



Branston Church of England Infant Academy

RE Policy

Policy Co-ordinator: Headteacher/Subject Leader

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Cycle Review: Annually

As a caring Church of England Infant Academy, we recognise the core place that RE occupies in relation to our Christian distinctiveness. We are committed to the Christian values that develop a distinctive ethos underpinning the way in which we carry out our work and the way in which our children learn. We believe that we can inspire all members of our school community to achieve their full potential. The context of RE at Branston Church of England Infant Academy is that of a small rural school for children in the age range of 4-7 years. We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds that make up our school and community and respect this variety of backgrounds in the spirit of Christian welcome. We actively promote British Values, including respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We challenge racism and all forms of prejudice, and we see RE as one curriculum area in which our pupils can encounter and critically reflect on a range of world views.

At our school we aim to:

- Develop Christian values and principles.
- Help all members of our school community in achieving to their potential.
- Enable each child to develop an enquiring mind with the ability to question and discuss, so that they become independent, life-long learners.
- Provide an environment which is dedicated to promoting high standards of achievement for all, together with a love of learning which will be life-long and achieved within a Christian context.

Aims and Objectives to develop pupils' religious literacy

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Branston Church of England Infant Academy, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and consider the 'big questions' raised by human experiences, reflecting on how religious and other traditions respond to them. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide but also of other world religions, especially those faiths representative of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

Our objectives in the teaching of RE are, for all of our children:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions adhered to in the UK;
- to develop an understanding of religious traditions, and an appreciation of cultural differences in the UK today plus the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights;
- to develop their investigative and research skills, in order to hold reasoned opinions on religious issues;
- to have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society.
- to develop an awareness of spiritual, moral issues and beliefs exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values arising in their lives;
- to develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- to be capable of reflecting on their own experiences, and of developing a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- to have a consideration of the person as an individual and also a member of communities.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

Our school curriculum for RE 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.

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from RE lessons and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We acknowledge that parents/guardians/teachers do not need to provide a reason why they wish to withdraw from the subject. Should a parent/guardian wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons or a teacher wish to refuse to teach RE, we ask that written notice be sent to the Academy Council.

Should a parent/guardian request that their child be withdrawn from RE, we will endeavour to communicate clearly the place of RE within a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that they are in possession of all the necessary information before confirming their decision. However, we will not attempt to persuade them to alter their decision.

The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus 2018, and meets all the requirements set out in that document. Our curriculum is enhanced through carefully selected units from Understanding Christianity. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that 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 Statement of Entitlement as stated by the Church of England Education Office and Government guidance says RE should be taught for a minimum of 5% of curriculum time for Key Stage 1 which equates to 36 hours over the year. This time is arranged as discrete hour-long lessons per week or in a range of ways, including discrete weekly/ fortnightly lessons and RE days. RE forms part of the planning at EYFS, this is delivered weekly and is in line with the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus. Understanding Christianity is also used to develop the child's understanding of Christianity.

Teaching and Learning Style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principles of good teaching ensuring enquiry, art, drama, thinking skills, speaking and listening activities and multisensory activities enable 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. The planning of RE generally allows for important events in each of the religions to be taught at the appropriate time of year. We organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

The subject is approached using two key aims;

- Learning about religion – which includes enquiry, investigation, identifying and interpreting features and aspects of religion. It covers knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other.
- Learning from religion – which aims to develop pupils' ability to reflect on, and respond to, their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils' should learn to develop and communicate their own ideas in relations to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and values.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, 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, e.g. by:

- setting 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.

RE Curriculum Planning

RE is a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus 2018. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build on prior learning in the form of a spiral based curriculum, to ensure that children have opportunities to revisit past learning. So they know more and remember more over time. We ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach RE topics in conjunction with other subjects.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have some mixed-age classes, we usually carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus 2018, as well as key units from Understanding Christianity.

The class teacher adopts the plans for each lesson from the medium term plan and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

The Foundation Stage

We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in Early Years Foundation Stage

In EYFS, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. RE is planned and taught within the outcomes for an 'Understanding of the world'. The curriculum is based on material which most children in Lincolnshire encounter and the experiences they have as they begin school. Knowledge of religion, beliefs and cultures is essential to achieve some of the early learning goals and therefore RE forms a valuable part of the Foundation Stage.

Contribution of RE to the Teaching in other Curriculum Areas

English - RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in our English lessons have religious themes or content, which encourage discussion, and this is RE's way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE). - Through our RE 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 pluralistic society.

Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development - Through RE 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 multi-cultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and in so doing, develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

RE and Inclusion

At our school, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. Lessons and activities are scaffolded to ensure that pupils with special educational needs and disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, are able to access the curriculum.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in RE. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to the Cathedral, for example, that involves a journey), we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment for Learning

Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. Teachers will assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work, in line with current guidance and gives the child written or verbal feedback to help guide progress. At the end of the unit, children are given an opportunity to recall and share what they have learnt during the unit of study. This information is used to assess the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. We keep resources for RE in a central store, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. There is access to Bibles and a collection of religious artefacts that we use to enrich teaching in RE.

Visits and Visitors

We encourage faith leaders and other members of faith communities to visit Branston Church of England Infant Academy. We regularly welcome 'The Joy Foundation' into school to deliver worship.

Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping them informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- completes an annual action plan which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in RE and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe RE lessons across the school.

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated by the Headteacher and RE coordinator as part of the school's agreed monitoring cycle which can include lesson observations and work scrutiny.