

Policy for Religious Education

Introduction

This policy is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Religious Education at Long Mead Primary School. It was approved in October 2018 and reviewed in January 2023 after the new Kent Syllabus (2022-2027) was updated.

The Legal Requirements

The 1988 Education Act states that every maintained school must provide a balanced and broadly based curriculum that:

- Promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.
- Prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life.'

All maintained schools must teach religious education according to the locally agreed syllabus. All agreed syllabuses must 'Reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' Pupils in maintained schools must take part in religious education unless wholly or partially withdrawn by parents. Parents have a right to withdraw their children from R.E. Parents requesting withdrawal should inform the Headteacher in writing. Pupils who withdraw from R.E. will be expected to study books about their own religion provided by the parents. Teachers have a right to withdraw from the teaching of R.E. Teachers considering withdrawal should inform the Headteacher in writing. It is the teacher's responsibility to ensure R.E. is taught in their class.

Aims

At Long Mead Primary School, pupils come from a diversity of ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds. Through the study of religious education, pupils' understanding of the multicultural and multifaith society that we live in today is promoted. Sensitivity to the differences of faith, culture and practice within our school leads to an atmosphere of tolerance to others and goodwill.

At Long Mead Primary School we additionally believe:

Children should be encouraged to develop an understanding of the importance of creating a community that works in harmony. We work with the children to develop a sense of community that engages both attitudes and understanding of:

- Forgiveness
- Fairness
- Love/friendship
- Empathy/compassion
- Respect/tolerance
- Awe and wonder
- Right and wrong

To create this community, children need to:

- Develop a willingness to ask questions and explore.
- Respect and value the views and opinions of other children's faiths.
- Respect the right of others to hold their own religious views without ridicule or embarrassment.
- Recognise that everybody is unique and has something to offer to R.E.
- Appreciate the impact that beliefs, values and traditions have on lifestyle.
- Have time to reflect and appreciate all of the above.

School Context

Long Mead Primary School serves children between the ages of three and eleven within Tonbridge, Kent. We work to the Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE and recognise the variety of religious and non-religious families from which our pupils come. We welcome and celebrate this diversity, are sensitive to the home background of each child and work to ensure that all pupils are included in our RE programme. We are pleased to have the support of members of local faith communities, we enjoy good relationships with them and encourage them to make positive contributions to the school and RE when appropriate. We recognise the importance of pupils' all-round personal development and the leading role that RE plays in contributing to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural elements in particular.

Key Skills in RE

We strongly believe that RE is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. We seek to develop children's skills in:

- Investigating (e.g. asking relevant questions, knowing how to use different types of sources as ways of gathering information).
- Reflecting (e.g. thinking and speaking carefully about religious and spiritual topics, reflecting on beliefs, practices and ultimate questions).
- Expressing (e.g. explaining concepts, rituals and practices, identifying and articulating matters of concern).
- Interpreting (e.g. drawing meaning from artefacts, art, poetry and symbols, interpreting religious language).
- Empathising (e.g. considering the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others).
- Applying (e.g. using RE learning in new situations).
- Discerning (e.g. developing an insight into personal experience and religion, relating learning to life).
- Analysing (e.g. distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact, distinguishing between the features of different religions).
- Synthesising (e.g. making links between religion and human experience, including pupil's own experience).
- Evaluating (e.g. debating issues of religious significance with reference to experience, evidence and argument).

Key Attitudes in RE

As with skills, RE has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote.

These include:

- Curiosity and wonder (e.g. developing imagination and curiosity, responding to questions of meaning and purpose).

- Commitment (e.g. understanding the importance of a commitment to a set of values by which to live one's life).
- Fairness (e.g. listening to the views of others without prejudging one's response, readiness to look beyond surface impressions).
- Respect (e.g. being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others, being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good).
- Self-understanding (e.g. feeling confident in their own beliefs and identity, recognizing their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth).
- Open mindedness (e.g. being willing to learn and gain new understanding, openness to points of view different from one's own).
- Critical mindedness (e.g. a willingness to examine ideas, questions and disputes about religious and spiritual questions).
- Enquiry (e.g. being prepared to reconsider existing views critically, being prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself).

The Key skills and attitudes in RE are explained in full on pages 106-109 of the Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE 2017-2022.

