any parent who wishes to do this may consult with the Headteacher.

Religious Education is separate from the act of collective worship (see school policy on Collective Worship).

Values and Aims

School Values: Compassion, Forgiveness, Respect, Independence, Resilience, Confidence, Teamwork, Honesty, Fun, Friendship, Motivation, Achievement.

The overarching Christian values of faith, hope and love underpin the school values and the teaching of religious Education seeks to demonstrate how people of faith live these values.

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. These include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, each of which is represented in Hertfordshire;
2. Develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures;
3. Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions
4. Enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:

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- a. Developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;
 - b. Responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experiences and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - c. Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in light of their study;
 - d. Expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
5. Recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within a religiously diverse society.

Implementation

Learning

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by encouraging an open and honest enquiry, an awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own by Learning about Religions and Learning from Religion.

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum.

AT1 Learning about Religions

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

AT2 Learning from Religion

- give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues;

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- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
 - identify and respond to the questions of meaning within religion.
- Children will be "Learning about Religions" and "Learning from Religion" through:

1. Investigation; the use of first-hand and other resources to understand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories.
2. Questioning; developing curiosity about life, relationships and the natural world
3. Empathy; developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as wonder, forgiveness, sorrow, joy and to try to see the world through the eyes of others
4. Reflection; the ability to consider thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs of oneself and others
5. Relating; linking significant features of religions, making associations between them, to understand what makes religions distinct and/or similar
6. Expression; the ability to identify and explain feelings and aspects of religions

Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas.

- Belief and Teachings - e.g. stories, prophets, founders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death
- Religious Practices and Lifestyles - e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, effects on individuals
- Ways of Expressing Meaning - e.g. art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, silence/stillness
- Human Identity, Personality and Experience - e.g. preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people

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- Questions of Meaning and Purpose - e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences
- Values and Commitments - e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, moral dilemmas

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches, which are reflected in our Teaching and Learning Policy. This will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, role-play, drama, asking and answering questions, using a range of sources including ICT, works of art, artefacts, visits and visitors.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect whilst deepening knowledge
4. parents; by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community

Planning

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage the school follows the Primary Scheme of Work for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. This scheme shows how we have planned that "aspects of all six principal faiths are explored over Key Stage One and Two". School currently include units from Discovery RE and Understanding Christianity as agreed by the Governors.

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We use a combination of teaching RE as a separate subject and through linking it with other curriculum areas, depending on the material which has to be covered.

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. Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher, who will identify which parts of the programme of study are to be the focus, the learning objectives for the unit (i.e. what the pupils should know, understand and be able to do as a result of their work), the activities planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. A range of resources and reference books for both children and teachers are available.

Presentation

Each unit of work will involve pupils in activities, such as already mentioned above. These will provide opportunities to demonstrate how far they have learned "about religions" and "from religion". In addition, pupils will sometimes be encouraged to share their learning with a wider audience, such as in assembly (for the school and/or parents), for display in the entrance area or hall, as part of a community project or within a church service at St Mary's. Pupils will be encouraged to think about the purpose of the work or its intended audiences.

Cross Curricular Issues

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and a consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined following the Eight Level Scale in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

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Through activities for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment.

School reports are sent home in the spring term of each year and the RE report is written identifying achievement of relevant objectives.

Management and Leadership

The RE Subject Leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for Subject Leaders. The RE Subject Leader meets regularly with the Foundation Governor responsible for overseeing RE to review and improve the teaching and so that every opportunity is found for the local church and clergy to inform and support the school's RE policy.

There is a yearly staff meeting on RE, led by the Subject Leader where matters arising can be aired openly. The RE component of the School Plan is then reviewed and updated.

Drafted by: Sue Wilcox
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