

Riverside Primary School

Religious Education Policy

September 2024

Reviewed without change



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Religious Education Policy

The law provides a basic curriculum for schools, which includes religious education and the national curriculum subjects. Religious education, unlike the subjects of the national curriculum, is determined at a local level. Each local authority has a statutory duty to set up a 'Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education' (SACRE) whose duties include the provision and monitoring of religious education and collective worship. As part of its responsibilities towards religious education, the SACRE has to establish a syllabus which is reviewed every five years. The North Tyneside Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education is a revision of the one produced in 2006. This syllabus is the legal basis for Religious Education for schools in North Tyneside.

Rationale

Religious education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions including Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. It enables pupils to learn about other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to those questions. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development. It enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures. It enables pupils to think about this country's faiths and values in a multicultural society.

Religious education encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, equality, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious education encourages pupils to develop their sense of self worth, identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a plural society and global community. Religious education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It enables pupils to develop respect for, sensitivity to and acceptance of others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own. It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice and racism. In the current climate, religious education also raises awareness of radicalisation and supports pupils who are feeling unsafe.

Review of the Curriculum

The RE curriculum, was updated in 2020-21 it was amended to ensure a wide range of religions are explored. Ensuring children have a good understanding of people's beliefs. What they believe and how they celebrate these beliefs. This links in with our British values of having tolerance of those of different beliefs and faiths.

The aims of religious education in North Tyneside

Religious education should enable pupils to:

- acquire knowledge and develop understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in this country;
- develop an understanding of the ways in which religious beliefs, faith and secular views influence the values, practices, attitudes and behaviour of individuals, communities, societies and cultures;
- develop the ability to reason and make decisions and judgements about religious, ethical and moral issues, with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in this country;
- address fundamental questions about life and enable personal search for meaning and purpose through consideration of the beliefs, faiths and teachings of the principal religions represented in this country
- reflect on personal experiences in the light of their study of religion and develop confidence in their own identity, beliefs and values;
- develop positive attitudes and acceptance of others who hold different views and beliefs;
- develop a sense of belonging and responsibility as a member of a diverse community, locally, nationally and globally;
- develop a sense of social action.

What is the contribution of religious education to the school curriculum?

Along with the other subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education aims:

• To provide for all pupils to learn and achieve:

The North Tyneside Agreed Syllabus is designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment of pupils. Religious education develops independent and interdependent learning. It makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy and computing. Religious education promotes an enquiry-based learning approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion and faith. It also enhances the capacity to think coherently and consistently. This enables pupils to reflect on their own and others' views in a reasoned, thoughtful and informed manner.

• To promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life:

Religious education has a significant role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. In religious education, pupils are able to focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues, appreciate their own and others' beliefs, faiths and cultures and develop self-awareness and awareness of others. Religious education enables pupils to gain a clear understanding of religions and beliefs and learn about the ways different faith and non-faith communities relate to each other.

What are the purposes of the North Tyneside Agreed Syllabus for religious education?

This syllabus has four purposes:

1. To establish an entitlement

This syllabus determines learning in religious education in community schools for all pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, religion, gender and differences in abilities. This learning contributes to pupils' developing knowledge, skills, values, understanding and attitudes which are necessary for their personal fulfilment and development as active and responsible citizens.

2. To establish standards

This syllabus makes expectations for learning and attainment explicit to pupils, parents, teaching and support staff, governors, employers and members of the public. It establishes standards for the performance of all pupils in religious education. These can be used to help pupils and staff set targets for improvement and evaluate progress towards them.

3. To promote continuity and coherence

This syllabus contributes to a coherent curriculum that promotes continuity. It aids the transition of pupils between schools and phases of education and can provide a foundation for further study and lifelong learning.

4. To promote public understanding

This syllabus aims to increase public understanding of, and confidence in the work of community schools in religious education. It recognises and takes account of the involvement of local and national bodies and the interest of particular groups.

