

Townlands Church of England Primary Academy

Religious Education Policy

Aims and objectives

The principal aim of Religious Education is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.

Children will acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions and world views represented locally and within the United Kingdom. This will encourage their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development so that they develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, preparing children for living in a society of diverse religions and beliefs.

By following these aims of our Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE we aim to ensure that all pupils:

Know 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.

Express ideas and insights about 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 identify, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues.
- Appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.

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 individual 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.

The Legal Requirement for the teaching of Religious Education.

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 EYFS who are less than five years old.

The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from Religious Education classes if they wish, although this should only be done after the parents have met with the head teacher and given written notice to the school governors clearly explaining why. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach Religious Education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention in writing explaining why to the school governors.

The Religious Education curriculum forms an important parts of Townlands spiritual, moral, social and cultural teaching and development.

Our schools Religious Education curriculum is based on Leicestershire's Locally Agreed Syllabus (Leicestershire Religious Literacy for all 2016-2021 and Understanding Christianity). The ERA states that the Religious Education syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in the United Kingdom are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions and world views.

Curriculum Planning

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Local Authority's Locally Agreed Syllabus- *Leicestershire Religious Literacy for All* and *Understanding Christianity* (a national initiative introduced in 2016) as per Diocesan recommendation.

As a Church of England school part of the teaching is through Understanding Christianity. This is as stipulated in the Statement of Entitlement and agreed with the LA and by the vast majority of schools in Leicestershire.

We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, building on prior learning and we ensure that the planned progression is built into these units, this subsequently provides challenge as they move through the school.

RE is taught in half termly units according to the long term plan.

The following whole school aims are particularly relevant to our work in Religious Education:

- To develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences.
- To develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions.
- To develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition.
- To be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.
- To develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in our regional community and Britain today.
- To develop investigative and research skills and to enable reasoned judgements about religious issues.
- To have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.
- To promote education for citizenship.

Teaching and Learning

We base our teaching and learning on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children to learn about religious traditions, systematically enquire and investigate, in order to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to others and to them. Through collaborative exploration, children are encouraged to question and share responses respectfully and sensitively prior to determining the impact of learning on themselves. This enables children to extend their own sense of values and character and promotes their spiritual growth and development via given opportunities to think about and reflect upon their own views and beliefs in relation to the themes and topics studied.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods through discussions, recording, active participation, visitors, trips, art, music, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories and reflection. We also extend RE and religious thinking, by drawing upon the experiences of religious festivals throughout the year eg Harvest, Advent, Diwali.

At Townlands, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions for life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of the Divine. We enable children to develop knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism and Buddhism. 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.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we deliver suitable learning opportunities to provide the varying challenge required. 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 difficulty (we do not expect all children to start at the same point or to complete all tasks.)
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to level of challenge required.
- Enable mixed attainment groups to interact to encourage discussion, questioning and sharing of responses and understanding, whilst always being prepared to intervene and scaffold where required.

Matching work to pupils' needs

Whole school policy with regards to special needs and differentiation applies to RE. Teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their general educational 'ability'.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as PSHE and our Collective Worship programme, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important. Also, at Townlands, Religious Education strongly supports the school's Christian values of Honesty, Love, Hope, Faith, Forgiveness, respect and Friendship. These values are taught discretely during RE lessons and these values are displayed in all classrooms and around the school.

RE and Foundation Stage

Townlands Church of England Primary Academy recognises that RE forms a valuable part of the educational experience of children in EYFS. It can contribute particularly to:

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication, language and literacy
- Knowledge and understanding of the world
- Creative development

Skills which are developed in Religious Education

The teaching of RE will ensure that the following skills are included across the key stages. These include:

- Investigation
- Interpretation
- Analysis and Evaluation

- Application
- Expression
- Empathy

Attitudes which are developed in Religious Education

We aim to encourage and develop the key attitudes, this also underpins our ethos for developing our children's' character:

- Curiosity and wonder
- Commitment
- Fairness
- Respect
- Self-understanding
- Open-mindedness
- Critical mindedness
- Enquiry

Resources

Resources are stored in a cupboard in the hall and should be returned after use. The school has invested in books, religious artefacts, picture packs and posters and staff need to familiarise themselves with these materials. We maintain an RE story shelf in the library and the quiet area which offers many stories from different faiths and traditions. Teachers may choose to use these in resources in RE lessons as well. There is a range of RE 'big books' which can be used across the age range. Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

Assessment and Monitoring of RE

There is a RE coordinator who is responsible for RE at Townlands, she also works closely with the two collective worship coordinators. The coordinator monitors the delivery of RE through pupil interviews, work samples and observations.

In line with the school policy on assessment and monitoring, the learning outcomes are shared with the children throughout each unit of work. Tasks are set which are linked to the learning outcomes. These tasks take a variety of styles, for example:

- Creative work
- Drama
- Writing
- Discussion
- Art

The children are encouraged to develop skills to enable them to assess their own progress in RE and to understand how to improve their RE work.

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through evaluating tasks set. At the end of key pieces of work, teachers will mark work using 'a star and a wish'. This provides an opportunity to give children 'next step' marking and an opportunity for children to respond.

At the end of the academic year, all teachers provide a level for each child. This level is then entered onto a whole school tracking system. The assessment tasks could be a writing task, a discussion or a creative response (dance, drama, art etc).

The Headteacher and SLT also report on RE through the school self-evaluation. The coordinator attends Diocesan Network meetings to keep abreast of news and resources.

Reporting to Parents

On an annual basis, the school reports to parents on attainment and progress in RE based on teacher judgement.