

RE policy

Gretton Primary School



Approved by:	Richard Woolston	Date: Autumn 2021
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Gretton Primary School is a village school with approximately 105 pupils, who are taught in mixed-age classes:

Robins - Reception

Kingfishers - Years 1 and 2

Owls - Years 3 and 4

Eagles - Years 5 and 6

Although not a Church of England School there are strong links with the local clergy and church. The school plays a significant role in Church festivals such as Harvest, Christmas and Easter. In addition, staff liaise with clergy to involve the children in Family Services. Local clergy take assembly on a regular basis.

The location of the village means that we are some distance from other faith communities and places of worship, so the children's day to day experiences of our multi-cultural society are limited. This means that the multi-faith experiences we bring to the classroom and the visits we make are vital for the children's awareness of the religious dimension in people's lives and the different ways this is expressed.

1. Aims and Objectives

Religious Education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Gretton School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths and we address the fundamental questions in life, 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. Children have the opportunity to 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.

The main aims of Religious Education are to help the children to:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences
- 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 spiritual searching and 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 pupils to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

2. The legal position of Religious Education

Our school curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1996 Education Act. This 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 the right to withdraw their child from religious education classes, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The Act 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. The 1996 Act states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that religious traditions in the UK are mainly Christian, but at the same time, it should take into account the teachings and practices of other major world religions. Our school RE curriculum is based on Gloucestershire LA's Agreed Syllabus (revised 2017 to 2022) and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.

The Gloucestershire LA's Agreed Syllabus (2017 to 2022) describes three approaches to teaching and learning:

Making sense of beliefs

Making connections

Understanding the impact

(See Gloucestershire Syllabus for further details)

3. Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style 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.

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 the children's own experiences at religious festivals such as Harvest and Easter to develop their religious thinking. Where possible we organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school to talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics using various sources, including the internet. 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 in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all pupils 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 (but not expecting all children to complete all tasks);
- grouping the children by ability and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of individual children.

4. Curriculum planning in R.E.

We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with Gloucestershire LA's Agreed Syllabus (2017 to 2022) We ensure that the topics studied in RE build upon the children's prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge across each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out curriculum planning in Religious Education in two phases (long-term and medium-term) The long-term overview maps the RE topics studied each term in each class. Where possible we teach RE topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Foundation and Key Stage 1. In Key Stage 2 we place more emphasis on independent study of religious themes and topics, delivered in a discrete weekly lesson with occasional special-focus days to enhance our provision.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. As we have mixed-age classes, we have made provision for medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the agreed syllabus but do not have to repeat exact topics.

5. Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach Religious Education to all children in school, including those in the reception class. 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 Goals that underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

6. Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

Literacy

Religious Education contributes significantly to the teaching of Literacy in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use have religious themes or content, to encourage discussion and to promote the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to participate in drama activities to develop their ability to empathise with characters in a religious context.

7. Information and communication technology (ICT)/Computing

We use ICT where appropriate in religious education. We use audio-visual material to enable the children to observe and experience religious practices outside their own experiences. We also give the children opportunities to find, select and analyse information, using the internet and CD ROMs. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

8. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our RE 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 tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our multi-cultural society.

9. 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.

10. Teaching Religious Education to children with special needs

The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy and we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. In our teaching we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties and we take into account the targets set for individual children. We also seek to extend learning opportunities for those children who are more able.

11. Resources

The school has a modest but varied range of resources. These are organised in topic boxes linked to the units of the Agreed Syllabus. There are boxes containing Christian, Jewish and Muslim religious artefacts. There are many reference books relating to Religious Education in the school and we have sufficient copies of the Bibles for class use. In addition, we can subscribe to the Gloucester Diocesan Resource Centre, which provides extra teaching resources and artefacts for each topic.

12. Assessment and Recording

We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them in class discussions and in independent work during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the understanding of each pupil in relation to the expected levels of attainment as set out in the Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus. We record this assessment using the school's agreed procedures making a judgement as to whether each child has met, not met or exceeded the learning objectives for each unit of work. This assessment is used as a basis for tracking the progress of each child, preparing yearly reports to parents, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher.

13. Monitoring, review and links

The RE Subject Leader and Headteacher are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in RE. They are 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. This policy links to the Teaching and Learning Policy.

Review dates

Last reviewed: Autumn 2021

Next review: Autumn 2023 (once Gloucestershire Syllabus has been updated)