



Bowness-on-Solway School

Policy for Religious Education

Pupils should not just learn about religion but also about themselves from religion.

(Cumbria RE Agreed Syllabus)

Religious Education (RE) is a compulsory subject in schools in England. Bowness-on-Solway School follows the RE syllabus as set out by the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) for Cumbria schools for key stages 1 and 2.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from RE. Where parents wish to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that they meet with the headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, parents need to apply to the Governing Body in writing to withdraw their child from RE lessons. The Governing Body will make arrangements with the headteacher for the child(ren) to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.

School Context

RE is taught, as in other curriculum areas, by starting from the pupils' own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local - and in the wider national and international - communities. The religious character of families associated with our school is narrow, with most either identifying as 'no religion' or as Christian. Many pupils have had little experience of religious belief systems.

Aims of the RE Curriculum

RE is an important part of the school curriculum and is taught according to each child's stage of development and experience. We seek to provide a clear idea of what religion is about, the importance that it plays in many people's lives and how that faith is expressed in their daily lives and routines.

The overall aims are:

- That all children form their own opinions about religious beliefs and customs and that they develop an understanding and tolerance of people who hold a strong faith;
- That all children enjoy learning about religion because it is taught in a stimulating and interesting way that arouses their curiosity and develops positive skills and attitudes;
- That all children develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them;
- To help pupils to understand some of the impact of religion throughout the world, its influences on the lives of individuals and communities and its effect on the cultural diversity of their own and other societies both presently and in the past;
- To support pupils' personal and spiritual development by encouraging self-awareness and self-respect;
- To help pupils to develop socially and morally by encouraging a positive attitude and valuing the beliefs of others, however different they may be from their own.

Inclusion

Every child is entitled to be taught religious education regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or special need or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multi-cultural society that we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any pupil.

Health, Safety and Well-Being

Visits to places of worship and other RE-related venues are encouraged as an important part of developing a child's understanding of the role religion plays in communities. Prior to all visits, staff will carry out a formal risk assessment, if necessary, visiting the venue in advance. Staff will ensure that the context of the learning that will take place during the visit will not undermine a child's own faith or challenge their belief and will only be presenting a knowledge base about a faith in an objective manner.

Permission will be sought from parents/carers for each child to attend the visit. We acknowledge the sensitivity that some families may have with regard to their child visiting another place of worship and staff must ensure that they do all they can to assure parents and to encourage pupil participation.

Timetabling for RE

Children in the Early Years are taught RE through the Early Learning Goal of *Understanding The World*.

In key stages 1 and 2, RE is taught discreetly and is supplemented in a cross-curricular manner e.g. through PSHE, History, Geography, Art or as part of a focus day or period of time e.g. Christmas and Easter.

Collective Worship is delivered separately from the teaching of RE, though strands of Collective Worship may be used to enhance the RE curriculum.

Teaching and Learning

A variety of teaching methods should be used to teach RE, such as role play & drama, stories and music. Visitors to school should also be encouraged to give children the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about another person's experiences of living/celebrating through different faiths.

The Early Years and key stage 1 form the basis of children's future understanding and therefore should begin with children's own experiences and feelings, particularly around 'special times', people, places and objects/symbols. Many opportunities are given for thinking, talking, listening and responding to others respectfully. Great emphasis will always be placed on valuing and caring for other people in our local community and also for children to relate their understanding to a wider/global community.

In key stage 2, similar opportunities should be offered and children should be encouraged to openly discuss their understanding, opinions and attitudes about religion.

It is possible that a teacher may have their own religious beliefs/faith. The teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own.

Teachers must be sensitive about the language that they use, for instance replacing, 'I go to church on Sundays' with, 'Christians go to church on Sundays'.

Planning for RE

RE should be planned with the following main attainment targets as a guide:

Learning about Religion (Informed)

This includes enquiry into, and investigation of the nature of religion, the range of beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Through this, pupils should develop an understanding of ethical issues and an understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other. Pupils should also develop an understanding of the nature and characteristics of religions.

Learning from Religion (Reflective)

This focuses on developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils should develop the skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they have learned about religions. Pupils should learn to communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments.

SMSC & RE

RE plays a key role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in schools.

RE contributes to the spiritual development of pupils by:

- Exploring powerful questions of meaning and truth;
- Understanding the importance of feelings, emotions and experiences in religious belief and practice;
- Considering the value, purpose and dignity of human beings;
- Reflecting on who and what matters in life in order to develop their own views and ideas on religious and spiritual issues;
- Considering how religions and beliefs express key ideas and experiences.

