

# LOUDWATER COMBINED SCHOOL

## Religious Education Curriculum Policy

How we behave and live our lives affects other people and the world we live in. This is why our behaviour and ways of living are important issues. Our behaviour is influenced by our attitudes. Our attitudes are influenced by our experiences and beliefs. RE is the opportunity to reflect on our experience of the world and the beliefs, values and attitudes that guide us through life. We do this by exploring the beliefs, values, practices, and ways of living from the principal religions and different worldviews. We all play a part in creating the world and society we live in. What we believe, whether religious or not, contributes significantly to this. RE helps pupils (and the school as a whole) to reflect on the ways in which beliefs influence how people live their lives.

Although RE is statutory, it justifies its place in the curriculum on educational grounds. Alongside Buckinghamshire SACRE, we believe that religious education contributes to a wider vision for education in which the core purpose is human development. Knowledge and skills are of central importance, they are manifestly necessary, but not in themselves sufficient. Education is also about the development of people, their attitudes, and dispositions and how they relate to themselves, each other, and the world they inhabit. It is part of our development as human beings. All subjects in the curriculum should contribute to this, some more and some less so. Religious education has a particularly significant contribution to make because it is about a person's way of experiencing, responding to and understanding the world.

### **Intent**

Religious Education is delivered in school in line with the current Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022-27.

#### The Four Aims of RE

1. To understand the nature, role and influence of religion and worldviews, locally, nationally, and globally.
2. To reflect on questions of meaning, purpose and value.
3. To formulate reasoned opinion and argument.
4. To enter into meaningful dialogue with people of different beliefs and backgrounds, appreciating and celebrating diversity, recognising what we hold in common, and respecting a shared humanity that can be experienced, expressed, and responded to in diverse ways.

These are developed in the following ways, which can be seen as 'steps' to achieve each aim:

1. To understand the nature, role and influence of religion and worldviews, locally, nationally, and globally by:
  - Developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other faiths, and worldviews (KS1 onwards).
  - Exploring similarities and differences between the religions and worldviews (KS1 onwards).
  - Considering the nature and interpretation of sources of authority in Christianity, other faiths and worldviews (Lower KS2 onwards).
  - Exploring similarities and differences within religions and worldviews (Lower KS2 onwards).
  - Understanding what it means to belong to a religious community and the influence religious faith has on individuals and communities (Upper KS2 onwards).

- Considering the way religious teaching and practice relate to ultimate questions (Upper KS2 onwards).

2. To reflect on questions of meaning, purpose, and value by:

- Reflecting on the significance of their own and others' personal experience and emotion (KS1 onwards).
- Thinking about what influences our beliefs and lifestyle and the way we see things (Lower KS2 onwards).
- Exploring different religious and non-religious beliefs about meaning, purpose and value (Upper KS2 onwards).
- Raising and exploring the ultimate questions which arise from these (Upper KS2 onwards).

3. To formulate reasoned opinion/argument by:

- Gaining the necessary knowledge and understanding to give informed opinions with reasons (KS1 onwards).
- Developing the skills of questioning (KS1 onwards) and reasoning (Lower KS2 onwards).
- Developing the ability to see things from other peoples' perspective (Upper KS2 onwards).

4. In achieving these three aims, pupils will be better able to enter into meaningful dialogue with people of different beliefs and ways of living. General skills such as enquiry, analysis, reasoning are developed age-appropriately at both key stages.

Our curriculum also places emphasis on developing skills that enable our pupils to:

- *Reflect on their own personal responses to the fundamental human questions to which worldviews respond,*
- *Learn to articulate these responses clearly and cogently while respecting the right of others to differ,*
- *Develop skills relevant to various disciplinary approaches,*
- *Develop wider transferable skills and dispositions.*

The following learning process lies at the heart of our curriculum:

Learning in RE involves helping pupils make sense of life. Learning about religions, beliefs and ways of living is the vehicle through which they develop their understanding of themselves, others and the world.

The learning process involves a journey with three possible starting points: Please see diagram below.

1. What does it mean to be me? Pupils' own experience and self-concept,
2. What does it mean to be you? Religious/worldview experience, concepts and content,
3. What does it mean to be human? Universal human experience and concepts.

The teacher can decide which aspect is the best entry-point to the enquiry for the pupils and/or what they will be learning. This model incorporates skills-development and progression. The skills running along the outside of the arrows are described for each Key Stage, thus providing a means of progression. Teachers use these to plan challenging learning. Thus, at KS1 the process will be basic and will become more complex and challenging as pupils progress through school.

Pupils will grow to recognise how we are all different, yet we share our humanity in common, so that through their exploration of religious and non-religious worldviews, they will develop their own understanding of what it means to be human and their own sense of meaning, purpose and value in relation to others.

Learning can start from any of the three questions:



To meet the agreed syllabus aims we enable children to develop a knowledge and understanding of world religions through studying religious and nonreligious beliefs and worldviews, practices and ways of life.

Although there is an emphasis on Christianity, other world religions are studied and compared especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. In upper Key Stage 2 we also explore world views including Humanism.

