



Hall Meadow
Primary School



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

REVIEWED BY HEADTEACHER: November 2020

BY GOVERNORS: 29th January 2021

NEXT REVIEW DATE: November 2023

Hall Meadow Primary School is committed to ensuring the welfare and safety of all our children in school. We believe that pupils have a right to learn in a supportive, caring and safe environment which includes the right to protection from all types of abuse. All of our school policies and procedures reflect this priority.

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES:

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Hall Meadow Primary School, children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths develops through addressing the fundamental questions in life. Lessons are planned to enable children to develop a sound knowledge of world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within the local community. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. Tasks are planned to help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- Be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- Develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- Develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

THE LEGAL POSITION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE):

The Hall Meadow 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. The Hall Meadow school RE curriculum is based on the Northamptonshire SACRE Agreed Syllabus and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. 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.

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLE:

At Hall Meadow, the teaching and learning of RE is based 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. Through planning and questioning, lessons enable children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. Children are encouraged to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

The different teaching and learning styles used in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. Teachers use their own and the children's experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Eid, Diwali and Pesach (amongst many others) to develop their religious thinking.

Hall Meadow organises visits to local places of worship and invites representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children. The school aim is for each Year Group to arrange at least one RE visit or Visitor to visit the school each academic year. Long term planning encompasses one celebration/theme day for each class based on their curriculum. This is monitored by the RE Subject Leader.

Through the use of the Northamptonshire SACRE RE scheme of work, children carry out research into religious topics. They study “Big Questions” within religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children have opportunities to discuss religious and moral issues amongst themselves as well as with visitors, use computers (working individually or in groups) and are given the opportunity to prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

Philosophy for Children (P4C) strategies are used to give children opportunities of free speech and respect for the views of others. Hall Meadow holds special festival assemblies to celebrate the religions in the school. Children are asked to share their experiences of religion with the rest of the school during such assemblies. Staff recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and 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, 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 complete all tasks);
- Grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group providing scaffolding where necessary;
- 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 and extend that of other pupils.

CURRICULUM PLANNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

Religious Education is taught to all children in years One-Six. In the Foundation Stage, children are taught through festivals that are relevant to the specific cohort as they take place throughout the year.

The Religious Education curriculum is planned in accordance with the Northamptonshire SACRE’s Agreed Syllabus. Whole school overviews ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. Opportunities are planned for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

The Curriculum planning in religious education is formed within three phases long-term (LEA Planning), medium-term and short-term (weekly/daily planning). Religious Education topics in conjunction with other subjects (namely Literacy and PSHE), especially at Key Stage 1 is a natural combination. Individual lesson plans for each unit/topic have been prepared for class teachers within the LEA scheme and the Subject Leader and list the specific learning objectives for that lesson. Each class has a copy of all the units for their year group and plans are often discussed on an informal basis with the RE subject leader. All plans are available to staff on the shared network for ease of access and modification.

FOUNDATION STAGE:

As the Reception Team work under the Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, Religious Education aspects of the children’s work relates to the objectives set out under the Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Knowledge and Understanding of the World (KUW) areas which are crucial to the development and progress of all pupils at this stage.

CONTRIBUTION OF RE TO OTHER SUBJECT AREAS:

English

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in English lessons have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. Children are often

encouraged to make books and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

Information and communication technology (ICT)

ICT is used where appropriate in RE. The children find, select and analyse information, using the Internet to further research and develop their knowledge and understanding. Teachers use interactive whiteboards for whole class or group teaching.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through RE lessons, children are taught about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, RE contributes to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. The values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, children are given the knowledge to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development – please see SMSC policy

Through teaching religious education, opportunities are provided for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. Lessons help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. Their social development is enhanced by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and by doing so they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives. Hall Meadow has been involved in charity projects that offer the children the opportunity to learn about and support others in need. E.g. Harvest Festivals (giving food to the local Food Bank), and giving to charities.

Values Education ('Value of the Lesson'):

Hall Meadow embraces values both the British Values and those of our trust (InMAT). In RE, as in all subject areas, there is always a Value of the Lesson. This allows children to focus on their value and learn in a respectful manner which is fundamental to the study of religions and religious practices.

TEACHING RE TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS (SEN)

At Hall Meadow, all children, whatever their ability, are able to access RE. It forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through the teaching of religious education, opportunities provide learning that experiences able all pupils to make progress. This is achieved through setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against the National Curriculum allows staff to consider each child's attainment and progress against expected levels. The RE assessment process looks at a range of factors –classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that staff 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.

ASSESSMENT AND RECORDING:

Children's work in RE is assessed by making informal judgements through observations and marking the work after the lesson. Assessments for each unit area then averaged out to provide an end of year result.

Marking:

Weekly RE work should be marked following the school's marking policy (see school marking policy).

RESOURCES:

Resources are kept in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each religion as well as a collection of books, artefacts, photopacks and other teaching resources including dolls. Concrete artefacts and resources are used as a stimulus as a 'hook' in the start of the term/topic.

MONITORING AND REVIEW:

Class teachers are responsible of assessing and monitoring pupil's progress in this subject area. The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the pupil's work and the quality of the teaching in RE through annual work scrutinies, pupil interviews and lesson observations. The subject leader is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE on request and through staff meetings. The RE subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual report which evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. The RE subject leader is also responsible for the maintenance, ordering and upkeep of RE resources.

WITHDRAWAL FROM RE LESSONS AND TRIPS:

Parents have the legal right to withdraw pupils from RE but this must be discussed with the class teacher, RE Coordinator and Head teacher. A class teacher cannot make the decision to allow a child/parent to withdraw from RE lessons. If the parent chooses to go ahead and withdraw their child from RE this must be given to the school in writing by the parent. Staff should refer to the Northamptonshire New Agreed Syllabus for information about speaking to parents and withdrawing pupils from RE and the issues surrounding this, including the negative implications, must be highlighted to the parent (for example, missing lessons that may link to other subject areas, for example, English lessons, which may have an impact on the pupil's progress and learning), as well as issues of discrimination. The withdrawal of a child from RE lessons should be the last resort as RE is an important part of learning and understanding about the world and community.