

Archbishop Courtenay Voluntary Aided C.E. Primary School

Policy statement for Religious Education

The Religious Education policy adopted by Archbishop Courtenay Primary School CE Primary School reflects the belief that that education involves the whole person: body, mind and spirit, enabling pupils to explore meaning and purpose in their lives. Religious Education has a significant place in the life of the school through which to develop the religious literacy and nurture the spiritual development of all pupils.

1) Legal requirements and time allocation

As a Voluntary Aided Church of England School, Religious Education is determined by the Governing Body, which is responsible for fulfilling the school's Trust Deed and all other legal requirements. Religious Education is taught to all pupils from Reception to Year 6, as required by law. The Governors have adopted the Rochester Diocesan Syllabus for RE (published 2009). The syllabus recommends that a minimum of 5% of curriculum time is given to RE; and therefore timetabled RE is normally taught for the equivalent of an hour a week at Key Stage 1 and 1.25 hours at Key Stage 2. This is in addition to time set aside for Collective Worship.

2) Aims

The aims of Religious Education are set out in the Rochester Diocesan Syllabus as follows

Religious Education is an educational activity which promotes the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.

It aims to enable pupils:

- to gain a secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity as expressed in the traditions of the Anglican Church
- to be introduced to some of our neighbours' religions and to learn to respect people of different faiths
- to mature in their own beliefs, values and behaviour, by reflecting on religious beliefs and practices."

3) Spiritual, Moral, Social & Cultural Development

Religious Education has a particular contribution to make to these important areas of education because of its subject matter and the approach taken towards it.

- Pupils are encouraged to develop spiritually by exploring religious ideas, drawn particularly from Christianity, and reflecting upon them for themselves.
- They are helped to develop morally by considering religious codes of conduct and Christian values in particular, evaluating their own behaviour in the light of these.

- Pupils explore the social aspects of religion such as religious lifestyles. We also encourage them to listen to each other and to respect people whose ideas are different from their own.
- RE promotes cultural development through an emphasis on Christianity, which has influenced British art, music and literature over the centuries. Pupils learn about key figures in the Bible, for example, and major Christian festivals. RE also encourages them to appreciate the rich diversity of other cultures by introducing them to some of the other principal religions in Great Britain.

4) Curriculum Content

In the Foundation Stage, the areas of learning and development which will be primarily addressed will be those of Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding the World. In addition, the areas of Communication and Language, Literacy and Expressive Arts and Design will be visited in a variety of ways. Aspects of Christianity are explored, such as the 'Special Day' of Christmas and 'Special Occasions' such as baptisms. Pupils are also told Bible stories.

From Key Stage 1, RE is taught as a separate subject. The content is still based on the concept of 'special', such as special people and places, special books and objects. This is used to teach pupils about Christianity.

The whole of Key Stage 2 explores Christianity under the themes of The Church, Jesus Christ and The Bible. Other religions are also introduced: Judaism in Year 3, Islam in Year 4, Hinduism in Year 5 and Sikhism in Year 6.

5) Attainment Targets & Assessment

There are two attainment targets in the RE Syllabus:

- AT1 Learning about religion
- AT2 Learning from religion

AT1 helps pupils to know and understand what religious people believe, what they do and how they express themselves. AT2 helps pupils to make sense of themselves, of life, and of right and wrong. The syllabus is set out in such a way that there is a balance between these two attainment targets. In other words, pupils are taught about religion, especially Christianity, but they are also helped to think about the relevance of religious ideas to their own lives. For example, lessons about Christian saints also encourage pupils to think about saintly qualities in themselves and in others.

6) Teaching and Learning Styles

At Archbishop Courtenay CE Primary School we use a variety of teaching and learning styles in RE lessons. One of our principal aims is to nurture spiritual development, whilst pupils learn about the Christian faith and other faith communities. For the very young, this will be achieved by respecting their natural ways of learning through experience, exploration, conversation and play. Older children will investigate, evaluate and discuss before demonstrating what they have learned through pictures, role play or the written word. Sometimes we will engage in whole class teaching, but children

will also work individually or in groups. A wide range of resources will be used including books, posters, videos/DVDs and appropriate artefacts. The internet and other ICT based resources will also be used for research purposes or as a teaching tool. We will also make use of outside visitors and will make visits to our parish church and other places of worship to enhance learning.

We recognise that there are children of widely differing abilities in our classes and we ensure that we provide suitable learning opportunities for all by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. Our work in RE also takes into account the targets set in Individual Education Plans and the needs of those children with Special Educational Needs.

7) Assessment

Pupils are assessed on both attainment targets at the end of terms 2, 4 and 6 using the national assessment levels in Religious Education (Qualifications & Curriculum Authority 2004). These levels also help teachers to pitch the work at the right level, challenging pupils to develop knowledge and understanding in the subject and also the ability to reflect on ideas and relate them to their own experiences. Therefore, assessment is both formative (ongoing) and summative.

8) Monitoring and Review

Monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in RE is the responsibility of the RE subject leader, supported by the senior leadership team and head teacher. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE subject leader will also write the subject development plan at the start of each academic year, outlining the aims and objectives for the leadership of the subject for the year ahead. The head teacher allocates regular management time to the RE subject leader so that she/he can review samples of children's work and undertake observations of teaching and learning in RE across the school.

9) Equal Opportunities

Although the content of RE in this Church of England Aided School is mainly Christian, reflecting the Christian nature of the school, we make no assumptions about the commitment of individual pupils. We encourage all pupils to participate in RE, and encourage sensitivity in handling minority opinions, beliefs and practices.

10) Withdrawal

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from all or part of Religious Education, but we would encourage them to discuss this with the head teacher before making a final decision.