

Bell Farm Primary School



Religious Education Policy

The learning and teaching of Religious Education at Bell Farm Primary School aims to develop children's intellectual, social, emotional and spiritual understanding of both themselves and the world in which we live within a values-based rights-respecting school community. Religious education fosters co-operation, self-confidence, independence and tolerance in our multicultural world.

Objectives

To enable pupils to:

Appreciate the distinctive nature of religion and the important contribution of religious and spiritual insights and values to the individual's search for meaning in their life.

Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of other principle religions represented in Great Britain.

Develop interest in and enthusiasm for the study of religion and enhance their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

To acknowledge that not all people are religious and that there are philosophies and views of the world that are formed without reference to a god, the supernatural or an afterlife.

The legal requirement

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. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once 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, social and cultural teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship.

Teaching

Our school RE curriculum is based on the Revised Surrey Agreed Syllabus for RE July 2017 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 Surrey are

in the main Christian and that it should take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam).

In Early Years the teaching of RE is thematic and based on topics that link to the pupils' lives and experiences. They start where the child is and build on their understanding of celebration, specialness and belonging.

In Key Stage One, pupils will study Christianity and aspects of Judaism and Islam.

It is recommended that in Key Stage One 36 hours per year are devoted to teaching RE and in Key Stage Two 45 hours are spent teaching RE.

At Key Stage 2 the main focus of study is Christianity. At least 50% of time is spent on teaching about Christian beliefs, practices and ways of life. In addition to developing their knowledge of Christianity, pupils will also study aspects of Buddhism, Hinduism Sikhism, Islam and for the first time they will also be introduced to non-religious world views and philosophies such as Humanism.

Learning

RE has specific learning outcomes. These refer to the skills that pupils should develop and how they are demonstrating that progression.

Early Years Foundation Stage:

The early learning goals set out what most children should achieve by the end of the foundation stage. Religious education can make an active contribution to all these areas but has a particularly important contribution to make to these four strands:

Personal, social and emotional development

- Have a developing respect for their own cultures and beliefs, and those of other people.
- Show sensitivity to others' needs and feelings, and form positive relationships.
- Work as part of a group or class & understand & follow the rules.

Communication, language and literacy

- Answer 'who', 'how' and 'why' questions about their experiences in response to stories, experiences or events from different sources.
- Develop their own narratives in relation to stories they hear from different traditions.
- Develop their own explanations by connecting ideas or events.
- Children listen attentively in a range of situations. They listen to stories, accurately anticipating key events and respond to what they hear with relevant comments, questions or actions.

Understanding of the world

- Begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people

- Talk about features in their own immediate environment & how environments may vary from one another

Expressive Arts and Design

- Represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings through design and technology, art, music, dance, role-play and stories

Characteristics of Learning:

- **Active learning** – being involved and concentrating; playing with what they know
- **Playing and exploring** – finding out and exploring
- **Creating and thinking critically** – using what they already know to learn new things

For each of these four areas, there are examples of religious education-related experiences and opportunities, and relevant links with the Surrey units of work. These links are in the form of a suggested progression of learning experiences for particular units from the syllabus.

Progression in Key Stage 1 and 2.

RE is taught through an enquiry model of learning where children deepen their understanding of RE, make secure connections and utilise higher level thinking skills.

The two attainment targets for RE are:

- LEARNING ABOUT RELIGION: 'Know about and understand'
- LEARNING FROM RELIGION: 'Express, ideas, beliefs and insight'

Through the KS1 units of work, pupils should be taught to:

- explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings and talk about their meanings;
- name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting similarities where appropriate;
- identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives;
- explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the arts and communicate their responses;
- identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols and begin to use a range of religious words;
- reflect on and consider religious and spiritual feelings, experiences and concepts such as worship, wonder, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness;
- ask and respond imaginatively to puzzling questions, communicating their ideas;

- identify what matters to them and others, including those with religious commitments, and communicate their responses;
- reflect on how spiritual and moral values relate to their own behaviour;
- recognise that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

Throughout Key Stage 2 units, we provide pupils with increasing opportunity to;

1) LEARN ABOUT RELIGIONS BY:

Developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity, aspects of Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam and being introduced to non-religious philosophies and world views such as 'Humanism'.

