

Oakhurst Primary School R.E. Policy

Introduction

At Oakhurst Primary School we aim to celebrate diversity and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our pupils.

We believe that Religious Education provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster awareness of the differences in cultures and faiths within our school and the wider world. It is a subject that celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes.

RE is taught in accordance with the aims of the Swindon Agreed Syllabus. Particularly relevant to our school is the aim which states:

'Our teaching must stimulate curiosity, and develop children's sense of exploration and discovery. We aim to help children understand that questions in RE are in the main contentious, and that worthwhile questions in RE will seldom simply be answered by facts. In RE we aim to develop a classroom where inquiry is the norm – children are encouraged to look for alternative possibilities and to be open-minded and flexible in their thinking. We aim to teach children to think for themselves, become reflective learners and draw their own conclusions.'

Legal Requirements

In accordance with the law we provide religious education for all pupils registered at the school. The teaching of RE comprises 5% of the curriculum timetable as required by the Agreed Syllabus and recommended by the QCA.

Section 352 of the Education Act 1996 identifies the distinctive place of religious education as part of the basic curriculum alongside the National Curriculum. Religious education is to have equal standing in relation to the core and foundation subjects within the school.

Parents are informed in the school prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their pupils from religious education. Parents who choose to withdraw their children from Religious education lessons are required to state this in writing annually to the Head teacher.

The Scheme of Work

The scheme of work for Religious Education covers all the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. RE is taught in half-termly units.

We use the Swindon Scheme of Work as a basis for our planning. As a source of ideas and teaching strategies we also make use of the Wiltshire Scheme of Work and Diversity and Ethnic Minority Achievement Service.

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that:

At KS1 pupils study Christianity and Judaism as a major focus;

At KS2 pupils study Christianity and Judaism as a major focus and Islam as a minor focus. They also complete two encounter units in Sikhism and Hinduism.

Teaching and Learning

Planning for Religious Education is based on the two Attainment Targets in the Agreed Syllabus:

1. Learning *about* Religions
2. Learning *from* Religions

Learning about religion includes enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion, its key beliefs and teachings, practices, their impacts on the lives of believers and communities, and the varying ways in which these are expressed. It also includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.

Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own experiences and their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth and values and commitments, and communicating their responses.

Inclusion and differentiation for children with SEN and EAL are taken into account in our planning and teaching as they are in all areas of the curriculum. Within the teaching of RE we make the most of opportunities to help the children develop their sensitivity to relevant issues such as refugees and religious fasting, and to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

We endeavour to draw on the varied experiences and backgrounds of our pupils and staff in order to make RE relevant and interesting to our pupils. One way of doing this is through our links with local religious communities and places of worship.

Through RE children have the opportunity to develop many key skills such as thinking, researching, evaluating, reflecting and empathising. Wherever possible, links are made between Religious Education and other curriculum subjects.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as PHSE and our

Collective Worship programme, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important.

We encourage children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within society and their own experience.

Religious education also strongly supports the school's citizenship programme by introducing pupils to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider communities, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice.

Recording, Marking, Assessment and Reporting

In line with the school policy on assessment and monitoring it is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. Once a year the class teacher on a pro-forma will record the level achieved by each pupil. The level achieved will be used by the co-ordinator to track pupil progress through the school and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that each pupil is set work that is appropriately challenging. The RE co-ordinator will also collect a sample of children's work in each year group once a year.

The co-ordinator will monitor RE within the school through analysis of this assessment data.

Management

The teaching, assessing and resourcing of Religious Education is managed by the RE curriculum leader, in close collaboration with Senior Management.

The curriculum leader attends regular training and professional development, and organises INSET and training for other members of staff when necessary. RE planning is collected for monitoring twice a year every, and the scheme of work is evaluated annually.

Resources are bought with the annually allocated RE budget and stored in a central place for use by all staff.