Mesne Lea Primary School
Working together for individual excellence

Religious Education Policy

Reviewed By: Victoria Unsworth
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Rationale

This policy details the provision we make for the learning and teaching of Religious Education at our school and in particular:

- The significance of Religious Education for Mesne Lea Primary School is developing our pupils empathy, enquiry and understanding of religious beliefs and practices;
- The importance of Religious Education in providing opportunities to celebrate and foster awareness of differences between our school, community and the wider world;
- To emphasise that high quality teaching and learning of Religious Education is the responsibility of all staff working at Mesne Lea Primary School;
- The organisation of the Religious Education curriculum, including progression of skills and knowledge, outcomes and assessment;
- The position of Religious Education as a subject that celebrates diversity, challenges stereotypes and helps develop cohesive communities. This links directly to our two connections: Diversity and Equality and Human Impact on the environment.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make clear the aims of our Religious Education curriculum and the core knowledge and skills that need to be taught in each age phase.
- Make explicit that teaching of RE should promote vigorous, thoughtful responses from pupils in a safe environment;
- Ensure that learning processes be employed by teachers in order for pupils to make progress at a good pace and achieve the highest standards of which they are capable;
- Make explicit our expectations in terms of subject outcomes and performance for pupils in RE as they progress through the school;
- Outline the approach to learning and teaching of Religious Education that our school has adopted;
- Highlight the importance of active enquiry during RE lessons to promote curiosity, linked to other areas of the curriculum.

The value of Religious Education within our curriculum

We believe that studying religious and non-religious worldviews is essential if pupils are to be well prepared for life in our increasingly diverse society. Pupils need to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to make sense of the complex world in which they live so that they can 'respect religious and cultural differences and contribute to a cohesive and society' (RE Review 2013).

All staff at Mesne Lea Primary School understand that high quality teaching of Religious Education is fundamental to the development of pupil's knowledge of the beliefs and practices of different religions and worldviews. We believe Religious Education gives pupils valuable insights into the diverse beliefs and opinions held by people today. It helps with their own personal development and supports an understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural questions. Religious Education is important when encouraging pupils to value themselves and the communities within which they live. Religious Education lessons offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate. They allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global.

What are we aiming for?

At Mesne Lea Primary School, we strive to help our children develop knowledge, understanding and respect towards different religions and faith groups, thereby preparing them for life in our diverse multi-faith society and a future of many possibilities. We appreciate the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds of our pupils and adapt our curriculum in response to the context, strengths and needs of our school. The skills and attitudes developed through RE relate to the promotion of British values and life in modern Britain and the improvement of community cohesion. Children will build their conceptual knowledge through studying religions and worldviews locally, nationally and globally in our progressive curriculum, enabling them to make links and connections between worldviews, develop disciplinary skills and build on their understanding of their positionality in relation to their learning. By revisiting key 'big questions' and building on prior knowledge, pupils will learn about how religion and worldviews are lived experiences across the world, consider the impact of worldviews on society and have opportunities to consider their personal worldviews.

Linked to our core connection of 'diversity and equality' and the British Values, children will be able to consider issues that are relevant in the world today. Children will learn to develop the skills and confidence to consider themselves as 'World Citizens' who belong in a multicultural, mutually respectful world.

At Mesne Lea, Kapow Primary's R&W scheme of work enables pupils to meet the government guidance, which states that RE must reflect that 'the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. Our scheme has been designed to fulfill the aims of A Curriculum framework for Religious Education in England

How will we do this?

Reflecting the findings of the Ofsted Research review series: religious education (May 2021), our scheme has the following three strands running through it:

- ✔ Substantive knowledge (conceptual and worldviews related).
- ✔ Disciplinary knowledge.
- ✔ Personal knowledge.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews,
Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews
Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews,

These strands are interwoven across all units to create lessons that build children's conceptual knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews (substantive knowledge) and use a range of disciplinary lenses. Children will also be equipped to explore and express their preconceptions, personal worldviews and positionality (personal knowledge) through varied and engaging learning experiences.

The curriculum is progressive, clearly sequenced and suitably ambitious. It is rooted in disciplinary knowledge based in theology, social sciences and philosophy. We enrich the curriculum by organising visits to places of worship and faith leaders and other members of the community are also invited into school to contribute to learning in the classroom as an additional valued resource.

Each unit includes overarching 'big questions' which will be revisited throughout key stage 1, lower key stage 2 and upper key Stage 2, allowing children to apply the breadth and depth of their learning across various concepts. These 'big questions' are: Why are we here? Why do worldviews change? What is religion? How can worldviews be expressed? How do worldviews affect our daily lives? How can we live together in harmony if we have different worldviews?

Our Curriculum is built around a language rich environment, in which we talk to the children and develop their subject specific vocabulary alongside the skills and knowledge outlined in the National Curriculum. Adults use subject specific language from EYFS to Y6 which is planned sequentially.

