

Castleside Primary School



R.E Policy

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Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Castleside 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. 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.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- 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

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the new Durham LEA's Agreed Syllabus for 2020 and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are mainly Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions. We teach tolerance and respect towards people of all faiths and no faith.

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, 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 the main religious faiths and compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies or with peers.

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 in accordance with the new Durham LEA's Agreed Syllabus for 2020. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. At the start of each lesson, previous learning is reinforced before being developed further. Our R.E overview of Key Stage 1 and 2 shows the progression of learning and skills as children move up through the school. It is based on the three key areas of knowledge, critical thinking and personal reflection. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop

Religious Education (RE) Policy

their understanding 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 two phases (long-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. As we have some mixed-age classes, we carry out the long-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

Key Stage 1

- Our children develop knowledge and understanding about Christianity and Buddhism as well as our local faith communities.
- They learn about why Jesus and the Bible are special to Christians. They learn what Christians believe about God and what it means to belong to the Christian faith, learning more through visiting our local church. They learn about Saint Cuthbert and the importance of Easter and Christmas time.

KEY Stage 2

- Our children develop their knowledge and understanding of what Christians believe about God, Jesus and the Holy Trinity. The children extend their working knowledge of the Bible. They deepen their understanding of the significance of Easter and Christmas, including learning about Epiphany, Lent, Advent and the Last Supper. They build upon their learning in KS1 to study the lives of the Northern Saints and their impact upon the growth of Christianity in our region, with a focus on why people visit Durham cathedral today.
- They learn in depth about Judaism and Hinduism and begin to develop their knowledge of Islam and Sikhism. Our children look at religious diversity in our area, learn more about our nearest Muslim community and reflect on their own thoughts and beliefs.
- Our children learn about how religious beliefs are expressed through worship, ritual and daily living. They have opportunities to learn first-hand through visitors coming in to school and visits to places of worship.
- They also develop their understanding of what religion and ritual are and what concepts those with faith or those without faith have in common, including showing care for others and the world around us.

EYFS

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In Class 1, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. We relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum planning for children aged birth to five, following the suggested topics in the Durham Agreed Syllabus.

Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

There are many ways that RE contributes to the teaching of other subjects but primarily to PSHCE. It promotes tolerance and understanding of others and encourages the children to think about their own values and morals.

Assessment and Recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons, keeping records of progress for assessment using Target Tracker. At the end of the year, an annual report is sent to parents that summarises the work covered and gives individual comments on each child's progress and participation.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store, labelled appropriately. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and there are many relevant websites to support the children's individual research and learning.

Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. S/he is also 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. The RE subject leader undertakes opportunities for CPD on a regular basis and attends network meetings to keep up to date with current developments in the teaching of R.E.