

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

1. The aim of Religious Education

The aim of Religious Education within our school is to promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural and intellectual development of pupils by encouraging an **exploration** and **response** to those aspects of religion and human experience, which raise fundamental questions of belief and value.

For example, R.E. makes a contribution to spiritual development by giving pupils the opportunity to think about their own response to ethical and moral issues.

The aim for RE is an *educational* one and the Redbridge agreed syllabus states that RE should:

- encourage pupils to have confidence in their own growing sense of identity as well as valuing and respecting diversity in others;
- help pupils in their search for meaning and purpose in life;
- neither promote nor undermine any particular religious, spiritual or secular stance;
- be accessible to pupils and teachers of any religious persuasion or none.

Parents have the right to partly or wholly withdraw their children from RE and teachers in general have a right not to teach the subject.

It cannot be stated too strongly, however, that this agreed syllabus has been constructed in the hope that parents will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal. It is hoped that teachers, too, will recognise the educational validity of RE and will feel drawn to meet its professional challenge.

If a parent/carer requests that their child be partly or wholly withdrawn from RE, they should be asked to contact the Head Teacher.

If a teacher is unhappy with teaching aspects of the RE scheme of work, they should contact the RE co-ordinator or Head Teacher.

2. Meeting the aims

The role of The Agreed Syllabus

Unlike many other subjects Religious Education is not part of the National Curriculum and the detailed working out of a syllabus for Religious Education is a matter for each individual Local Education Authority.

Central to the teaching of RE in our school is The Redbridge Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education "Exploration & Response"

The Redbridge Agreed Syllabus Conference – consisting of members representing religious communities, teachers and the local community, formulated this document. The syllabus sets out a framework for RE in Redbridge schools and contains both statutory requirements and guidance material.

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a programme of study for RE within each key stage. Following these programmes of study should enable pupils to learn about religion and learn from religion.

This can be divided broadly into:

Exploring

- what people believe;
- what people do;
- how people express themselves;

Responding

- making sense of who we are;
- making sense of life;
- making sense of values and commitments.

Hence the title of the document.

Religious Education at the Foundation Stage

The RE programme for Early Years should consist of a balance between two elements:

- units of work
- single sessions, lessons or activities

There are three frameworks for units of work:

- Celebrating Special Times
- Stories & What they Tell Us
- Aspects of Identity & Relationships

It is recommended that in reception classes at least one unit will be studied each term. As far as possible, all children should have experience of one unit from each of the three areas of experience at some point during the Foundation Stage.

Religious Education at Key Stage 1 and 2

The agreed syllabus sets out RE at this stage in terms of two kinds of RE unit:

- standard RE units, each with a particular focus and each designed to last for about half a term;
- supplementary units on Easter and Christmas, and another on Celebration, Festival and Community which is ongoing

RE units to be included in the Year 1 curriculum are:

- What does it mean to belong?
- What does it mean to live with family and friends?
- Who influences our lives?
- What can we learn from stories about children?

RE units to be included in the Year 2 curriculum are:

- Why is a church building special for many Christians?
- What makes us wonder about the world?
- Why are different books special for different people?
- How do we express meaning through cards, candles and actions?

RE units to be included in the Year 3 curriculum are:

- How and why do Hindus celebrate Diwali?
- How and why do Hindus worship at home and in the mandir?
- How did Jesus make people stop and think?
- What makes me the person I am?

RE units to be included in the Year 4 curriculum are:

- How do Jews celebrate their beliefs at home and in the synagogue?
- Why is Pesach (Passover) a special time for Jewish people?
- Why is the Bible special for Christians?
- How should we relate to the world?

RE units to be included in the Year 5 curriculum are:

- Why is Muhammad important to Muslims?
- Why are prayer and the mosque important to Muslims?
- Why is Jesus important to Christians?
- What inner forces affect how we think and behave?

RE units to be included in the Year 6 curriculum are:

- Why is the gurdwara an important place for the Sikh community?
- Why are the Gurus important for Sikhs today?
- How do Christians try to follow Jesus' example?

3. The Scheme of Work Outline

The scheme of work, in accordance with the requirements of the agreed syllabus, sets out the RE programme for each year group and for the needs of all pupils. Local support material will include a suggested planning grid for each unit. Drawing up the support material involved the efforts of members of the Redbridge Agreed Syllabus Review Group.

