

Eversley Primary School
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) POLICY

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AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Eversley Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. 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.

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.

THE LEGAL POSITION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE):

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 ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention 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. Our school RE curriculum is based on the London Borough of Enfield SACRE 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.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE:

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.

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, Eid, Diwali and Pesach (amongst many others) to develop their religious thinking.

Eversley organises visits to local places of worship and invites representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. A *Trips and Visitors* folder assists teachers in arranging visits to places of worship and inviting visitors from the local school community into the classroom. Each Year Group should arrange at least one RE visit or Visitor to visit the school each academic year. They should also arrange one celebration/theme day based on their curriculum. This is monitored by the RE Subject Leader.

Through our use of the *Discovery RE* scheme of work, alongside the *Enfield SACRE* scheme of work, children carry out research into religious topics. They study "Big Questions" within religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children have opportunities to discuss religious and moral issues amongst themselves as well as with visitors, use computers (working individually or in groups) and are given the opportunity to prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies. Philosophy for Children (P4C) strategies are used to give children opportunities of free speech and respect for the views of others. Eversley holds special festival assemblies to celebrate the religions in the school. Children are asked to share their experiences of religion with the rest of the school during such assemblies.

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 scaffolding where necessary;
- 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 and extend that of other pupils.

CURRICULUM PLANNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Enfield SACRE'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 carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases long-term (LEA Planning), medium-term (on each year groups Medium Term Plans) and short-term (weekly/daily planning). We often teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects (namely Literacy and PSHE), especially at Key Stage 1.

Individual lesson plans for each unit/topic have been prepared for class teachers by the LEA and the Subject Leader and list the specific learning objectives for that lesson. Each class has a copy of all the units for their year group and plans are often discussed on an informal basis with the RE subject leader. All plans are available to staff on the shared network for ease of access and modification.

FOUNDATION STAGE:

Religious Education is taught to all children in years One-Six. In the Foundation Stage, children are taught through festivals that are relevant to the specific cohort as they take place throughout the year.

As the Reception Team work under the *Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum*, we relate the Religious Education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out under the *Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED)* and *Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW)* areas which are crucial to the development and progress of all pupils at this stage.

CONTRIBUTION OF RE TO OTHER SUBJECT AREAS:

English

RE 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 English lessons have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. Children are often encouraged to make books and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

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

Teachers use interactive whiteboards for whole class or group teaching.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through our RE 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.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development - please see SMSC policy

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 by doing so they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Eversley has been involved in charity projects that offer the children the opportunity to learn about and support others in need. E.g. Harvest Festivals (giving food to the Barnet Food Bank), and giving to charities (The AVM Charity, *Children in Need*, amongst many others).

Values Education ('Value of the Lesson'):

Eversley is a Values School and has 22 School values that were selected by pupils, parents, staff and governors. In RE, as in all subject areas, there is always a Value of the Lesson. This allows children to focus on their value and learn in a respectful manner which is fundamental to the study of religions and religious practices.

Just a Minute (JAM):

Also fundamental to the pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development is our school focus on taking 'Just a Minute' (JAM). This takes place in each class daily, at some point in the day, sometimes at the start of an RE lesson or after or before playtimes as well as at the end of whole school assemblies. This teaches the children about respect and being able to stop and think which is also at the core of many religions and religious practices. This is an area we are developing as a school. HK, JH, HM and DT have attended Mindfulness training with the intention of raising the profile of mindfulness across all year groups.

TEACHING RE TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN)

At our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. RE 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.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have Special Educational Needs (SEN). 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.

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.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING:

We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and marking the work after the lesson. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary; on misconceptions or for an assessed piece of RE work (this is usually termly at the end of a unit). Assessments for each unit area then averaged out to provide an end of year result.

Marking:

Weekly RE work should be marked following the school's marking policy for foundation subjects; LO or WALT with a tick if the child has met the learning, WALT or LO with a circle around it if the child has partially met or is beginning to work towards the objective (these should both be recorded using a green pen). WALT or LO double underlined should be used if the child has not met the learning objective or if they needed full support in the activity/task. This should be in red ink.

We make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the national curriculum levels of attainment at the end of each term. We use such assessments as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year. RE is assessed half-termly through a wide range of assessment tasks throughout and at the end of units. **RE is assessed by the class teacher or the person teaching RE to the class.**

RESOURCES:

We are well resourced in our school, which enables us to teach all our RE units of work. We keep resources for RE in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religion as well as a collection of books, videos/DVDs, photopacks and other teaching resources including dolls. There is a large collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in RE. We also have a good supply of RE topic books in this central resource base.

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

Class teachers are responsible of assessing and monitoring pupil's progress in this subject area. The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the pupil's work and the quality of the teaching in RE through annual work scrutinies, pupil interviews and lesson observations. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE on request and through staff meetings. The RE subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. The RE subject leader is also responsible for the maintenance, ordering and upkeep of RE resources.

Withdrawal from RE lessons/trips:

Parents have the legal right to withdraw pupils from RE but this must be discussed with the class teacher, RE Coordinator and Head teacher. A class teacher cannot make the decision to allow a child/parent to withdraw from RE lessons. If the parent chooses to go ahead and withdraw their child from RE this must be given to the school in writing by the parent. Staff should refer to the *Enfield New Agreed Syllabus* for information about speaking to parents and withdrawing pupils from RE and the issues surrounding this, including the negative implications, must be highlighted to the parent (for example, missing lessons that may link to other subject areas, for example, Literacy lessons, which may have an impact on the pupil's progress and learning), as well as issues of discrimination. The withdrawal of a child from RE lessons should be the last resort as RE is an important part of learning and understanding about the world and community.

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