Religious education and learning across the curriculum

a. Key skills

Religious education provides opportunities for pupils to develop those key skills, which in turn enhance the quality of learning in the subject:

- communication through developing a broad and accurate religious vocabulary, reading and responding to a range of written and spoken language (including sacred texts, stories, poetry, prayers, liturgy and worship), communicating ideas using the creative and expressive arts, talking and writing with understanding and insight about religious and other beliefs and values, reflecting critically on the ultimate questions of life, using reasoned arguments;
- application of number through calendrical reckoning, collecting, recording, presenting and interpreting data involving graphs, charts and statistical analysis;
- computing through using a range of resources including the internet, researching information about religions and beliefs, teaching and practices, using email to communicate and analyse information with people of differing beliefs and cultures, using spreadsheets and databases to handle and present data relevant to the study of religious education;
- working with others through sharing ideas, discussing beliefs, values and practices, collaborating with each other and developing respect, acceptance and sensitivity;
- improving pupils' own learning and performance through setting targets as part of religious education development, reviewing achievements and identifying ways to improve their work;

- problem-solving through recognising key issues to do with religious belief, practice and expression, interpreting and explaining findings and making personal decisions on religious issues (for example, considering their own and religious ideas on good and bad), ethical dilemmas, equality and priorities in life.

b. Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Each of these four areas can be viewed and planned for separately but opportunities for provision will often be interconnected.

Many opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will arise naturally and will be inherent in, for example, the ethos and values of the school. However, schools should be able to monitor the quality of their provision and this cannot be done without careful planning, reflection and evaluation.

There are many significant opportunities within religious education for personal development arising from its distinctive content, teaching and learning experiences, resources and interaction which are crucial in learning about and learning from religions. In particular, religious education can make a major contribution to a pupil's spiritual development.

The programmes of study

In formulating the programmes of study, the guidelines in the DfE non-statutory framework for religious education were followed.

It is important to ensure that during their school life pupils encounter all of the principal religions represented in the United Kingdom (Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism).

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The EYFS describes the phase of a child's education from the age of three to the end of the reception year. Religious education is compulsory for the school to provide, including for those in a reception class. Although it is not compulsory for pupils in a nursery school or nursery class in a primary school, it is good practice and educationally and developmentally sound for religious education to form part of the learning at that stage.

Including religious education in EYFS will offer significant opportunities to meet the requirements of the early learning goals and will provide pupils with some valuable learning experiences and strong foundations to build on later in religious education.

It is important to remember that in the early years teaching and learning in religious education should:

- involve a multi-sensory approach;
- build on what pupils already know, understand and can do;
- be inclusive of all races, cultures, religions, needs, abilities and backgrounds, by ensuring the careful use of language, books and activities;
- offer wide experiences and activities which provide opportunities to learn about and learn from religions;
- offer opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Breadth of study

During the EYFS, children may:

- begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, stories, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship;
- listen to and talk about stories;
- be introduced to religious words;
- use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression;
- reflect on their own feelings and experiences;
- ask big questions;
- use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

Religions to be studied

In EYFS, pupils will begin to learn about Christianity and other religions represented in the school and the local area (children should learn aspects of at least two other religions).

Religious education and the EYFS areas of learning

Religious education can make a contribution to each of the areas but it has a particularly important contribution to make to:

- Personal, social and emotional development;
- Communication, language and literacy;
- Knowledge and understanding of the world;
- Expressive Arts and Design

Programme of study for EYFS

The following programme of study offers flexibility so that teachers may:

- plan for learning about and learning from Christianity and two other religions
- plan for religious education in a early years unit
- plan for religious education in both nursery and reception classes, if they so wish

The programme of study for Key Stage 1

Throughout Key Stage 1, pupils explore Christianity and at least two of the principal religions in this country. They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families. Pupils ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imaginations. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Teachers should ensure that in planning for religious education there is equal balance between learning about religion and learning from religion.

