

Orchard Primary School

R.E. Policy

Overview

R.E in Orchard Primary School is taught in accordance with the approaches and aims of Bexley London Borough as set out in the agreed syllabus of November 2007.

Aims and Objectives

Religious Education aims to help children to:

- develop a sense of their personal worth, individuality and identity;
- acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and secular world views represented in Great Britain;
- develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on the ways in which those who hold the beliefs think and act;
- develop an understanding of the influence beliefs have on communities, societies and cultures;
- develop the ability to give reasoned and informed opinions about religious and moral issues, with reference to their own beliefs and the teachings of the principal religions and beliefs represented in Great Britain;
- develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of many religions and beliefs;

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

R.E. aims to enhance children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:

- a) developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings and philosophies can relate to them;
- b) responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their own understanding and experience;
- c) developing the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

Attainment targets

The Bexley policy identifies two attainment targets to be covered in R.E.: AT1 Learning **about** religion (knowledge and understanding of religions) and AT2 Learning **from** religion (enquiry and evaluation). It is important not just to teach AT1 but to give time for pupils to evaluate and reflect about religious beliefs. On each R.E. lesson plan and on the half term planning sheet AT1 and/or AT2 should be identified, so that both areas are covered in a term.

The Bexley policy defines the attainment targets for KS1 and 2 as:

KS1

Attainment Target 1 (Learning about religion)

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) explore a range of religious stories and sacred writings and talk about their meanings;
- b) Name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion, noting similarities where appropriate;
- c) Identify the importance, for some people, of belonging to a religion and recognise the difference that this makes to their lives;
- d) Explore how religious beliefs and ideas can be expressed through the arts and communicate their responses; and
- e) Identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols and learn to use a range of religious words.

Attainment Target 2 (Learning from religion)

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) Reflect on and consider religious and spiritual feelings, experiences and concepts such as worship, wonder, praise, thanks, concern, joy and sadness;
- b) Ask and respond imaginatively to puzzling questions, communicating their ideas;
- c) Identify what matters to them and others, including those with religious commitments, and communicate their responses;
- d) Reflect on how spiritual and moral values relate to their own behaviour; and
- e) Recognise that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

KS2

Attainment Target 1 (Learning about religion)

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) Describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others;
- b) Describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with, beliefs and teachings;
- c) Identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences within and between religions;
- d) Investigate the significance of religion in the local, national and global communities;
- e) Consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, understand why they are important in religion and note links between them;
- f) Describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions;

- g) Use specialist vocabulary in communicating their knowledge and understanding; and
- h) Use and interpret information about religions from a range of sources.

Attainment Target 2 (Learning from religion)

Pupils should be taught to:

- a) Reflect on what it means to belong to a faith community, communicating their own and others responses;
- b) Respond to the challenges of commitment both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways;
- c) Discuss their own and others' views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas;
- d) Reflect on ideas of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to them; and
- e) Reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives.

Early Years Foundation Stage

It is important for young children to approach early years experiences related to R.E. with open attitudes and interest and feel free to talk about the place of religious experience in their own lives. During the Foundation Stage children will begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They listen to and talk about stories. They are introduced to religious words and use their senses to explore religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live. It is important that R.E always starts from the child's own experiences. R.E would be covered under the area of Knowledge and Understanding of the World with aspects of Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

The key areas covered will include:-

- Right and wrong; (Self and family)
- Self and others;
- Festivals; (Community and the world)
- Living things;
- Symbols and rituals;

Planning and Progression

At Key Stage One Christianity, Hinduism and Judaism are studied in depth. There is also study of believing, story, celebrations, symbols, leaders and teachers and belonging.

Key Stage One children are given the opportunities and experiences of visiting places of worship, listening and responding to visitors from local faith communities, using their senses and having times of quiet reflection, using art, design, music, dance and drama to develop their creative talents and imagination. They are able to share their own beliefs, ideas and values and to talk about their feelings and experiences. They begin to use ICT to explore religions and beliefs as practised in the local and wider community.

At Key Stage Two Christianity, Sikhism, Buddhism and Islam are studied in detail. There is also study of beliefs and big questions, teachings and authority, worship, pilgrimage and sacred places, the journey of life and death, symbols and religious expression, inspirational people, religion and the individual, religion, family and the community and beliefs in action in the world.

Key Stage Two children are given the opportunities and experiences of encountering religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, focus on the impact and reality of religion, to discuss religious and philosophical questions, to consider a range of human experiences and feelings, to reflect on their own and others' insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning. They are able to express and communicate their own and others' insights through art and design, music, drama, dance and ICT and develop their use of ICT to enhance their awareness of religions and beliefs globally.

