



Religious Education Policy

Draft

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Religious Education Policy

The Importance of Religious Education

'RE makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.' Religious Education in English schools: non-statutory guidance 2010. DFEE

'Schools should, through their RE programmes, aim systematically to prepare students for the spiritual and intellectual challenges of living in a world with diverse religions and beliefs as well as non-belief' Big Ideas for Religious Education, Wintersgill 2017

RE 'should explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life. This is an essential area of study if pupils are to be well prepared for life in a world where controversy over such matters is pervasive and where many people lack the knowledge to make their own informed decisions. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background and personal beliefs and practices.' Commission on RE, September 2018

At Hunslet Moor we believe that Religious Education has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life. In a society with a rich cultural diversity and in an era of increasing globalization, it challenges them to reflect on important moral questions and helps them to develop respect for and understanding for the views of others. Religious Education also makes an important contribution to the school's duty to promote community cohesion. Human beings are strengthened and empowered by learning from each other. Engaging and stimulating RE helps to nurture informed and resilient responses to misunderstanding, stereotyping and division. It offers a place of integrity and security within which difficult or 'risky' questions can be tackled within a safe but challenging context. Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

In RE pupils discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions, in local, national and global contexts, through learning about and from religions and other world views. They learn to appraise the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.

Our teaching should equip pupils with knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and other world views, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in society with its diverse understanding of life from religious and other world views.

Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

RE Curriculum

The RE curriculum is based on the Local Agreed Syllabus for Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds produced by SACRE for teaching from September 2024-29

The aims of RE in our school reflect the aims of the syllabus for pupils:

First, it is about beliefs and values. Our Curriculum aims to develop learners' understanding of religions/worldviews, exploring their commonality and diversity.

Specifically, RE will:

a. Enable learners to develop a broad and balanced understanding of religions/worldviews.

RE's primary purpose is to give learners a broad understanding of Christianity, other religious traditions and non-religious beliefs, and understand how these are woven into human experience and applied to life and decisions.

b. Empower learners to develop and use critical thinking skills.

Well taught, RE is a rigorous academic subject, supporting problem solving and critical thinking skills. It will inspire and motivate learners to enquire into religious and purposeful questions. Engaging and stimulating RE helps to nurture informed and resilient responses to misunderstanding, stereotyping and division. It offers a place in the curriculum where difficult or 'risky' questions can be tackled within a safe but challenging context.

Secondly, the syllabus is about 'belonging'. It aims to nurture pupils' awareness of the treasury of diverse beliefs and cultures, as well as sensitivity to the questions and challenges that these can present. Ultimately, we all share a common humanity and our own patch of the Earth. In this way RE plays a part in helping pupils to discover their own place, identity and journey through life.

Specifically, RE will:

c. Broaden perspectives of faiths and cultures, encouraging tolerance of diversity.

A universal RE entitlement means that the subject must aim to develop understanding of diversity, empathy and cohesion. RE develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religious traditions and worldviews and explores their responses to life's challenges. This gives them the knowledge and skills to flourish both within their own community and as members of a diverse and global society.

d. Develop their own personal worldview, identity, values and spirituality.

The role of RE is neither to promote nor undermine organised religion. But part of its purpose is to provide structured opportunity for consideration of the non-material aspects of life. RE can contribute dynamically to children and young people's education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It can support their own discovery of their personal journeys of meaning, purpose and value, whether or not they identify with a specific, organised worldview.

e. Contribute to developing learners as positive, participating citizens of the world.

Human beings are strengthened and empowered by learning from each other. So, through experience and culture, it is possible to explore the opportunities, challenges and purpose of our individual lives and communities. RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for their future, for employment and lifelong learning.

It enhances spiritual, moral, social and cultural education by:

- Developing awareness of the fundamental questions raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them;
- Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience;
- Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- Nurturing curiosity and insights to become positive, participating citizens.

Principles and Requirements of the Syllabus

Learning Pathways

The syllabus we are following is based around six threads or 'pathways' through which the most important features of RE may be understood. Coherent and sequential learning is built on these pathways and then earthed by thematic and systematic study of specific religions/worldviews.

