

Bury C of E Primary School

Religious Education Policy



Written: January 2018

Reviewed: January 2021

Next review: January 2024

“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”

Jeremiah 29:11

Religious Education Policy

1. Aims and objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Bury Church of England Primary School we develop the children’s knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity and other world religions. Children **reflect, enquire, analyse, interpret** and **evaluate** 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 – with a core focus on the skills of **analysis, enquiry, reflection, interpretation** and **evaluation**;
- have respect for other peoples’ views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

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

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spiritual, moral and social and cultural teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. 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. We follow the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus (2015) and on the advice of the Diocese of Chichester use Understanding Christianity for the majority of our RE curriculum.

3. Teaching and learning

3.1 We base our teaching and learning 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. We have affiliated with the Chartered College of Teaching to ensure we are able to access high quality research and CPD for our teaching and learning. The evidence we use to support our teaching and learning is applied across the curriculum inclusive of RE.

3.2 Our teaching and learning in RE enables 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, Holi etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. Our Year 6 children take part in an annual interfaith event as part of our Rother Valley Community*. They then share their knowledge with the rest of the school.

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 techniques decided by the class teacher as most effective to the children's learning.

3.4 We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing current attainment levels, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the needs 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);

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- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the needs of the individual child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children (if appropriate).

4. Curriculum planning in religious education

4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the LA’s Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning using Understanding Christianity. 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 carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage.

4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. 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 (unless this is the intention through spaced practice).

4.4 The class teacher (usually the RE lead) writes the plans for each lesson. She keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the rest of the staff to ensure continuity across school. This approach also ensures the RE lead has a strong knowledge of how strong RE is across the entire school.

5. Foundation Stage

5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school

5.2 In the reception/year 1/2 class, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children’s work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Additional RE topics covered throughout the year are outlined in the long term plan and taught weekly within the reception classes.

6. Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

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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 English have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is one of our ways 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 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. As a staff and governing body we have refined the Christian Values down to five which are core to our school, **Courage, Humility, Perseverance, Wisdom and Compassion**. 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 diverse society.

6.3 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. All of these areas are taught both in the classroom and throughout our Bury Rangers (Forest School) sessions which take place each week.

7. Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs

7.1 At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their attainment level. 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 West Sussex Agreed Syllabus allows us to consider each child's

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attainment and progress. This cannot be done to a binary level. No child learns on a linear progression, the move away from levels has supported us as we can focus on an individual child's next step and constantly look to support improvement.

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. Our SENDCo supports this whilst also making use of outside agencies where possible and necessary.

7.3 Intervention through identified Special Educational Need will lead to the creation of an Personal Learning Plan (PLP) for children with special educational needs. The PLP 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 the Arun Churches, 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 We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe children during lessons. We mark according to our feedback policy (in-line with all subjects). We assess against the learning the children are undertaking. Since there are no end of year specific objectives for RE, we do not state where a child is with their RE at any given point in time. We use RE to support our assessment of children's writing against end of Key Stage interim arrangements.

8.2 The RE subject leader regularly adds examples of work to their own file for benchmarking

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 separate box of equipment and a collection of religious artefacts for each religion. Each class also has their own bibles in the classroom.

10. Monitoring and review

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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. 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. The R.E. subject leader presents the headteacher with an annual action plan that evaluates the strengths and weaknesses of the subject.

*Whilst traditionally this was done in person, during Covid this moved to virtual attendance