
R.E. Policy



Written By: Mrs N. Metcalfe (Headteacher) and Miss L. Coyne (RE co-ordinator)

Approved By: Governors Learning and Teaching Committee

Date: Spring Term 2016

Next Review Date: Spring Term 2019

Vision Statement

With God's help

We will live kindly,

Love each other,

Learn and laugh together!

Mission Statement

The March CE School will preserve and develop its religious character in accordance with the Church of England and in partnership with the Church at parish and diocesan level.

The March CE School aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. It encourages an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promotes Christian values through the experience it offers all its pupils.

Aims and objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At The March C E Primary School, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of Christianity and some of the major world faiths. They are given opportunities to address fundamental questions concerning, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

The purpose of teaching Religious Education at the March C E is to:
Show children that Christianity is about following the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and that this is relevant to their daily lives. Extend children's ability to reflect upon themselves as whole people, experiencing life through body, mind and spirit. Help pupils understand the significance of religion and its contribution to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Through the teaching of Religious Education we aim to:

- to develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- to develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions adhered to in the UK;
- to develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;

- to be capable of reflecting on their own experiences, and of developing a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- to develop an understanding of religious traditions, and an appreciation of cultural similarities and differences in the UK today;
- to develop their investigative and research skills, in order to hold reasoned opinions on religious issues;
- to have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society.

A statement regarding the legal position of RE including syllabus taught

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that, although it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject, the 1988 Education Act states that Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils. In this school the faiths that are taught across KS1 and KS2 are Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism.

Legal requirements

The statutory requirements for RE are:

- RE must be taught according to a locally agreed syllabus. At the March, RE taught within the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education which was new from September 2015.
- RE must not be denominational but teaching about denominational differences is permitted.
- RE must be provided for all registered pupils, but parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons.
- The Educational Reform Act (1988) states that 'RE must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of other principle religions represented in country.'

Philosophy

The teaching of RE at The March School follows the practices and recommendations of the West Sussex County Council Agreed RE Syllabus. Advice has also been taken from the Diocese of Chichester and from the previous inspection (2010) by the SIAMS. We firmly believe that RE and Collective Worship are separate, but linked. For further information, please see the Collective Worship Policy.

Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE 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 RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE 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 Harvest, Easter, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship, and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

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 in our 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, e.g. 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 mixed ability in the room, allowing for children to support and encourage one another;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

RE curriculum planning

RE is a core subject here at The March CE Primary School. We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build on prior learning and dovetail with the collective worship themes from Values for Life. 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.

We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. The RE subject leader devises this plan in collaboration with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach RE topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. In Key Stage 2, we place an increasing emphasis on the study of religious themes and topics in their own right.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives and expected outcomes. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.

The Foundation Stage

We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the reception class. In reception classes, RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

RE and ICT

ICT enhances RE, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using the Internet and independent research. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Older children use PowerPoint to help them to make presentations on various topics, such as sacred symbols in different world religions. Younger children can take photographs of the class acting out a Bible story. They can then make a class storybook of it, by adding in speech bubbles and a narrative text. Or, using desktop software, they can create a special book in which each pupil has his or her own page; they also make a cover and binding for the book, and draw up a set of rules for its use. A digital video camera can record a visit to a place of worship, and pupils can also find the various artefacts in churches by doing virtual tours on church websites.

RE and the creative curriculum

When topics relate overtly to religious themes, for example Tudors, links can be made. We believe it is important not to force links as these may be tenuous and cause confusion. Children may choose to use their skills in art, music, design or ICT to express their understanding of RE and not rely exclusively on writing. We aim for a mixed portfolio of expression to ensure children use their talents and potential.

Teaching Religious Education to children with CHAPs and SEN

At our school we teach Religious Education to all children, whatever their ability. Religious Education forms part of the school 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 progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning Religious Education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a mosque, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils. When progress exceeds

significantly outside the expected range our assessment process looks at a variety 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. Likewise, if the child is not reaching the expected range then our assessment process also ensures we take the appropriate action.

Assessment and recording of RE

Assessment of RE is conducted informally during lessons using observations and marking of children's work against learning outcomes and success criteria. At the end of each unit, a summary judgement is made in relation to the National Curriculum and descriptors from the West Sussex New Agreed Syllabus. These are then recorded and used to inform future planning are monitored by the subject co-ordinator. Attainment in RE is monitored through analysis of this data, lesson observations, link governor learning walks, work sampling and through pupil dialogue. This information will feed into the SIAMS Self-Evaluation Toolkit for Church of England Schools. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the expectations of the unit. We record the attainment grades in our assessment files, which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our RE teaching units. We keep resources for RE in a central store, where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. There is a set of Bibles for both Key Stages, and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in RE. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research.

Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. It provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored. RE also provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area. RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. See also the PSHCE policy.

The right of withdrawal from RE

At our school we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or PSCE. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at our school.

Monitoring and review

The coordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:

- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
- gives the headteacher an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in RE and indicates areas for further improvement;
- uses specially allocated regular management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe RE lessons across the school.

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated by the headteacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of lesson observations. Children's work and planning is scrutinised once a term. Lessons will be observed throughout the year by the SLT and RE Co-ordinator.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.

Signed:

Date:

