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Religious Education

The importance of religious education to the curriculum

Religious Education is about the distinctive ways in which human beings express their understanding and experiences of life. It provides pupils with opportunities to reflect upon human experiences that give rise to fundamental questions of life and death and to consider values and commitments. It provides opportunity to study Christianity and the principal religions of Britain. It does not promote a religion or particular set of beliefs. This kind of nurturing is the privilege of the home and faith communities to which pupils belong. The religious education taught in our school is based on Devon, Plymouth and Torbay Agreed Syllabus (2007).

The aims of religious education and how these contribute to the school's aims

The school aims to:

- encourage children to develop as members of a community;
- encourage a reflective approach to living;
- enable the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the principal religions of Britain;
- provide pupils with opportunities to reflect on their experiences of life;
- contribute to the development of their own beliefs and values.

Strategy for implementation

Entitlement and curriculum provision

Five per cent of curriculum time is allocated to the curriculum at both key stages. This amounts to 36 hours at Key Stage 1 and 39 hours at Key Stage 2 per year.

The pupils spend the majority of curriculum time studying Christianity, as that is what is well represented in our own community.

At Key Stage 1 pupils learn about the principal religions of Britain by studying a relevant aspect of one of the religions in most units of work. In this way, pupils are introduced to the wider concept of religion and to the richness and diversity of world faiths.

At Key Stage 2 pupils study discretely Judaism in Year 5 and Hinduism in Year 6.

All units require teachers to include opportunities for pupils to reflect on meaning (not assessed), learn about religion (attainment target 1) and

learn from religion (attainment target 2).

The scheme meets the requirements of the programmes of study in the Agreed Syllabus (pages 34-38 - key stage 1; pages 41-51 - key stage 2). Teaching in the foundation stage is based on the Agreed Syllabus pages 32-33.

The learning objectives identified in the units of work cover the full entitlement for pupils.

There is a suitable balance between expecting pupils to express their own ideas through speaking and listening and to record what they have learned through writing, illustrations and diagrams.

Teachers provide stimulating and challenging experiences that enable pupils to gain enjoyment from their studies.

Regular opportunities for visits to places of interest and visitors to school are regular features of the curriculum. In this way, pupils have first-hand experiences of the religious traditions.

Teaching and learning

Pupils are provided with as much first-hand experience of the principal religions as possible and artefacts and authentic resources are used wherever possible.

Where religious artefacts are used, they are treated with the respect they would be given if they were being used in their actual setting for worship.

When teaching religious education, the school does not seek commitment by the pupils to a particular religion. Teachers should not assume that pupils are members of any faith community. They avoid phrases such as "When you go to church ..." and use statements such as "When Christians/Jews go to church/synagogue ...". The integrity of pupils is respected and they are never asked or expected to believe the claims of a religion.

Sacred literature is treated with respect. For example, biblical material is presented as the sacred text of the believing community to whom it is the Word of God. Biblical stories are used to identify what they teach believers about God and his relationship with people.

Pupils are provided with opportunities to explore the themes they perceive in the story.

The experiences and views that pupils bring from home and faith communities are always valued.

Assessment and recording

Learning outcomes and assessment activities are identified in each unit of work in the scheme.

Assessments are based on the statements in the Agreed Syllabus (key stage 1 page 38; key stage 2 page 51)

Work in religious education is assessed in accordance with the school assessment policy.

Continuity and progression

Each unit in the scheme of work indicates how it relates to the other units

In each unit the expected levels of achievement are identified and these are based on the appropriate level statements for the age and stage of the pupils.

Teachers need to be aware of, and take account of, pupils' achievements in their previous learning.

Organisation

Teachers decide on the appropriate organisation in lessons. All activities are based on the scheme of work. Teachers organise activities so that pupils of all ages work as a whole class, in small groups and individually over time.

Teachers take account of differentiation in planning work for each lesson. Teachers should seek guidance from the subject leader if required in relation to this.

Where parents exercise their right to withdraw their children from religious education parents are invited to discuss their decision with the headteacher. The headteacher will explain the religious education policy and attempt to identify the reason for withdrawal and agree alternative arrangements.

Learning resources

A range of learning resources are available for each of the RE topics. Specific resources for each unit of work are organised in topic boxes. All books, fiction and non-fiction (including Bibles) are stored in a variety of places around the school. Ask the subject leader.

Leadership and management

Leadership and management roles

The subject leader has the responsibility to take a lead in developing religious education further across the school within the school's improvement plan, monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning, and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect informal support from the subject leader, and support arising from the school improvement plan and identified in performance management and induction programmes.

Staff development and training opportunities

To develop staff confidence and competence in teaching religious education:

the subject leader will attend Devon Curriculum Services area conferences;
whole-school training needs are identified as a result of the monitoring and evaluation programme;
other training needs are identified through induction programmes and performance management;
the subject leader will arrange for relevant advice and information from courses to be disseminated and, where appropriate, to be included in improvement planning and turned into practice;
where necessary, the subject leader leads (or arranges) school-based training;

Review

This policy will be reviewed annually in line with the school's policy review programme.