



Religious Education (RE) Policy

This policy represents the agreed principles for the teaching of Religious Education throughout the school. This policy has been agreed by governors within the school and all teachers representing the Early Years Foundation Stage, Phase 1 and Phase 2.

School aims

Our school community (children, staff, parents and governors) aims to:

- Learn and grow together within a safe, caring and happy environment;
- Continually encourage achievement in all aspects of school life;
- Motivate all children with a broad and challenging curriculum;
- Treat everyone with honesty and respect;
- Ensure opportunities for all.

Aims and objectives

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

The objectives of teaching Religious Education in Shepherd Primary 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 make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity in society;
- appreciate and live by core values promoted within our school.

The legal position of Religious Education

Shepherd Primary School's 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 only after they 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 Religious Education curriculum is based on the LA's Agreed Syllabus, and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the Religious Education syllabus should reflect the fact that 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.

Teaching and learning style

Shepherd Primary School bases its teaching and learning style in Religious Education on the key principle that good teaching in Religious Education 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 Religious Education curriculum.

Shepherd Primary School uses a variety of teaching and learning styles in Religious Education to enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, and Passover to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits, for each year group from Reception to Year 6 to local places of worship (see Off-Sites Visits Policy), and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. In addition, the children have frequent assemblies with a Religious Education theme, covering festivals celebrated by all major world faiths. These are led by the Religious Education subject leader, other staff members or religious leaders.

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 investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations on a computer and share these in assemblies.

We recognise the fact that all classes at Shepherd Primary School have children of widely differing abilities, 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 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 teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

Curriculum planning in Religious Education

Shepherd Primary School's Religious Education curriculum is in accordance with Hertfordshire's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Shepherd Primary School carries out the curriculum planning in Religious Education in two phases (long-term and medium-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The Religious Education subject leader

devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach Religious Education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Phase 1. In Phase 2 we place an increasing emphasis on the study of religious themes and topics in their own right. The Religious Education subject leader, in conjunction with class teachers, endeavours to draw cross curricular links with other subjects within the teaching of Religious Education, especially with PSHCE and Literacy.

Our medium-term plans give details of each Unit of work for each term and the precise week and order in which key learning objectives for each topic are to be taught. The Religious Education subject leader keeps and reviews these plans to ensure that children have complete coverage of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus. Each class teacher prepares an evaluation of the half termly quality of teaching and learning in Religious Education, identifying areas of strength and areas for improvement. The Religious Education subject leader monitors medium-term planning regularly and provides constructive feedback to teachers.

The Foundation Stage

Children in the Early Years work from the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) framework. We relate the objectives set out in Early Years Outcomes which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged birth to five. Religious Education is delivered through Understanding the world; people and communities. In Reception, the summative data is measured against the EYFS Profile.

Contribution of Religious Education to the teaching in other curriculum areas

English

Religious Education contributes significantly to the teaching of English at Shepherd Primary School by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion.

Personal, Social, Health and Citizenship Education (PSHCE)

Shepherd Primary School's Religious Education lessons teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also emphasise the schools' agreed core values. Through our teaching of values 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 pluralistic society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Through Religious Education at Shepherd Primary 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.

Religious Education and ICT

Information and Communication Technology enhances Religious Education, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children 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. Digital cameras are used to record a visit to a place of worship.

Religious Education and Inclusion

At Shepherd Primary School we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. 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 provide learning opportunities that enable all 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, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details see separate policies: Special Educational Needs; Accessibility; Inclusion; Gifted and Talented; English as an Additional Language (EAL).

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, and differentiation – 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 for children with Special Educational Needs through School Action and School Action Plus 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.

Shepherd Primary School enables all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in Religious Education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (see Off-Site Visits Policy), class teachers carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe, inclusive and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment for Learning

Children demonstrate their ability in Religious Education through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might produce a PowerPoint presentation based on their investigation of sacred texts. Class teachers will assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgements as they observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the class teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or verbal feedback to help guide progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future. This information is used to assess the progress of each child, for setting new goals and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the academic year.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in Shepherd Primary School to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. The resources for specific religions are stored in boxes and located in the relevant classrooms throughout the school. There is a set of bibles for both phases kept in the school library. The school library also has a selection of Religious Education topic books.

Sustainability

Through our work towards the Sustainable Schools Award, Shepherd Primary School is committed to being environmentally sustainable and educating our children and wider school community about sustainability for the future.

In moving towards being sustainable, we are attempting to reduce our ecological footprint or to tread more lightly on the Earth. This equates to reducing the amount of resources we use and buy, the waste we produce and the emissions we produce.

Class teachers plan to teach children about sustainability issues, through the teaching of RE, where appropriate and relevant.

Monitoring and Review

The Religious Education subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work, the quality of the teaching in Religious Education, supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for Religious Education in the school. The subject leader carries out a range of monitoring activities including lesson observations, review of planning and evaluations, pupil work sampling and liaison with the Religious Education link governor to report on standards.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.