



St. Michael's Nursery and Infant School Religious Education Policy

Religious Education (RE) Policy Statement: September 2023

At St. Michael's Nursery and Infant School, we foster strong links with our local community in working together to provide rich learning opportunities for our pupils. The ethos of our school provides a welcoming, secure and stimulating environment and is reflected in a religious education programme that is inclusive and relevant to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all our pupils.

RE at our school is based on the 'Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education', following a learning challenge – big question approach. This syllabus highlights that schools and governing bodies must ensure all learners gain their statutory entitlement to RE throughout all years of compulsory education and in the sixth form (Part of statute since 1944/1988 Education Reform Act).

It is the head teacher's duty to ensure that:

- RE is provided in accordance with the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for all children at St. Michael's Nursery and Infant School.
- There are appropriate resources and staffing to meet the aims of RE.
- Parents receive information on their children's progress in RE at the end of the year.
- Request from parents for the withdrawal of their children from RE are responded to and alternative arrangements made.

The governing body is responsible for ensuring that:

- RE is included in the weekly curriculum.
- Sufficient time is devoted to RE (equivalent of at least one hour per week) and resources are devoted to RE to ensure school meets legal obligations and provides an RE curriculum of quality.

1. What we believe

RE is fundamentally concerned with an exploration of the important aspects of life and what it's like to be human. Religious Education asks about meaning and purpose in life from beginning to end. It provides opportunities for pupils to ask questions seek answers and develop ideas in a quest to discover more about their own identity and that of others. Space in the curriculum is provided for individual reflection and time to wonder 'who' and 'why'.

RE can provide a context for the exploration of moral and ethical opinions and dilemmas by learning about lifestyles and behaviour in real, historical and fictional situations. It can help our pupils to understand the power and meaning of belief and religion for individuals and communities in the United Kingdom and across the world. Religious Education opens up visions of how life for all the Worlds Citizens may be transformed by truth, beauty and goodness.

Within their learning in RE, pupils develop specific attitudes that are open, reflective, and critical and a skill base which allows them to be curious, play with ideas, empathise, listen, imagine, question, make links and reason. They need to appreciate the 'uncomfortableness' of the unknown. RE shall promote understanding, tolerance and friendship among all nations, racial and religious groups.

At St. Michael's Nursery and Infant School, it is important that all our enquiries within RE relate to clearly defined concepts in order to develop purposeful and relevant learning. We constantly ask ourselves the questions; 'Why are we learning/teaching this? Where is this learning taking me?'

2. Specific objectives and key aims

In RE at our school we aim to enable pupils to:

Learn *about* Religion and Beliefs (attainment target 1) by:

- Developing a knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and sources;
- Developing a knowledge and understanding of religious practices and lifestyles;
- Explaining meanings within different religious forms of expression; language, story and symbolism.

Learn *from* Religion and Beliefs (attainment target 2) by:

- Reflecting on aspects of human nature, identity, personality and experience especially in the light of one's own beliefs and experiences;
- Identifying and responding to questions about the nature, meaning and purpose of life;
- Giving informed and considered responses to religious and moral issues, values and commitments.

Learning *from* religion is concerned with developing pupils' capacity to respond thoughtfully to and evaluate what they learn *about* religion. Also, about developing skills and attitudes that enable pupils to be well informed about the religious and non-religious responses to the big questions of life and how these are expressed through practice.

RE is carefully planned to ensure balance between the two attainment targets of the subject.

3. Religious Education Curriculum Planning

RE at our school follows 'Cumbria Agreed Syllabus' & The Learning Challenge Curriculum.

Planning for RE occurs in these phases:

- Long-term plans - supported by RE Coordinator, and other RE professionals.

- Medium-term and short-term plans – teachers will plan lessons/ activities/ experiences using key concepts, skills and knowledge from long term plans.

The Cumbria Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education gives a detailed outline of what we teach in the long term. More able pupils aim at higher objectives. Less able pupils aim at lower objectives.

Long-term planning in RE provides an overview of when the syllabus units of study are to be covered throughout the school. It also determines the general theme for each unit of study and the focus religion(s).

Our medium-term RE plan at key stage 1 highlights the topic and some resources to be covered each term. They ensure an appropriate balance and distribution of work across each term and are used and applied in line with our general principles of learning and teaching.

Throughout religious education, the development of skills and attitudes is planned for as well as progression in knowledge and understanding. Pupils engage in a variety of activities that are structured to allow opportunity for reflection, exploration of beliefs and values, questioning and enquiry, investigation and personal response.

4. The Early Years Foundation Stage

Unlike other curriculum subjects, religious education is statutory for children in reception classes. Our long-term planning for the subject acknowledges this fact and includes our reception class in the coverage of units of study from the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus. These units of study are planned to integrate with the foundation curriculum and the way that it is developed throughout this reception year. RE makes a significant contribution to children's knowledge and understanding of the world and their personal and social and spiritual development. RE in the foundation stage provides opportunities for children to investigate their feelings and relationships and to explore and wonder at the world around

them. There are opportunities for them to think about how the choices they make and the things they do affect themselves and others. Stories, pictures, videos and artefacts help to provide insights into the beliefs, practices and lifestyles of different people.

5. Teaching Religious Education to pupils with special needs

All pupils have an entitlement to high quality RE, whatever their ability. It is part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all pupils. We provide learning opportunities that are matched to the needs of specific groups of pupils. Learning considers the targets set for individual pupils in their individual education plans (IEPs). Teachers support learning by selecting and developing practical, interactive and visual strategies and materials.

6 Assessment and recording

The assessments that teachers make as part of every RE lesson help them to adjust their weekly plans. Teachers match these short-term/informal assessments to the teaching objectives. Teachers concentrate on being aware of who has not reached the objective and who has far exceeded the objective. They note achievement and progress by assessing the pupils' work against the learning objectives for their lessons. In RE we use an adapted version of the Challenge Curriculum (which ensures coverage of the Cumbria Agreed Syllabus) for planning and assessment. Parents are given information of their child's progress in RE in annual reports.

7 Resources


We have a range of resources to support the teaching of RE across the school. This includes collections of artefacts for each of the major world religions, collections of teacher and pupils' books on these religions, posters, videos, downloaded resources from RE Today website. Most of these resources are kept in our central resource area but further books are available to pupils in the school library and classrooms.

8 Monitoring and review

Monitoring of the standards of pupils' work and of the quality of teaching in RE is the responsibility of the Headteacher along with the RE subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.

September 2023

Signatures: N. Birch

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