

St Edmund's C of E Primary and Nursery School



**Learning through faith,
we dream, believe and achieve.**

Religious Education

Reviewed September 2021

The St Edmund's Church of England Primary School Religious Education Policy

Introduction

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At St Edmund's Church of England Primary School it has a special place in our life and work as we offer the distinctive curriculum of a Voluntary Controlled school. Through it we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity alongside the major world religions, and we address some of the fundamental questions in life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, so that our children can reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religion as well as about religions, gaining and developing the skills for studying religions and world views.

Aims

The aims of Religious Education at St Edmund's C of E Primary are to enable all children:

- To encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and influences the lives of millions of people today.
- To learn about the other major religions and world views
- To develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- To develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- To develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- To be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- To develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- To 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. The Act stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The Act 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 Act also states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions. 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 Nottingham and Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus, prepared by the SACRE in 2020, and adopted by the Diocese for use in Church Schools. The Agreed Syllabus covers the statutory framework from which we draw our Long Term Plans, and devise our scheme of work. As of November 2020, teachers across the county are being provided training in the new Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for implementation within schools starting January 2021. The new syllabus coincides directly with the National Curriculum and structures the lesson and teaching accordingly for a progressive approach to RE. St Edmund's C of E Primary School follow the agreed syllabus and have revised our timetable of learning to adhere to the changes to content and teaching in accordance with its launch.

Religious Education is allocated 36 hours of tuition per year in Reception and Key Stage 1 and 45 hours of tuition per year at Key Stage 2. This is in line with the recommendation of the 2021 Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus. This time is for teaching of religious education and does not include time allocated for Collective Worship.

Teaching and learning

We base our teaching and learning in RE on the key principle that good teaching 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 in RE enables children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. For example we use their experiences of religious festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter, but also teach about other important festivals such as Diwali and Passover to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to our Parish church and invite church representatives to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children explore religious and moral issues by working individually or in groups.

We recognise the fact that all children learn in different ways and may have 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:

- planning activities that incorporate a range of tasks that cater for the varying learning styles within our class; providing for Visual, Auditory and Kinaesthetic preferences;
- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting differentiated tasks and/or grouping the children according to ability;
- providing resources of differentiated 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 Nottinghamshire Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge 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 also use an external resource known as Understanding Christianity. This programme of study is used to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. We aim to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice as they explore the significant theological concepts within Christianity as part of developing their wider religious, theological and cultural literacy. This programme is taught alongside the Nottinghamshire agreed Syllabus.

Foundation Stage:

In the Foundation Stage, Religious Education is an integral part of the 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 framework which underpin the curriculum planning for children in the Foundation Stage.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship - Through our Religious Education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our multicultural society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development - Through teaching Religious Education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgments as we observe them during lessons based on the learning objectives set each session. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the expected attainment and complete our assessment grid. This will increasingly demonstrate what the expected level of achievement is in RE in each year of the school. The progress steps for RE in the Agreed Syllabus are used to provide summative judgements.

Resources

We have a selection of resources across our school to support the teaching of our Religious Education units of study. We have RE topic books and Bibles for both key stages in the Library and further books are loaned termly through the Education Library Service.

Monitoring

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. We are members of the RE network for Nottinghamshire which meets three times a year.

Review

All policies are subject to periodic evaluation and update.

Reviewed: September 2021

Next review date: September 2022