4. The Teacher's Role in Religious Education

The scheme of work outline will need to be referred to by year group teams when planning each week. There is an overview that shows where the units are plotted. The agreed syllabus can be consulted for further details and ideas. Teachers are expected to give examples of work from 3 children (high/middle/low ability) and feedback to the RE co-ordinator at the end of the year.

5. Teaching Methods and Classroom Organisation

There are a number of qualities that good RE teaching will seek to foster and which will apply equally to both students and teachers.

It is up to individual teachers to organise their class in whatever way best suits the activities of each lesson. However, RE should be taught in a manner that encourages children to reflect upon and make sense of their own experiences, and to raise questions and explore and evaluate issues.

It is strongly recommended that teachers develop a range of ways of using stories and religious artefacts in their RE work. The support material recommends a range of books and stories, which can be used to generate discussion or illustrate an aspect of religious or human experience, and at certain points the use of religious artefacts is specified.

Significant aspects of RE are covered in exploring a range of festivals.

6. Religious Education and Assemblies

Although acts of worship and Religious Education are separate aspects of school, it is possible for assemblies to act as a "launching pad" for ideas in RE, particularly when the assembly uses a story or an artefact, or if it is the celebration of a special occasion. The school has a separate policy on collective worship and assemblies.

7. The Local Community

The ongoing RE units give the school an opportunity to involve parents and other members of the community. Pupils also have the opportunity to visit various places of worship. This is arranged in collaboration with the RE co-ordinator.

8. Assessment, Record-keeping and Reporting

Pupils should:

- be aware that some questions are puzzling and may not have easy or right answers, even for adults;
- understand that people's beliefs and values affect the way in which they live;
- make links between their own experiences and those of others.

The levels of attainment identify six strands. At Key Stage 1 the great majority of pupils are expected to work within levels W - 3. The expected attainment for the majority of pupils in Year 1 is Level 1. The expected attainment for the majority of pupils in Year 2 is Level 2. At Key Stage 2 the great majority of children will be expected to work within levels 3 to 6. The expected attainment for the majority of pupils in Year 6 is level 5.

RE work is kept in a separate book for individual children and is passed on to the next teacher.

School reports will contain a brief comment to record the child's progress in RE.

Marking of children's work is linked with the school's marking policy.

9. Resources

In implementing the school's RE scheme of work, teachers are encouraged to use a wide range of resources such as books, religious artefacts, ICT, posters, teaching packs, pictures and videos. Resources are currently stored in the Resources room and outside the Staff Room.

It is also recommended that other types of resources in RE teaching be used. For example:

- human resources- the experiences and contributions of children and adults throughout the school and in the local community.

- the natural world and all its elements.
- physical resources such as places of worship.

NB. If teachers wish to arrange a visit or visitor in RE, this should be done in collaboration with the RE Co-ordinator.

10. Equal Opportunities

The agreed syllabus encourages schools to develop an approach to RE which is inclusive so that all pupils can take part. In seeking to achieve this, the school should, for example:

- take into account the views and experiences of all, irrespective of whether individuals would call themselves 'religious' or not;
- remember that, at certain stages in life, some individuals do not want attention drawn to their identity;
- make sure that the perspectives of both sexes are taken into account;
- bear in mind that different individuals may learn best in different ways;
- encourage the challenging of unhelpful stereotypes.

11. Race Equality

Curriculum planning will take account of the ethnicity, background and language needs of all children. The allocation of children to teaching groups will be fair and equitable to all children. Teaching methods and styles will take account of the needs of children from different ethnic groups, and encourage positive attitudes to ethnic difference, cultural diversity and racial equality. Racism and discrimination will be challenged within this curriculum area.

12. Cross-curricular links

RE is a subject in its own right. However, links can be made with various subjects such as Literacy, Numeracy, ICT, Science, PSHE and Art. For example, role-play, observational drawings, shape and design, the internet & circle time.

13. Legal Requirements relating to RE

RE is a statutory requirement for children in reception classes but not in nursery classes. Nevertheless, it is recommended that RE should be a recognisable element in the planning for both nursery and reception classes. RE is a statutory requirement for pupils during Years 1 to 6.

The RE scheme of work makes it clear what is being required of teachers in the school.

The 1988 Education Reform Act made it a requirement that any new agreed syllabus published after that date should "reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain".

14. Review

This policy was reviewed in 2020 with reference to The Redbridge Agreed Syllabus. It will be reviewed again at the latest by 2023.