The syllabus therefore aims to:

- develop progressive understanding of the 'pathways' and
- build rich and profound knowledge of religions/worldviews.

Pathway 1: The Nature of Religion and Belief



Religions/worldviews involve interconnected patterns of beliefs, practices and values. They are also highly diverse and change in response to new situations and challenges. These patterns of diversity and change can be the cause of debate, tension and conflict or result in new, creative developments. *(Based on Big Idea 1: Continuity, Change and Diversity)*

Pathway 2: Expressing Belief



It is often difficult to express deepest beliefs, feelings, emotions and religious experiences using everyday language. Instead, people may use a variety of different approaches including figurative language and a range of literary genres. In addition, people sometimes use non-verbal forms of communication such as art, music, drama and dance that seek to explain or illustrate religious or non-religious ideas or experiences. *(Based on Big Idea 2: Words and Beyond)*

Pathway 3: A Good Life



Many people, whether religious or not, strive to live according to what they understand as a good life. Religious and non-religious communities often share an understanding as to the sort of characteristics and behaviours a good person will seek to achieve, as well as dealing with what is, or is not, acceptable moral behaviour. The ideal is usually presented in the lives and character of exemplary members. There are points of agreement and disagreement over the interpretation and application of moral principles both across and within different religions and worldviews. *(Based on Big Idea 3: A Good Life)*

Pathway 4: Personal Journey



Human beings have deeply felt experiences, which they may refer to as being 'religious' or 'spiritual' or simply part of what it means to be human. These experiences can take place in both religious and non-religious contexts and may produce a heightened sense of awareness and mystery, or of identity, purpose and belonging. The experience is sometimes so powerful that it transforms people's lives. As a result, people may change their beliefs and allegiances and on rare occasions the experience of a single person has led to the formation of a new religion or worldview.
(Based on Big Idea 4: Making Sense of Life's Experiences)

Pathway 5: Influence and Authority



Religious and non-religious communities interact with wider society and cultures. These communities affect societies by shaping their traditions, laws, political systems, festivals, values, rituals and arts. The patterns of influence vary significantly in different societies and at different points in time. Some societies are influenced predominantly by one religion or worldview, others by several or many. Religions and worldviews often appeal to a highly respected authority or vision, and this can have significant impacts on societies and cultures, whether positive or negative.
(Based on Big Idea 5: Influence and Power)

Pathway 6: The Big Picture



Religions and worldviews provide comprehensive accounts of how and why the world is as it is. These accounts are sometimes called 'grand narratives'. They seek to answer the big questions about the universe and the nature of humanity. These narratives are usually based on approaches to life, texts or traditions, which are taken to be authoritative. People interpret and understand these texts and traditions in different ways.
(Based on Big Idea 6: The Big Picture)

During the Foundation Stage the children will begin to explore religion in terms of special people, special books, special places, special times, special thoughts and special things. These themes will link in with the Foundation Stage areas of development: Personal, Social and Emotional Development; Communication and Language; Understanding the World; and Expressive Arts and Design.

Opportunities will be provided for children to gain first-hand experience of religious beliefs and practices will be woven into the curriculum by handling religious artefacts, meeting people from faith communities and visiting places of worship. They will be encouraged to use their imagination and curiosity to develop appreciation of, and wonder at, the natural world. They will be taught to appreciate and value themselves and others, recognising and celebrating diversity. Children will be encouraged to ask questions and talk about their own feelings and experiences, using subject-specific vocabulary as it is introduced to them. They will be encouraged to listen to and talk about stories from a range of different religions and world views.

In KS1 and KS2 teaching and learning is focused around developing knowledge and understanding along the six pathways for learning. Our curriculum's aim is to build subject-specific substantive knowledge of faiths and beliefs. This knowledge will grow throughout a learning career and will be appropriate to the age and local context. The law on agreed syllabuses (1988) refers to 'principal religions represented in Great Britain'. This has normally been interpreted as six: Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. In our curriculum each of these traditions and a non-religious worldview will be studied in all key stages, and this will incrementally grow substantive knowledge in each.