This includes:

- Encountering the key objects, people, places and activities associated with the religions studied e.g. visits to St Peters Church in Hersham, the Synagogue in Weybridge, the Mosque in Woking.
- Studying the lives of people who are held by members of their faith to be examples to others, looking particularly at how these people lived out the beliefs and values of their faith;
- Extending their awareness that certain features, e.g. festivals, worship, a sense of community, are shared by more than one religion, although expressed differently;
- Considering the meaning of symbols, stories and symbolic language for members of faith communities;
- Encountering the key beliefs of the religions studied,
- Considering the impact of religious beliefs on individuals and their local community.

2) LEARN FROM RELIGIONS BY:

Developing positive attitudes towards other people and enhancing their own spiritual and moral development through:

- Considering the value of certain religious practices in their own lives, e.g. prayer, periods of reflection, celebrations;
- Talking about stories which focus on values, relationships or religious teachings, and considering the relevance of this to their own lives;
- Exploring questions of the meaning and mystery of life;
- Developing an understanding of what it means to belong to a community.
- Discussing the differences between fairness and unfairness, right and wrong, and the nature of individual responsibility;

- Developing creativity within the curriculum, expressing ideas and feelings in the forms of art, music, drama etc.

Assessment for learning: Skills and processes to be assessed through religious education.

The children's progression in RE depends upon the development of the following general learning skills applied to RE. At Bell Farm we focus on these skills when developing a range of activities, which then provide the children with opportunities to demonstrate their capabilities in RE. They ensure that teachers will move pupils on from knowledge accumulation and work which is merely descriptive to a higher level thinking and more sophisticated skills. These skills are:

- Reflecting
- Empathising
- Interpreting
- Synthesising
- Expressing

Children are encouraged to evaluate their beliefs and attitudes through a range of discussion, written and sometimes role play.

Equal opportunities

In our school RE is taught as a whole class subject and treated in the same way as the core and foundation subjects – using a variety of experiences and teaching and learning strategies.

There are, however, particular issues relating to different ability groups. Pupils with poor language skills, for example, often have difficulties with abstract thinking. RE deals largely with issues of belief and uses symbols and metaphors in order to communicate those beliefs and abstract ideas. Therefore, attention is given to this area through the use of concrete and tangible approaches. For example, our planning incorporates the use of pictures or religious artefacts to help pupils move from concrete to abstract thinking. More able pupils, on the other hand, may excel in the area of abstract thought and are encouraged, by their teachers, to develop skills such as synthesis and evaluation.

All children are taught the school's adopted scheme of work irrespective of their ethnicity, culture or ability. This is from The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Surrey Schools July 2017.

Curriculum links

The teaching of RE is compulsory and has an agreed syllabus. Although it is a distinct subject area there are opportunities for it to be linked with other subjects. This can only be done, however, where there is clear awareness of how it relates to these areas.

The assembly programme has many identified links with the learning and teaching of RE. The school also hosts special assemblies linked to Bible stories led by Jackie Richardson.

We have set up an interactive prayer station in the main hall for people of all or no faith to express and share their opinions. The prayer space supports our wider curriculum around significant events, for example, WW1 Remembrance Day with coloured candles representing people involved and affected by war. The prayer space features at least one prayer activity that focuses on an issue of injustice, local or global.

Assessment for learning

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during the lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been complete and we comment as necessary in line with the school's marking policy. Assessment of RE is carried out in line with the foundation subject assessment procedures and reported to the school's assessment officer at the end of the school year.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education units and regularly supplement our existing stock. These include both books and artefacts. Teachers plan using the foundation planning template using the allocated units from the agreed syllabus.

Monitoring

The subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of 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 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.

Review and Evaluation

The RE subject leader will complete an annual review identifying the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and complete an action plan for the subject.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed in keeping with the Policy Review Cycle.

Status of Policy	Date
Authored by Jane Bruce	September 2017
Policy reviewed	January 2022
Agreed by Staff	January 2022
Review every three years	January 2025