The long term plan explains what religions are to be covered each year and shows the content to be covered. There is progression in content as children go through the school, building on existing knowledge and understanding and introducing children to new areas of the Religious Education curriculum throughout different year groups. The content highlighted is the specific areas that have to be taught from the New Bexley Agreed Syllabus as of September 2014.

Time allocation

To highlight the contribution that Religious Education makes to the school curriculum; it is expected that a minimum of 5% of curriculum time should be devoted to Religious Education (not including assembly time and collective worship). This equates to the following hours:

Key Stage One 36 hours per year or approximately 1 hour per week

Key Stage Two 45 hours per year or approximately 1.25 hours per week

Teachers are free to block teach R.E. work and are encouraged to use cross curricular links to make the best use of time and to enhance the children's enjoyment, interest and enthusiasm for the subject.

Christianity is given greater emphasis reflecting the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian. The five other principal religions are taught individually to avoid confusion but are given importance to reflect the growing diversity and multicultural community within the school and local area.

Skills and Attitudes

Teachers need to give children opportunity to extend different skills in R.E. this will involve acquiring knowledge, information and understanding about religion.

General skills will include:-

- Investigation, exploration, inquiry, interpretation and reflection;
- Empathy, evaluation, analysis, making comparisons and giving explanations.

Children should develop attitudes including:-

- Commitment, fairness, respect, self-understanding, awareness and enquiry.

Assessment and Record Keeping

Attainment and progress in religious education should be assessed in relation to the end of key stage statements of attainment in the Agreed Syllabus. Assessment should be planned for and should inform future planning.

Children are given verbal feedback in lessons and written feedback in their work to help show them how to move forwards in their learning. This is in line with the schools marking policy. In class discussion drama and role play, children will make their own personal assessments.

Teachers are encouraged to take photographs of R.E. sessions, art work and activities as evidence of the learning taking place. These are collated in a file for people to see and to share good practice and ideas amongst staff.

During the coverage of each half term unit the children should be given time to reflect and evaluate their own knowledge and understanding. They complete a brainstorm activity to indicate what existing knowledge they may have at the beginning of a topic. They repeat this activity at the end to show what new information they have learned. This highlights the progression made and gives the children a real sense of achievement and ownership of their learning. It also allows the teacher to monitor any misconceptions and gaps in children's understanding.

Teachers must complete one assessment activity each term to give an indication of the level that each child is working at. This is then collated as assessment using Classroom Monitor.

Teachers should log in their weekly evaluations any child that has made notable or weak performance. Children who excel are rewarded with class credits and gold book certificates.

Parents are given verbal feedback at parents evening on their child's progress in R.E. and informed of their overall achievement in the end of year report. Issues regarding difficulties that teachers experience in pupils learning are passed onto the curriculum subject leader to inform overall R.E. development.

Differentiation, Teaching and Learning styles

Each R.E. lesson should contain differentiation to meet the needs of all of the children. There should be a balance between written work, diagrams, art, display and creative work, role play and discussion so that children have the opportunity to access R.E. at different levels. Videos, DVDs, Interactive whiteboards, lap top computers, the internet and CD ROMs provide further ways of exploration. Artefacts can be used to show aspects of religions. Within a topic homework can be set to encourage further research or discussion at home. Teachers should explore different teaching and learning styles in order to keep R.E. fresh, relevant and most of all exciting.

Cross Curricular Links

At times it may be appropriate to discuss R.E. issues as they occur. This may include the death of a pet or someone in the family, or a wedding or baptism. Also with important news events there may be issues to discuss. Religions play a key part in shaping character and in PSHE/Values lessons there may be areas of further discussion. Children are encouraged to develop speaking and listening skills in R.E. especially when written work is not desirable. There are clear links between History and R.E. and these should be encouraged. Literacy sessions may be linked with R.E. so that texts covered are linked with R.E. This may include parables, information texts, letters, play-scripts, stories for other cultures, explanations, instructions etc. The ICT suite contains some resources that classes may access for R.E. lessons. In Geography and Science there may be links between nature, creation and ideas about man-made or God-made that are worth exploiting.

Lesson Plans

The long term plan has been broken into individual lesson ideas where possible, so that the teachers have guidance on what they should teach across each of the religions covered in their year group, key vocabulary to introduce and the associated learning objectives.

Exercise books/Resources

The children use normal exercise books for R.E. work along with a date and the learning objective clearly visible so that the children are aware of what they should be learning in each of their R.E lessons. Each year group has an R.E folder kept in their classroom with photocopied resources for their topics and lesson plans. This should be added to and kept for the next teacher that takes the class. All resources are kept in the R.E. cupboard.