RE contributes to the moral development of pupils by:

- Reflecting on key values and ethics within religions and beliefs; considering influences on moral choices and ethical decision making;
- Reflecting on what is of ultimate value to pupils and believers through studying the key beliefs and teachings from religion and philosophy on values and ethical codes of practice;
- Considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing a sense of conscience and responsibility.

RE contributes to the social development of pupils by:

- Studying a range of social issues from religious perspectives, recognising diversity of viewpoint within and between religions, as well as common ground between them;
- Reflecting on how religions and beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns.

RE contributes to the cultural development of pupils by:

- Promoting cultural understanding from a religious perspective through encounters with people, literature, the arts and resources from differing cultures;
- Considering the relationship between religion and cultures and how religious beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practices;
- Promoting inter-cultural understanding by encouraging pupils to question their own cultural pre-suppositions.

British Values

Since 2014, schools are legally required to promote British Values. Concepts that support the teaching of British values regularly occur in RE.

Democracy

Through discussion in RE pupils can realise the significance of each person's ideas and experiences. In debating the fundamental questions of life, pupils learn to respect a range of perspectives. This contributes to learning about democracy - as does examining the concept of responsibility to share our voice and influence for the well-being of others.

The Rule of Law

In RE, pupils examine different examples of codes for human life, including commandments, rules or precepts offered by different religious communities. They can consider the value of the rule of law, where all people are equal before the law.

Individual Liberty

In RE, pupils consider questions about identity, belonging and diversity, learning what it means to live free from constraints. Within RE, pupils can develop an understanding of themselves as situated in a particular cultural context by considering the cultural norms, rules, desires and pressures which restrain them, but also by considering the ways that they are free.

Mutual Tolerance

Learning about different ways of life and beliefs requires an understanding of difference. Quality RE teaching helps pupils to move beyond tolerance towards an increasing respect and the celebration of diversity. This should include hosting visitors and paying visits to places of worship and places of religious or spiritual significance.

Respectful Attitudes

In the RE curriculum, mutual respect between those of different beliefs is developed, promoting an understanding of what society gains from diversity. Recognition and celebration of human diversity can flourish where pupils understand different faiths and beliefs, and are actively encouraged to be broad-minded and open hearted. Pupils should learn to disagree respectfully and teachers should challenge their choice of language when necessary.

Assessment

The Cumbria Agreed Syllabus states that:

It is essential to measure pupils' attainment in order to ensure that learning objectives are met and to plan future learning. Teachers should make separate judgments about pupils' attainment in each of the Attainment Targets. Results should not be aggregated since pupils can have marked differences in their levels of performance in the two Attainment Targets.

Teachers should therefore assess what pupils know about religions, what their attitudes are to religions and how well they are able to express their own views and feelings towards other religions.

Planning should be part of a child-initiated process, beginning with children's current levels of understanding and following areas that children would wish to explore further. Examples of work produced, videos, photographic experiences should also be kept as an evidence base for making evaluations about the teaching of RE and the successful levels of learning that have been achieved. This should be straightforward and manageable.

Role of the Coordinator

The named coordinator responsible for coordinating the teaching of RE throughout the school is Mr Stuart Walsh.

Their role is to:

- Provide support, advice and resources to members of staff;
- Monitor the teaching of RE and outcomes for all children, revising policies and supporting staff with the planning of RE where necessary;
- Monitor the teaching of RE across the school, highlighting the continuity and progression of the areas taught.
- Attend relevant training and cascade this to teaching staff;
- Support staff through feedback at staff meetings;
- Monitor the use and need of resources throughout the school.

In order to ensure continuity and progression, it will be necessary to monitor the teaching of RE for all pupils. This should be done through liaising with staff, observing lessons, learning walks, monitoring planning and coverage and carrying out pupil interviews and book looks.

Any actions resulting from this should be acted upon within a given time frame.

Resources

Resources are centrally stored in the staff room and include books, pictures, artefacts and posters. All materials should be handled very sensitively and with respect.

The Governing Body

A governor representative attached to the RE coordinator will discuss the subject and its implementation as part of the teacher-governor meeting.

Visits are timetabled and the governor completes a written report to present to full governors.

January 2023	Policy written and adopted by Stuart Walsh with the teaching staff.
January 2023	Ratified by Governing Body.
January 2025	Date to be reviewed.

Role	Print Name	Signed	Date
RE Subject Leader and Headteacher	Stuart Walsh	<i>S. Walsh</i>	<i>18.1.23</i>
Chair of Curriculum Committee	Gill Barker	<i>G. Barker</i>	<i>18.1.23</i>
Chair of Governors	Rachael Holliday	<i>R. Holliday</i>	<i>18.1.23</i>