



ELMS FARM PRIMARY SCHOOL POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



1 Aims and objectives

1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Elms Farm School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions concerning, 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, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. 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.

1.2 The objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- 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.

2 The legal position of religious education

2.1 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 Birmingham LEA's Agreed Syllabus 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 in the main Christian, and that



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it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

3 Teaching and learning style

- 3.1** 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.
- 3.2** 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.
- 3.3** 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 discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups.
- 3.4** 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.

4 Curriculum planning in religious education

- 4.1** We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Birmingham LEA's 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.



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- 4.2** The long-term overview maps the religious education dispositions studied in each term during each key stage. This has been worked out on a two yearly spiral, going back to each disposition 3 times from year 1 – 6. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2 we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics, although RE is linked to topic based work where possible.
- 4.3** 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.
- 4.4** The plans for each lesson have been written and provided by SACRE. They list the specific dispositions for that phases and learning objectives / key questions for that lesson. The class teacher will adapt these plans according to the needs of the children and annotate them regularly. S/he keeps these individual plans and will submit them for scrutiny to the subject leader, when required.

5 Foundation Stage

- 5.1** We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in EYFS.
- 5.2** In reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Outcomes which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.
- 5.3** EYFS class teachers have access to two sided- work cards for each disposition, written by SACRE. These are available as a continuous reminder of RE provision and to enable accurate recording of coverage against Birmingham SACRE's key questions and objectives. The values based approach ensures that The Characteristics of Effective Learning are very likely to be being delivered within Birmingham SACRE's approach to RE. Through cross referencing from the work cards you'll find that SMSC and instilling British Values is encouraged; both of vital importance.

6 Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

6.1 English

Religious education 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 encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.



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6.2 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. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. 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 acceptance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

6.4 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 doing so, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

6.5 RE and computing

Information and communication technology enhances religious education wherever appropriate in all key stages. The children can select and analyse information using the Internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation. Younger children can take photographs of the class acting out a bible story. They can make a class story book of it by adding in speech bubbles and a narrative text, or using desk top software they can create a special book where each pupil has her/his own page. They can also make a cover and binding for the book and draw a set of rules for its use. A digital video camera can record a visit to a place of worship and pupils can also find the various artefacts in e.g. churches on virtual websites.

8 Religious Education and inclusion

8.1 At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. However, parents do have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons. Religious education forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provided learning opportunities that enable the pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language (EAL), and we take reasonable steps to achieve this.

8.1 We enable the pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the



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classroom, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

9 Visits to places of worship

9.1 Each year group is expected to visit a place of worship during the school year. If each year group visits a different place of worship, by the time the pupils have reached year 6, they will visit 6 different places of worship.

9.2 Each year group will go to the following places:

- Year 1 → Church
- Year 2 → Mosque
- Year 3 → Synagogue
- Year 4 → Gurdwara
- Year 5 → Mandir
- Year 6 → Buddhist Temple

Each teacher has been provided with guidance as to where to go and relevant expectations. Teachers will fill in an Educational visits risk assessment and hand it to the EVC prior to the visit.

10 Resources

10.1 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 where there is a box of artefacts for each of the key religions which need to be used to enrich teaching in religious education. There is a good supply of RE topic books and big books and posters in the large cupboards. There is also a set of LCP files for each Key Stage.

11 Monitoring and review

11.1 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 writes an action plan termly, identifying areas for development within the subject. S/he has specially-allocated time for carrying out the vital task of reviewing samples of the children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject. The RE subject leader presents the head teacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.



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11.2The RE subject leader will keep a portfolio of samples of children's work, annotated planning and trip evaluations.

11.3This policy will be reviewed every two years.