Organisation of RE

The syllabus is based on a key question approach where the questions open up the content to be studied. In EYFS children encounter religious and worldviews through special people, books, times, places, objects and by visiting places of worship. They ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder at the world in which they live.

In KS1 and KS2, RE enables pupils to:

- Know about and understand a range of religious and worldviews.
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religious and worldviews.
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

KS1 pupils are taught knowledge, skills and understanding through learning about Christians, Muslims and Jewish people. KS2 pupils are taught knowledge, skills and understanding through learning about Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people. Pupils may encounter other religions and worldviews in thematic units.

Time allocation follows the recommendations of the Kent Agreed Syllabus 2017 which recommends a minimum of 36 hours for RE at Key Stage 1 and a minimum of 45 hours at Key Stage 2 each year.

Approaches to teaching and learning in RE

RE is an exciting curriculum subject and we employ a wide range of learning methods in our teaching.

These include:

- Handling artefacts.
- Sharing personal experiences.
- Using art, music, dance and drama.
- Using story, pictures and photographs.
- Visiting local places of worship.

- Listening and responding to music.
- Making and tasting food e.g. from religious festivals.
- Looking at, and wearing clothes worn for a variety of religious occasions or within a variety of cultures.
- Role play.
- Meeting members of different faiths in school.
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas.
- Enjoying time to reflect and evaluate.
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others.

We encourage the use of a wide range of resources to enrich children's learning and we strive to ensure RE is a lively, stimulating subject which evokes interest and engages all children. Learning is planned to meet the individual needs of the children.

The contribution of RE to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development.

RE contributes to children's spiritual development by:

- Discussing and reflecting on questions of meaning and truth such as the origins of the universe, good and evil, life after death, beliefs about God and humanity and values such as justice, honesty and truth.
- Learning about and reflecting on important concepts and experiences such as love, trust, forgiveness, obedience and sacrifice.
- Valuing relationships and developing a sense of belonging.
- Considering how religions and beliefs regard the value and purpose of human beings, the importance of the environment and the significance of emotions such as love, anger, joy, jealousy, happiness and pain.

RE contributes to children's moral development by:

- Enabling children to value themselves and others.
- Exploring the influence of family, friends and other sources on moral choices.
- Considering what is of ultimate value both to children and within religious traditions.
- Developing an understanding in key beliefs and teachings in religion and values and moral choices.
- Considering ethical issues especially justice which promote racial and religious respect.
- Reflecting on the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience.

RE contributes to children's social development by:

- Considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns.
Reflecting on the importance of friendship and positive relationships.

RE contributes to children's cultural development by:

- Encountering British people of different faiths.
- Encountering people, stories, artefacts and resources from differing cultures.
- Promoting respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination.
- Challenging stereotypes of religion and beliefs.

RE and the use of language

RE can also make an important contribution to children's use of language by enabling them to:

- Acquire and develop a specialist vocabulary
- Use this vocabulary to help communicate and explain their thoughts / feelings with clarity.
- Listen and respond to the views and ideas of others.
- Be inspired to want to ask and respond to questions.
- Write in different styles / forms - such as poetry, diaries, reports and extended writing.

Assessment and Recording

In RE we provide annual reports based on the assessment of children's learning. Reports provided a brief summary of the work covered, a summary of the standards achieved and how the child can improve their learning. We also recognise that some of the most important learning in RE (e.g. how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed. What we do assess is children's progress against the key questions and learning objectives for the units they have covered.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

Although the learning objectives are statutory, we acknowledge that when taking account of these, some objectives may take longer to achieve than others, depending on children's varying abilities. Productive repetition of some ideas will be vital for reinforcing each concept, and vocabulary used when teaching needs to be checked against understanding. We understand that practical experiences are the most valuable educational tool and are essential for pupils with special educational needs. A wide variety of experiences such as visiting places of worship, receiving visitors, handling religious artifacts, self-expression and role play need to be arranged for these pupils to make the most of their learning. We provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of the children and further details are contained in the schools Special Educational Needs Policy.

Equal Opportunities

At Long Mead Primary School we value the opinion, beliefs and practice of all. It is the responsibility of all teachers to ensure that all children irrespective of gender, ability, including gifted children, ethnicity and social circumstances, have access to the curriculum and make the greatest progress possible. Religious Education provides opportunities to raise awareness and to value cultural and ethnic diversity. Further details are included in the schools Equal Opportunity Policy.