1. Learning about religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings and talk about their meanings
- b) name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting similarities where appropriate
- c) identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference this makes to their lives
- d) explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the arts and communicate their responses
- e) identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols and begin to use a range of religious words.

2. Learning from religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) reflect on and consider religious and spiritual feelings, experiences and concepts such as worship, wonder, faith, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness
- b) ask and respond imaginatively to puzzling questions, communicating their ideas
- c) identify what matters to them and others, including those with religious faith and commitments, and communicate their responses
- d) reflect on how spiritual and moral values relate to their own behaviour
- e) recognise that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

Breadth of study

During this key stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, attitudes, skills and understanding through the religions and beliefs to be studied:

- a) Christianity, Islam and Judaism;
- b) a religious community with a significant local presence, where appropriate;
- c) the world views of pupils.

Themes

During this key stage pupils should engage with the following themes:

- a) What people believe about God, humanity and the natural world;
- b) How and why some stories are sacred and important in religion;
- c) How and why celebrations are important in religion;
- d) How and why symbols express religious meaning;
- e) Figures who have an influence on others locally, nationally and globally in religion;
- f) Where and how people belong and why belonging is important;
- g) Who I am and my uniqueness as a person in a family and community.

Schools are free to choose which stories and people they study in the light of available resources, taking account of continuity and progression through and across key stages.

The programme of study for Key Stage 2

Throughout Key Stage 2, pupils learn about Christianity and at least three other principal religions, recognising the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and beliefs and the importance of dialogue between them. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in religious education.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

Teachers should ensure that in planning for religious education, there is equal balance between learning about religion and learning from religion.

1. Learning about religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others;
- b) describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from and are closely connected with, beliefs and teachings
- c) identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences within and between religions;
- d) investigate the significance of religion in the local, national and global communities;
- e) consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, understand why they are important in religion and note links between them;
- f) describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate, big and ethical questions;
- g) use specialist vocabulary in communicating their knowledge and understanding;
- h) use and interpret information about religions from a range of sources.

2. Learning from religion

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) reflect on what it means to belong to a faith community, communicating their own and others' responses;
- b) respond to the challenges of commitment both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways;
- c) discuss their own and others' views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas;
- d) reflect on ideas of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to them;
- e) reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives.

Breadth of study

During this key stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, attitudes skills and understanding through the religions and beliefs to be studied:

- a) Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Hinduism and Judaism;
- b) Pupils' world views or secular philosophy, where appropriate. Encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, and focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community.

Themes

During this key stage pupils should engage with the following themes. These themes have been integrated into the programmes of study.

- a) How people's beliefs about God, the world and others impact on their lives
- b) What sacred texts and other sources say about God, the world and human life
- c) Where, how and why people worship, including at particular sites
- d) Why some occasions are sacred to believers, and what people think about life after death
- e) How religious and spiritual ideas are expressed
- f) Figures from whom believers find inspiration
- g) What is expected of a person in following a religion or belief
- h) How religious families and communities practise their faith, and the contributions this makes to local life
- i) How religions and beliefs respond to global issues of human rights, fairness, social justice and the importance of the environment.

Schools are free to choose which stories and people they study in the light of available resources, taking account of continuity and progression through and across key stages.

Some useful recommended websites which have been quality assured for accuracy of the information provided:

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/>

<http://www.retoday.org.uk>

<http://www.pcfre.org.uk>

<http://www.cstg.org.uk>

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/>

The Agreed Syllabus requirements in North Tyneside

All pupils registered at a school are entitled to receive religious education. This includes pupils in the second year of the early year's foundation stage and students aged 16-19 in school Sixth Forms.

