

KIRK SMEATON CHURCH OF ENGLAND PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



Reviewed April 2023

“Church schools, through their understanding of the importance and centrality of worship, create imaginative approaches which can contribute powerfully to the spiritual development of their pupils”.

The Way Ahead: Church of England Schools in the New Millennium

Philosophy

Kirk Smeaton Church of England Primary School is a voluntary controlled school. Religious Education is therefore an important part of the school life as it gives us the opportunity to come together as a community. At Kirk Smeaton Church of England Primary School, we recognise that Religious Education is important to provide opportunities for our pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development and understanding. It also gives some time for thinking, listening, sharing, stillness and silence.

Legal Status 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 the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on North Yorkshire's Agreed Syllabus (supplemented by the Wakefield Diocese) and it meets all requirements. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

At Kirk Smeaton C of E Primary School we are committed to providing Religious Education to all Children, from the Foundation Stage to Year Six. Following training and advice, we currently base our Religious Education teaching on the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus (2019-2024), which is written with a strong emphasis on an enquiry approach.

Characteristics of Effective Learners in Religious Education

- The ability to consider challenging questions about possible meanings of life, beliefs in right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- An understanding of the connections between different faiths and human experiences.
- The ability to share positive attitudes of respect towards people who hold different beliefs and follow other religions to their own.
- The ability to make reasoned and informed judgments about religious and moral issues with reference to religions represented in the UK

Through Religious Education we aim to:

- Show children that Christianity is about following the living God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit and is relevant to their daily lives.
- Ensure the ethos of our School and RE Syllabus encourages our children to develop their own beliefs, values and attitudes using their own experiences;
- Celebrate the uniqueness of each child and seek to encourage individual creative responses through our age-related Schemes of Work;
- Seek to promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils;

- Promote understanding and awareness of Christianity and knowledge of the traditions and practice of Christianity and other world faiths;
- Encourage caring, thoughtful and respectful relationships;
- Provide a supportive environment where children can develop self-confidence, self-discipline and a sense of responsibility.

Religious Education will encourage and enable pupils to explore their own beliefs, values and traditions and those of others in meaningful and engaging ways. It will encourage pupils to share their diverse range of experiences and grow individually and together with sensitivity and respect towards people of all faiths and none.

The Curriculum

The Diocesan Syllabus is used throughout School with supplementary source materials as and where necessary. We are currently teaching the new RE curriculum with support from the North Yorkshire RE agreed Syllabus and resources (2019-2024). <http://sutton-in-cravencofe.n-yorks.sch.uk/data/documents/North-Yorkshire-Agreed-RE-Syllabus-2019-2024.pdf>.

Religious Education will be allocated no less than 5% of the timetable. In Key Stage 1 this amounts to between 40-50 minutes per week, totalling 36 hours over the year. In Key Stage 2 children should be taught Religious Education for 1¼ hours per week, totalling 45 hours over the year. At Kirk Smeaton C of E school, staff ensure coverage by block planning units of work for each term.

Planning

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage, the school uses the North Yorkshire units of learning for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus.

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. Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher using the guidelines from North York Agreed Syllabus and Understanding Christianity units and twinkle for extra resources and parables. The RE Subject Leader is available to help with this and keeps a range of teacher's resources as a guide. (When planning each unit of work the teacher will identify which parts of the programme of study are to be the foci, the learning objectives for the unit, the learning tasks planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of the pupils).

Teaching

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

- Beliefs, teachings and sources - e.g. stories, religious leaders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death;
- Practices and lifestyles - e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, actions, effects on individuals;
- Expressing meaning - e.g. sacred texts, art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, forms of religious and spiritual expression, silence/stillness;
- Identity, diversity and belonging- e.g. belonging, preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people;
- Meaning, purpose and truth - e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, making sense, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences;
- Values and commitments - e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, morality.

RE delivery 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 and drama - 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 and questioning whilst deepening knowledge
4. music and the arts - enabling children to experience elements of religions in a sensory way
5. parents - by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community
6. Reading stories from the diversity of religions taught

British Values

At Kirk Smeaton Church of England Primary School, we uphold and teach pupils about British Values which are defined as:

- Democracy
- Rule of law
- Individual liberty mutual respect
- Tolerance of those of different faiths and beliefs

These values are taught explicitly through Personal, Social, Health and Emotional (PSHE), and Religious Education. During RE we will discuss British Values through a number of different themes and ideas such as religious freedom, acceptance of other people's faiths and looking at tolerance and harmony between different cultures and beliefs.

Assessment

We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and through marking diagnostically. Assessment is based upon the child's ability in understanding various ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour. As well as the ability of a child to reflect on their own experiences and the experiences of others and respond to them in a thoughtful and constructive way, children's standards and achievements in RE are assessed in line with the North Yorkshire Level Descriptors.

Visits and visitors

Place of worship trips are organised during the year to support and complement the work in school and to promote links with the local community. We aim to invite more representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children in a sensitive manner