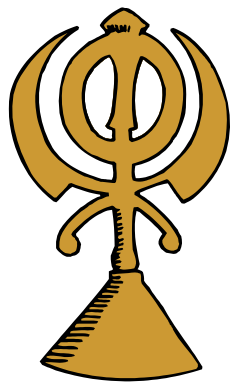


MAPLE SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



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RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT MAPLE SCHOOL

Background to Religious Education at Maple School

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. It is this Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2006-2012 which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

Families who send their children to this school are in the main 'nominally' Christian, but we do have some children from practising Christian families. In addition there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with "learning about religions" and "learning from religion" and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

Parents of a pupil at this school have a right to withdraw their children from religious education (RE). If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes this may consult the headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE (see note 1).

Values and aims

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually; is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. These include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism;
2. develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures;

3. develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions;
4. enhance their own spiritual, moral, cultural and social development by:
 - a. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;
 - b. responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - c. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - d. expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
5. recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within a religiously diverse society.

Objectives

Learning

In RE we foster a reflective approach to learning by:

- Encouraging pupils to develop attitudes that are open, reflective and critical.
- Developing a skill base in pupils which allows them to be curious, play with ideas, empathise, listen, imagine, question, make links and reason.
- Encouraging pupils to appreciate the 'uncomfortableness' of the unknown.
- Encouraging an open and honest enquiry, an awareness of prejudice, a growing self-understanding and respecting the rights of others to hold beliefs different from their own.
- Encouraging pupils to 'Learn about Religion' and 'Learn from Religion'.

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum.

AT1 Learning about Religions

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture, of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

AT2 Learning from Religion

- give an informed and considered response to religious and moral issues;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the questions of meaning within religion.

Children will be “Learning about Religions” and “Learning from Religion” through:

1. investigation; the use of first-hand and other resources to understand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events and stories.
2. questioning; developing curiosity about life, relationships and the natural world.
3. empathy; developing the power of imagination to identify feelings such as wonder, forgiveness, sorrow, joy and to try to see the world through the eyes of others.
4. reflection; the ability to consider thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs of oneself and others.
5. relating; linking significant features of religions, making associations between them, to understand what makes religions distinct and/or similar.
6. expression; the ability to identify and explain feelings and aspects of religions.

Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study should contribute to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provide opportunities for reflection on six key areas:

- Belief and Teachings - e.g. stories, prophets, founders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death
- Religious Practices and Lifestyles - e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, effects on individuals
- Ways of Expressing Meaning - e.g. art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, silence/stillness
- Human Identity, Personality and Experience - e.g. preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people
- Questions of Meaning and Purpose - e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences
- Values and Commitments - e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, moral dilemmas

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect whilst deepening knowledge
4. parents; by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them feel part of the school community
5. use of the internet and global studies - links to Geography

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, role play, drama, asking and answering questions, using a range of sources including ICT, works of art, artefacts, visits and visitors.

RE in the Foundation Stage

The EYFS documentation became statutory in September 2008 and applies to settings providing care and education for children 0-60+ months. In following the programme of study for RE in our reception class, the mechanism of delivery is that outlined in the EYFS which is based on a play based approach. The Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of RE Foundation Stage is delivered through experiences and contexts appropriate for the age and stage of the children according to the developmental statements in the EYFS. This may be partly through:

- short periods of directed input which highlight key festivals, celebrations, religious symbols and religious vocabulary by reference to children's own experiences
- use of persona dolls
- involvement of the wider community, for example, visits from key members of a religious group
- visits to a local place of worship.

There also needs to be evidence of delivery through continuous provision in Child Initiated Play.

For the young child, the value of RE provides a focus for:

1. Understanding myself
2. Valuing myself
3. Relating to others
4. Learning new things

These ways of thinking connect to the child's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development throughout the whole of education as well as specifically to RE AT2 - learning from religion.

Through an RE focus the EYFS practitioner can promote the development of the child's self-concept and self-esteem. This, therefore, links to the EYFS principles of:

1. A Unique Child
2. Positive Relationships

3. Enabling Environments
4. Learning & Development

Assessment, recording and reporting

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined following the Eight Level Scale in the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing. (Note 2).

Through activities, for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year, and include a report about the child's progress in RE.

Assessment is carried out in line with the Maple School Assessment Policy.

Planning

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage the school follows the Hertfordshire Scheme of Work for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. This scheme shows how we have planned that "aspects of all six principal faiths are explored over key stage one and two".

Our medium term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The work planned is relevant to the needs of the pupils.

In line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus we plan to spend 30 hours per year at key stage one and 39 hours per year at key stage two on the teaching of RE. This is separate from the act of collective worship.

Presentation

Each unit of work will involve pupils in activities, such as already mentioned above (see sections on Teaching and Assessment). These will provide opportunities to demonstrate how much they have learned "about religions" and "from religion". In addition, pupils will sometimes be encouraged to present work for a wider audience, such as in a special assembly, or for display around the school.

Cross Curricular Issues

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and a consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum.

Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

Management and Co-ordination

The RE co-ordinator manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject co-ordinators.

One of the school governors acts as link governor for the subject of RE.

Resources

The RE resources are kept in the right hand corner of the Resources room on the shelves. A full inventory was made of the RE resources, and a list circulated to all staff, in September 2011.

NOTES

1. DfES Circular 1/94 paragraphs 44-49
2. See Herts AS pages 28-29. The Eight Level Scale of Attainment.