



Parkside Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Reviewed September 2024

Religious Education

Aims and objectives

Religious Education (RE) at Parkside Primary School celebrates the diversity of religious and human experience. We encourage our children to investigate and reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their knowledge and understanding not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions to better understand the world around them, themselves and others.

We believe that RE has an important part to play in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils and will help them to gain a greater understanding of themselves and a more sympathetic awareness of the beliefs and needs of others.

The aim of Religious Education (RE) is to help children:

- 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 and the wider world today;
- develop investigative and research skills to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- value and have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions in Britain and in the local community;
- develop the ability to voice opinions on the topics covered and be able to debate the similarities and differences between the beliefs and traditions of the world faiths;
- to understand the world and their place in it;
- develop skills to support their personal, moral, social and cultural development.

Legislation & Guidance

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 RE classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the Headteacher and school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach RE, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the Headteacher school governors.

Our school's RE curriculum is based on the Waltham Forest LEA's Agreed Syllabus. The Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE) is responsible for determining the syllabus for Religious Education (RE) in council-run or funded schools in Waltham Forest, which Parkside School follows. 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 it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

Responsibilities of the Headteacher and Senior Leadership Team

The Headteacher and the Senior Leadership Team will:

- ensure that Religious Education is taught to the Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus as determined by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE);
- ensure all school personnel, pupils and parents are aware of and comply with this policy;
- work closely with the Governing Body;
- provide leadership and vision in respect of equality;
- provide guidance, support and training to all staff;
- monitor the effectiveness of this policy.

The RE Coordinator will:

- lead the development of this policy throughout the school;
- work closely with the head teacher;
- provide guidance and support to all staff;
- keep up to date with new developments and resources;
- review and monitor the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in Religious Education.

Teaching and Learning

A variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, drama, stories, ICT and reflection, are used to support and enrich the teaching in all our RE units. We also utilise a variety of resources, including religious artefacts, to support and enhance the teaching of RE as well as organizing visits to local places of worship and inviting representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

We aim to enable our children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religion. We use their experiences of religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover, Eid Christmas etc. in whole class assemblies to develop their religious thinking.

Through teaching and learning we want our pupils to:

- learn about the beliefs and practices of religious traditions;
- reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them;
- extend their own sense of social and moral values;
- promote their own spiritual growth and development;

- compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals;
- think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children or staff, or to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another. We hope that all parents / carers and teachers will feel comfortable with the RE being taught at Parkside School and we encourage the participation of all.

Assessment and recording

Evidence is gathered mainly through observation, oral discussion, written tasks, drawing, planning and weekly pupil voice that is carried out by our Year 6 pupils. Examples of work that the children produce in lessons is collected in Year Group folders and these also contain the KWL grids that show the progression of learning within each topic. Children record evidence of their own learning in their learning journey books through the writing of learning comments.

At the end of each half term, teachers complete a foundation subject assessment that gives information on those children who have achieved the objectives and those who are yet to do so. The recorded evidence assists teachers both in their planning and in their reporting to parents and governors.

Curriculum planning in Religious Education

At Parkside we plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with Waltham Forest's Agreed Syllabus, utilising the resources and lesson structure of the RE Today scheme of work. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

The Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus was updated by SACRE in January 2024 and establishes the key themes and objectives that are required to be studied by all Waltham Forest schools. The RE scheme of work developed by RE Today is divided into a series of RE units that are based on the six principal religions of Great Britain (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism) and the key objectives from this scheme are in line with the requirements of the SACRE agreed syllabus. Consideration is also made of the yearly religious festivals calendar.

Each RE topic in the agreed syllabus is based on a key question. These are grouped into themes of believing, expressing and living. Each topic is broken down into a series of individual lesson plans, that have been written by the RE lead, with key learning objectives, suggested activities and useful resources. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to access the unit plans and annotate and modify them where necessary to meet the learning needs of their pupils.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in our EYFS classes. The Waltham Forest Agreed Syllabus includes key themes for our Reception classes and a suggested scheme of work and our Early Years team have included these in their half termly planning.

In the EYFS, our children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects. Children listen to and talk about stories and use their senses in exploring religious beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They are encouraged to use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship RSE

Through our RE lessons we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. We promote tolerance and understanding of other people and enable our children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development

Through teaching RE in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. We help our children to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions and enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Our teaching also promotes British Values through discussion of the rights and freedoms of every individual within our British society and the rule of Law, and the mutual respect for, and tolerance of, those with different faiths and beliefs, and for those without faith.

Equal Opportunities

In keeping with the School's aims for equal opportunities, the teaching of RE endeavours to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, race, ability, social background or physical capacity. Care is taken in RE to avoid the reinforcement of negative or stereotypical images and RE aims to celebrate and appreciate cultural diversity through a variety of materials and experiences, in order to reflect the cultural diversities of our society.

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