Non-negotiables

- In Early Years, RE is taught as an ongoing subject, integrated in the curriculum throughout.
- Re in EYFS is evidenced via tapestry and within Topic books and within the learning journey
- In Year 1 RE is taught bi weekly with RE enhancement days to ensure coverage of the curriculum. Year 1 take reflective time weekly.
- In Years 2 - 6, RE is taught for an hour each week.
- In all Years from 1 – 6 all work is recorded in a large class book.
- RE work to be linked to reading and cross-curricular writing wherever possible.

How do we know it is working?

By the end of EYFS pupils will demonstrate the following;

- A positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships.
- An ability to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community.
- The opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.

By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils will demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts.
- Knowledge of basic subject specific vocabulary.
- The ability to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.
- Knowledge, skills and understanding through learning about Christians and Muslims or Jewish people. Pupils may also encounter other religions and worldviews in thematic units, where appropriate.

By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils will demonstrate the following:

- Knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts.
- The ability to use an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary.
- Curiosity and the ability to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and modern Briatin
- The ability to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

- All book monitoring will show that theory and intent is being implemented in the order and approach as planned by the subject leader.
- All books show retrieval practice throughout each term within the curriculum construct that show children are knowing and remembering more.

- Data at the end of EYFS will show at least 75% will achieve the RE objectives.
- By the end of year 1/2 at least 65% of children will be age related with 10% achieving above.
- By the end of year 3/4 at least 70% of children will be age related with 15% achieving above.
- By the end of year 5/6 at least 75% of children will be age related with 15% achieving above.

SMSC-

There is a clear and intended connection between RE and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Our balanced and broadly based curriculum promotes the SMSC development of pupils in order to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils in RE is connected to all four elements of the field of enquiry and centers on the exploration of the question 'what does it mean to be human?' At Mesne Lea, Religious Education curriculum provides a particular insight into spiritual and moral education within the curriculum and makes a distinctive contribution to the understanding of society and cultural diversity through developing understanding of religions.

Inclusion, equality of opportunity and differentiation

Religious Education forms an integral and statutory element of a pupil's entitlement to learning and at Mesne Lea we ensure that all pupils can engage with the learning of RE. Mutual respect and the fostering of empathy and community understanding at local, regional, national and global scales lies at the heart of the study of RE and at our school we model this in terms of the inclusive nature of the learning and teaching we provide. We ensure that examples of religious figures reflect all aspects of diversity within society. Pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.
Ensuring differentiation is a fundamental and core element of inclusion. As such we plan and resource our learning, in line with our whole school policies, to enable all pupils to make good and sustained progress in Religious Education, including children with special educational needs or disabilities, those identified as More Able and those with English as an additional language. In our differentiation planning we take due regard of factors such as classroom organisation, learning materials and the learning environment.

Connecting Religious Education to other areas of the Curriculum

Although Religious Education is taught as a separate subject discipline, opportunities arise in lessons for children to apply skills from other subject areas. For example in English, Art, Drama, Computing and Technology. This ensures that the curriculum is taught in a creative and engaging manner as well as being knowledge rich and ambitious. In our planning we have made meaningful links between Religious Education and other subject areas of the National Curriculum. Clear links are made to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) where incorporating content and perspectives adds value to and extends the understanding of our pupils. Making such links is important because it highlights to pupils the interconnectedness and interdependence of the real world. Strong connections are made however we maintain subject rigour and appropriate expectations in Religious Education for each stage of learning.

All teachers at our school are responsible for monitoring standards in Religious Education but the RE subject leader, under the direction of the Headteacher, takes a lead in this. Monitoring activities are planned across the year and form part of the Religious Education leader's leadership schedule. In summary, these include:

- analysing samples of pupils' RE work to moderate standards (attainment and progress against outcomes and end of stage performance descriptors) to ensure consistency;
- The moderation of teachers' planning once per term to monitor coverage and delivery of planned objectives;
- Lesson observations and Learning walks to ensure that learning and teaching is appropriately engaging and challenging and that the anticipated subject progress is being made by the pupils;
- The sampling of pupils' work twice per year to ensure that expectations in terms of subject outcomes are being maintained through the curriculum;
- Speaking to pupils about their RE lessons and what they know and remember about the subject;
- The subject leader provides feedback to staff about the quality of RE being taught and leads a discussion on standards being achieved within the subject;
- In collaboration with the Headteacher, Governors and teaching colleagues the subject leader drafts and finalises a RE Action Plan which is informed by the School Development Plan;

The Religious Education leader has the responsibility to take a lead in developing RE further across the school within the school's development plan; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect support from the RE leader arising from targets identified in the school improvement plan.

To develop staff confidence and competence in teaching Religious Education the leader will:

- Attend subject professional development opportunities as they arise and in the context of the priorities of the whole School Development Plan together with the Religious Education Action Plan
- Identify and source staff training needs arising
- Arrange for relevant advice and information from professional development programmes, including courses, to be disseminated
- Where necessary lead (or arrange) school-based professional development meetings for colleagues.