Alongside subject specific substantive knowledge, the syllabus and our curriculum is designed to enrich other forms of learning. An education in religion and worldviews will be rooted in several distinct, but complementary, academic disciplines, including study of religions, theology, philosophy, history, sociology, psychology, literary criticism, creative arts, media studies and natural sciences. There will be an emphasis on a particular disciplinary approach depending on the area of study or key question concerned. RE also provides rich and varied opportunities to develop personal knowledge and perspectives, both reflecting on the context of a pupil's own background and offering space to evaluate and learn from the views and experiences of others.

Planning for Religious Education

At Hunslet Moor we follow the Leeds Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and planning and teaching is based on the requirements specified in this document.

The school has subscribed to a series of units on the West Yorkshire RE hub that are linked to the Leeds Agreed Syllabus. All medium term planning is based on these units. Planning is saved in each year group's planning files. Teachers then personalise planning to best meet the needs of the learners in their class.

It is recommended in the Leeds Agreed Syllabus that the equivalent of one hour a week should be devoted to the teaching of Religious Education.

Religious Education lessons have been blocked on the long term planning and teachers can either time table and teach a unit in a bloc or choose to teach a weekly lesson. Whichever they consider this to be most appropriate. Teachers ensure enough time is dedicated to the teaching of RE to ensure learners cover each unit taught fully.

Assessment

We assess progress of pupils against the end of key stage statements in the syllabus. The units of work specify age-related expectations within the key stages.

Foundation Stage pupils are assessed according to the Early Learning Goals.

Day-to-day teachers at HMPS use formative assessment to build a picture of pupils':

- Substantive knowledge - what do they know/understand?

- Disciplinary knowledge - what skills have they learned?
- Personal knowledge - expressing ideas about how the RE has shaped them

Assessments of each child are made based on the progress they make throughout each of the units of work.

Assessments are shared and reported to parents at the end of the year in a formal report.

Throughout the year parents consultations are held to discuss and share pupil progress.

Monitoring and Evaluation of Religious Education

The curriculum coordinator is responsible for the monitoring and evaluation of the Religious Education curriculum throughout school. This will include:

- discussing and reviewing medium term plans
- preparing and updating documentation relevant to the teaching and learning of RE
- monitoring coverage of the Leeds Agreed Syllabus and the standards of RE teaching and learning by talking to colleagues, questioning pupils and through the scrutiny of work

Resources

Resources for the teaching of Religious Education are stored centrally in KS1. There is a RE budget available to buy new/updated resources that may enhance the teaching of RE. Teachers may also use their year group budgets to purchase resources relevant for the units taught in their year group and these will be stored in classrooms.

Withdrawal from RE

It is a legal requirement that Religious Education is provided for all registered pupils, although parents have the right to request that a pupil be withdrawn from the whole or part of Religious Education. This right to withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when issues related to religion arise in subjects such as history or drama. (See **Useful Documents** Religious Education in English schools: non-statutory guidance 2010 pp27-8.) If parents request that their child be withdrawn from Religious Education lessons, the school has a duty to supervise the child but not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. If the school receives a withdrawal request, the parents will be invited into school to discuss the aspects of the syllabus with the head teacher that concern them and to look at the school's teaching of Religious Education. After this, if they still wish to withdraw their child, the school will discuss with parents the alternative arrangements to be made for the kind of Religious Education teaching they wish their child to receive.

Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of Religious Education and must notify the Head Teacher and the chair of governors in writing if they wish to do so.

Further details on withdrawal from RE can be found in the document *Managing Withdrawal from RE* produced by SACRE and available on the Business Solutions website or at www.penninelearning.com

Useful guidance has been produced by NAHT and NATRE on withdrawal from RE and can be found here

<https://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/NATRE%20Guidance%20dealing%20with%20withdrawal%20from%20RE%20sample%20pages.pdf>

Enquiries and questions

The school welcomes enquiries or questions about RE. In the first instance parents should contact their child's class teacher