The minimum requirements

- Religious education is a core subject of the curriculum for all pupils and the requirements of this Agreed Syllabus are not flexible.
- Curriculum time for religious education is distinct from any time spent on assembly or collective worship.
- Whilst there is clearly some common ground between religious education and some other subjects such as citizenship, PHSCE and literacy, the time allocated for religious education (see below) is for the teaching of clearly identifiable religious education.
- This syllabus has been designed to be delivered in a minimum of 5% of curriculum time in Key stages 1-4, ages 5-16.
- The minimum recommended time of 5% for the teaching of religious education means that schools are expected to allocate:
 - Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year;
 - Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year;

The use of language

Religious education is a language saturated subject, which uses and develops skills of reading and writing, speaking and listening. It is good practice to apply, extend and reinforce language and literacy skills across the curriculum, and pupils will gain more from their work in religious education if such skills are improved. Any language used must be clearly understood by pupils.

However, whilst it is good to take account of the overlap between religious education and language and literacy, religious education must be planned and delivered according to the objectives outlined in the Agreed Syllabus.

Religious education contributes to the development of language and literacy by encountering:

- specialist vocabulary;
- sacred and secular texts;
- different texts such as story, parables, myth, biography, poetry;
- factual and fictional texts.

Religious education contributes to the development of language and literacy by encouraging pupil response, through:

- listening to the viewpoints of others;
- articulating and communicating their own ideas and the ideas of others;
- using synthesis, argument, comparison and personal reflection in written and oral communication;
- understanding and reflecting on the written and spoken words they encounter;
- discussion;
- writing in different styles, such as prose, poetry, diaries.

The use of computing

Pupils should be given the opportunity (as in other subject areas) to develop and apply their computing capability in religious education. They should be given opportunities to support their work by being taught to:

- find things out from a variety of sources;
- develop their ideas using computing and social media skills and tools;
- exchange and share information, using Skype for example;
- review, modify and evaluate their work.

Using computing skills appropriately in religious education offers great potential to support teaching and learning. However, as with other tools, strategies or approaches, working with computers should fulfil one or more of the following:

- supporting the achievement of religious education learning objectives;
- improving the quality and enjoyment of teaching and learning;

- adding value to the learning process;
- making planning and teaching more effective;
- contributing to pupils' understanding of computing.

In religious education, pupils can enhance their computing skills by:

- using the internet sources to investigate, analyse and evaluate different aspects of religious beliefs, faiths and practices, ultimate questions and ethical issues;
- using email, social media, networking or videoconferencing to communicate and collaborate with individuals in different locations;
- using multimedia, interactive whiteboards and presentation software to communicate a personal response, the essence of an argument or a stimulus for discussion;
- using writing-support and concept-mapping software to organise thoughts and communicate knowledge and understanding of the diversity of beliefs and practices within and between religious traditions;
- using equipment such as cameras to bring authentic images into the classroom to support discussion and reflection, and to enhance understanding of the impact of religious beliefs and practices on the lives of local individuals and faith communities.

Personal, Social and Health and Economic Education and Citizenship

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting personal, social and health and economic education through pupils:

- developing confidence and responsibility and making the most of their abilities by learning about what is fair and unfair, right and wrong and being encouraged to share their opinions;
- developing a healthy, safer lifestyle by learning about religious beliefs and teachings on food and drink, leisure, relationships and human sexuality, drug use and misuse, learning about the purpose and value of religious beliefs and sensitivities in relation to sex education and enabling pupils to consider and express their own views;
- developing good relationships and respecting the differences between people by learning about the diversity of different ethnic and religious groups and the destructive power of prejudice, challenging racism, discrimination, offending behaviour and bullying, being able to talk about relationships and feelings, considering issues of marriage and family life and meeting and encountering people whose beliefs, views and lifestyles are different from their own.

Religious education plays a significant part in promoting citizenship through:

- developing pupils' knowledge and understanding about the diversity of national, regional, religious and ethnic identities in the United Kingdom and the need for mutual respect and understanding;
- enabling pupils to think about topical spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues including the importance of resolving conflict fairly ;
- exploring the rights, responsibilities and duties of citizens locally, nationally and globally;
- enabling pupils to justify and defend orally, and in writing, personal opinions about issues, problems and events.

