



Shaftesbury
Primary School
Growing together

Religious Education Policy (2021- 2024)

Introduction

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. Shaftesbury Primary School is made up of staff and pupils who originate from many nationalities, cultures and faith groups. As a school we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, social, emotional, cultural and intellectual development of pupils and of society by encouraging an exploration of and response to those aspects of religion and human experience which raise fundamental questions of belief and value. As a school, we followed the Newham Agreed Syllabus.

Aims and objectives

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other major world religions and world views within modern 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. **As**

Newham is such a diverse community, RE is grounded in the following principles:

Children learn about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

Children express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues

- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives. (Newham Agreed syllabus 2016)

The legal position of religious education

The Education Reform Act 1988 (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.

In accordance with the law, Shaftesbury provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. The teaching of RE comprises 5% of the curriculum timetable as recommended by the QCA and required by the Newham Agreed Syllabus. This equates to 36 hours per year in KS1 and 45 hours per year in KS2. This requirement does not apply to nursery classes. Nevertheless, RE is a statutory requirement for children in reception. RE topics are also celebrated within assembly, aligned with the celebration calendar.

Teaching and learning style

RE should...

- encourage pupils to have confidence in their own growing sense of identity as well as valuing and respecting diversity in others;
- help pupils in their search for meaning and purpose in life
- provoke challenging questions about life
- neither promote nor undermine any particular religious, spiritual or secular stance; and • be accessible to pupils and teachers of any religious stance or none.
- encourage pupils to be confident and able to safely express their views and opinions.

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, in particular making references to other religions and cultural practices.

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, Guru Nanak's Birthday etc. to develop their religious thinking. Visits to local places of worship are embedded into the curriculum map and we have strong links within the community.

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 challenge;
- grouping the children by attainment in the classroom and giving tasks that match these;
 - 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.

Curriculum planning in religious education

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Newham's Agreed Syllabus 2016. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning, and that there is a clear sequence of 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.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases: curriculum overview, medium-term curriculum planning, and short-term individual lesson plans. The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group.

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. The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson, how the lesson will be varied, challenged and assessed, and the sequence of learning across a lesson and topic.

Foundation Stage

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. 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 Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Young children experience and respond to the world around them with all their senses. During the EYFS, the provision of a wide variety of learning experiences which value all people and include stimulating resources, 'relevant to all of the children's cultures and communities' (Development Matters) alongside positive interaction with adults and other children, help a child to make sense of the world. These elements are reflected in the early learning goals, particularly:

- personal, social and emotional development-making relationships
- understanding the world, people and communities
- communication, language and literacy
- expressive art and design.

RE can help children to begin to create for themselves an image or map of the world, often very personal to them, to which they can give expression through their play, their conversation and their early attempts at representational drawing, painting and model-making. In this way they demonstrate their growing understanding of how the wider world relates to them.

How does RE promote spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional and intellectual development?

RE has a key role in promoting pupils' spiritual development. We provide opportunities to embed the skills of exploration of and response to:

- Consider and respond to higher order questioning concerning the meaning and purpose of life.
- Developing an understanding of what different religions, spiritual and secular traditions teach about the meaning and purpose of life
- Recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions.

We enhance their social development by helping them to:

- Continue to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society and seeing how they relate to themselves and to others and the different experiences of the community.
- Exploring issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.
- Understand how religious teachings have shaped and influenced different communities and

societies.

Equal Opportunities

Shaftesbury is an all-inclusive school. We have children from all walks of life. It is therefore important that all their views, beliefs and values are to be appreciated and respected. In order for this to be implemented teachers need to differentiate tasks and activities according to their children's abilities. Planning should provide for;

- The range of pupil ability in the group, with varied activities.
- The individual needs of pupils including their special educational needs. • A

range of opportunities to assess progress.

Teaching religious education to children with special educational needs

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, variation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Intervention through SEN support or EHC plans will lead to the creation of an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs. The IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a Sikh temple, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary, this includes a comment on what the child has done well, identifying misconceptions, and challenging them further. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the national curriculum expectations and use this information to plan for future learning. Written or verbal feedback is given to the child to help guide their progress.

The RE subject leader keeps samples of children's work in a portfolio. This demonstrates what the expected standards in RE in each year of the school.

Resources

There are sufficient resources for all religious education teaching units in the school. The resources for religious education are kept in a central area where there is a box of equipment for each religion. There are religious books and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books which are there for children to access.

Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. 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. The RE subject leader presents the headteacher with termly reports which evaluate the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.