Visits/Speakers

Teachers are encouraged to take their classes to places of worship for the religions that they cover and to invite speakers into their classes. A list of places and speakers is given to staff at the start of the school year. Parents and the children themselves are welcomed to speak about their religion if they wish to and to describe what traditions they follow in their families and what their beliefs mean to them.

Over a child's school life at Orchard they will have the opportunity to visit the following places of worship to develop a broad understanding across all religions:

Year 1: Synagogue - Judaism

Year 2: Mandir - Hinduism

Year 3: Gurdwara - Sikhism

Year 4: Mosque - Islam

Year 5: Buddhist Temple - Buddhism

Year 6: Church - Christianity

Equal opportunities, bias, conscience, truth and the law

All children are treated equally and fairly. Children of any faith are encouraged to contribute in lessons. Children are not singled out if they have no faith. It is important not to give bias towards one culture or another, although moral issues should be discussed and evaluated. Some religions emphasize the 'oneness' of human races and how biologically speaking humans are of one blood. All children should be valued whatever their colour, language, gender, culture or background (race and class are subjective terms).

R.E. can be a difficult subject for children and teachers because of personal or parental bias; conscience and truth. No-one is neutral. When facing difficult areas it is best to allow children to discuss why they can or cannot do something. Teachers and children should be free to carefully express their own opinions. No-one can or should be forced to act against their conscience. Teachers should be aware of areas of difficulty such as:-

- The exclusive truth claims made in religion;
- The claim by atheists or humanists that God is dead;
- Misleading statements such as all religions lead to God, or that religion is the cause of all wars etc.
- Ideas about evolution that are based on faith not science;
- That some aspects of different religions are not liked by other religions;
- That religious morality may clash with contemporary laws, trends in society or 'standards';

- That many religions do not draw pictures of God, (Muslims do not draw pictures of Mohammed either);
- Religions themselves are divided into sub-groups with different beliefs;
- The meaning of spirituality or worship;
- Religions have their own beliefs about gender roles, marriage and sexual relationships.

By law parents may withdraw their child from R.E. and collective worship. Also teachers have the same right. By having an atmosphere of tolerance, respect, understanding and open discussion it is hoped this can be avoided.

Inclusion

Schools have a responsibility to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils. The National Curriculum and the local Agreed Syllabus for R.E. are the starting points for planning a school curriculum that meets the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. These principles are essential to ensuring an inclusive curriculum:-

- Setting suitable learning challenges (giving opportunity for success and achievement);
- Responding to pupils diverse learning needs (boys, girls, SEN/EAL, disabilities, ethnic minorities); and
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of children (visual/hearing impairment, pupils with distress, CLL difficulties).

Collective Act of Worship/Assembly

The daily Act of Worship is seen as an important part of school life. It is not worship of a group of believers but worship of a mixed collective group. It is primarily an educational opportunity for R.E. Most acts of worship are broadly or mainly of a Christian character, which would include veneration of God. Collective worship has also been defined as what is of most value or worth to a community (in this case 'our school'). Worship can be expressed in many ways. It can include religious stories, or stories with a message, song or video, demonstration of religious activity, drama and role play, games and interactive questions etc.

Collective worship helps to:-

- Celebrate achievements and special occasions;
- Share and experience differences;
- Foster a sense of group identity;
- Examine and reflect on values, moral, cultural or social;
- Pause and reflect;
- Learn how to behave in social gatherings;
- Learn how to perform in front of an audience;
- Provide a context where school members can be joined by members of the community;

- Prompt a sense of awe, wonder and delight.

It should be an inclusive time where everyone should feel happy to contribute.

The times and arrangements for assemblies may change as required. Generally they last for 15 minutes. There is a whole school assembly on Mondays. There is circle time and time for discussion and reflection on Tuesdays during SEAL sessions. There is a weekly prayer for each class and a thought of the week. There are separate hymn practice assemblies for both KS1 and KS2 each week. At the end of the week there is a Gold Book assembly where children's achievements are celebrated. There is a prayer and hymn/song sung at each assembly.

In class, teachers are encouraged to promote reflection about the day and enable the children to discuss issues they have encountered.

A range of visitors are organised to come into school once a month, including policemen, musical specialists and representatives from Anglican, Baptist and other churches. Visitors from other faiths are encouraged to come in.

Themes and resources for collective worship are taken from a variety of sources. We have linked our assembly resources to the coverage of different Values for each month during the year e.g. positivity. In order to understand a variety of cultures and festivals each class should complete activities to celebrate a range of religious festivals across the year for example Eid/Diwali/Chinese New Year.

The festivals to be celebrated will change every year depending on the religions and topics covered in class. These will take the form of RE festival afternoons.