Religious education considers the acquisition and responsible use of money, including charitable giving and caring for others. Religious education focuses on the ethics of wealth, debt, poverty, gambling, business and investment which enable pupils to develop their skills of analysis and critical reflection.

Thinking skills

Through using thinking skills strategies, religious education can deepen pupils' understanding of religious and spiritual questions and at the same time contribute to wider educational standards by enabling pupils to 'think about thinking' and 'learn how to learn'.

Religious education provides opportunities to promote thinking skills through helping pupils to research, select, interpret and analyse information from religious traditions, reflect and question their own views and ideas and those of others and communicate their ideas in a variety of ways.

Creativity and culture

Religious education explores beliefs, values and the spiritual through a variety of means, including creativity. It considers the scope of human nature, sources of inspiration and discovery, connections between beliefs, values and forms of artistic expression. Religious education develops pupils' appreciation of the value of cultural distinctiveness and allows pupils to express themselves creatively.

Education for equality

Religious education raises questions about belief and human behaviour through studying the damaging effects of xenophobia, extremism and racial stereotyping and the impact of conflict in religion. This promotes respect, acceptance, understanding and co-operation through dialogue between people of different faiths and beliefs.

Effective contributions to scientific, medical and health issues

Religious education explores philosophical and ethical questions of the origin, purpose and destiny of the cosmos and life within it, the nature of humanity and human interaction with the world. Religious education considers developments in genetics and medicine and their application and use and explores concepts of health and well-being.

Links to employment, vocations and work-related learning

There is a clear focus in religious education on individual sense of purpose and aspiration in life. Religious education considers its appropriateness and relevance to a wide range of employment opportunities and the development of spiritual and ethical issues linked to the world of work.

Education for sustainable development

Religious education helps pupils to consider the origins and value of life, the importance of looking after the environment and studies the ways in which religious beliefs and teachings influence attitudes to the environment and other species.

Religious education and inclusion

The statutory requirements and guidance on Inclusion identifies three principles that are essential to the development of an inclusive curriculum, including religious education. These principles are:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for all pupils.

Religious education is for all pupils, irrespective of their age, gender, ethnicity, ability, attainment or background. This Agreed Syllabus provides rich and diverse opportunities for all pupils to learn in religious education.

For some pupils, whose attainment is significantly lower than the expected levels for a key stage, greater degrees of differentiation will be necessary and the same is true for pupils whose attainment exceeds the expected levels. All learning experiences should be meaningful and inspire pupils.

Withdrawal

Under the terms of the 1988 Education Reform Act, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the teaching of religious education.

The Head teacher, on receipt of such a request will discuss with the parents working understanding of the religious issues involved and the practical implications of withdrawal. Compliance with the parents request will be granted on full parental awareness of the legal aspect of the teaching of RE and possible accommodation implications. Teachers can also exercise the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. Should this occur, the class should be taught by another staff member as part of our PPA cover arrangements so that the class entitlement to the curriculum is ensured.

Resources

The resources used by teachers to aid their effective delivery of RE are stored in the cupboard in the BASE. The resources are clearly sorted according to the relevant religions and will be built up as necessary.

Monitoring

It is the RE coordinators role to ensure that the subject is monitored and evaluated throughout the year. This will be carried out on a termly basis using the schools current subject monitoring system.

Reporting to Parents

Progress will be reported to parents in a written annual report.

In the past at Riverside we have tried to link Literacy and Maths into many Foundation Subjects including RE and we are now moving away from this towards a more knowledge based learning system which also caters for children being able to reflect on specific religions and religious based events. Our focus is more towards spiritual, moral, cultural and social aspects of learning, especially within the children's community and wider world.

Review Date: September 2025