

Glory Farm Primary and Nursery School, Bicester, Oxfordshire

Religious Education (RE) Policy Document

Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Glory Farm 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 not only of Christianity but also of other 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.

“If the teacher is to press for any conversion it is conversion from a shallow and unreflective attitude to life. If he is to press for commitment it is commitment to the religious quest.... To that search for meaning, purpose and value which is open to all men”.

(Bishop Ian Ramsey).

Our pupils should be encouraged to search, question and learn in a caring and sensitive environment where there is a pervasive sense of community, at the heart of which is love and where the qualities of freedom, tolerance and peace are fostered.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- contribute to the development of pupils as individuals and as members of society by helping them to find out about themselves, their worth and each other, fostering a reflective approach to life and keeping alive the sense of wonder and mystery implicit in everyday experiences.
- 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

Local Education Authorities (LEAs) are responsible for setting up Standing Advisory Councils on Religious Education (SACREs) which must be representative of local religious interests. SACREs are responsible for advising LEAs on matters connected with religious education and worship.

The legal requirements regarding RE and school worship can be found in the Education Reform Act 1988 (Sections 6-13). They are reaffirmed in the Education Act 1996 (Sections 375-389) and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (Sections 69-71).

The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social 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. Our RE curriculum is based on The Discovery RE scheme of Learning which meets all the requirements of the above document.

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, Diwali, and Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

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 computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies. RE is taught with an emphasis on a cross curricular focus where appropriate.

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 resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;

using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Curriculum planning in religious education

We plan our religious education curriculum using The Discovery RE scheme of Learning which meets the LA requirements. This is an enquiry based approach to discovering about world religions. 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, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. Year group staff use the above scheme to construct long term and medium term plans for their age group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics.

Foundation Stage

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In reception classes, 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 Development Matters document and the children work towards achieving the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged zero to five.

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.

Teaching religious education to children with special needs

In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs).

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary.

Resources

At Glory Farm School we have a very wide range of resources to enrich our delivery of the R.E. curriculum. These include books, posters, videos, tapes and numerous artefacts from all major world religions. The R.E. resources are located within the school resource room and the library which has a good supply of R.E. topic books and computer software to support children's individual research.

Monitoring and review

The RE Subject Leader is 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.

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Date of Approval _____

Date for Review _____

Signed _____