Through our teaching of RE we aim to develop positive attitudes and values and to reflect and relate the pupils learning in RE to their own experience. This should develop in children the ability of reflecting on their own spiritual and moral issues and encouraging a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.

We aim to develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition, however it is important for adults and pupils in the school to know that some people are not religious.

Through an understanding of religious traditions, children will develop an appreciation of cultural differences in the UK today and have respect for other people's views, and hence to celebrate diversity in society especially in our own community.

As part of the syllabus at each Key Stage, visits to local places of worship are encouraged as are visits by members of faith communities and individuals who can share their beliefs and practices. We aim to develop an understanding of concepts and skills to make sense of religion and belief, at an appropriate level of challenge for the pupils age.

### Implementation

RE is taught weekly for half a term planned by the teacher following the RE SOL and sometimes linked with key dates and religious festivals or with other curriculum areas, providing opportunities to celebrate and study religions with greater relevance and consistency.

Work is assessed and recorded in RE books in a variety of ways.

This can be through:

- writing, such as narrative, poetry, instructions
- completing worksheets
- artwork
- drama
- dance
- songs
- discussions
- research
- story telling

For each lesson there will be evidence of learning undertaken, whether this is written, photographs of drama, artwork or similar or evidence of visits or visitors etc

Throughout the year groups, children are offered a wide range of learning opportunities about world religions including deeper understanding of the origin of those religions and their key stories and teachings. Use of key words should be included in lessons to help with the progression of skills around specific language involved in children's learning. A variety of artefacts and resources are available including use of online resources. Boxes of artefacts and RE books are housed in the Resource room.

### **Religions studied**

In the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), teachers will provide opportunities for child-initiated learning and plan adult led learning focusing on the background, experience and needs of the children, ensuring that they introduce experiences that help the children in their Understanding of the World.

In line with the recommendations of the Agreed Syllabus we will explore the following religions:

#### **Key Stage 1**

- Christianity plus one other Abrahamic religion in depth (Judaism)
- With reference to one Dharmic tradition and non-religious backgrounds (not necessarily a specific non-religious worldview).

#### Context

An exploration of home life and how this influences the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of children and others in relation to their sense of self, belonging and celebrating what is important in life.

#### Core Questions

- *How does our background influence who we are?*

- *How does belonging to a religion or group affect people's lives?*
- *How should we behave and treat others and the world?*

Enquiries (referring back to the core questions):

1. What does it mean to be me? (Who I am).
2. How important are the groups people belong to? (Belonging).
3. What makes some people so important? (Important people).
4. Why are some places so important? (Important places).
5. What makes some things sacred to some groups of people? (Special things).
6. What makes some stories so important to different people? (Sacred books).
7. Why is it important to look after our world? (The natural world).
8. Why do we celebrate important occasions? (Special occasions).

In exploring these questions, the children will also reflect on:

- Their own sense of who they are and their uniqueness as a person in a family and community.
- What they believe, what they think is important, and how those influence their day-to-day lives.

### **Lower Key Stage 2**

- Christianity plus one different Abrahamic religion and one Dharmic tradition in depth (the syllabus recommends Islam and Hinduism)
- With reference to other religious traditions and non-religious perspectives as appropriate.

Context

An exploration of what people believe to be important in life and why, and how this is expressed.

Core Questions:

- *What is most important in life?*
- *How do different religions show what is most important to them?*
- *How does this affect their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves, other people, and the world around them?*

Enquiries: (referring back to the core questions)

- How and why do people worship? (Worship).
- Are places of worship really needed? (Religious buildings).
- What holds communities together? (Religion in the community).
- How do religions express their beliefs about God? (Symbolism).
- Why are sacred texts and holy books so important? (Sacred Texts).
- What do our celebrations show about what we think is important in life? (Festivals).

In exploring these questions, the children will also reflect on:

- Their own sense of who they are and their uniqueness as a person in a family, community, and world.
- What they believe, what they think is important and how these influences their day-to-day lives.

### **Upper Key Stage 2**

- Christianity plus one other Abrahamic religion and one Dharmic tradition (these could either be a continuation from LKS2 or different ones, the syllabus recommends continuing with Islam and Hinduism) and Humanism.
- With reference to other religious traditions and worldviews as appropriate.

## Context

A reflective exploration of some of the big questions, beliefs, and concepts about life and what it means to be human, and how responses to these are expressed through ritual and ways of living.

Core Questions:

- *What do people believe about life, the world, and the good life?*
- *Where do these beliefs, attitudes and ways of living come from?*
- *How are these expressed and lived out in the lives of individuals and communities?*

Enquiries: (referring back to the core questions)

- Why do religions or non-religious groups celebrate important moments in life? (Rites of Passage).
- Why is pilgrimage so important to some religious communities? (Pilgrimage).
- Why don't all members of a religious or non-religious community believe and live in the same ways? (Diversity).
- How did the religions and worldviews begin? (Founders and Prophets / Roots).
- How does what we believe influence the way we should treat the world? (Creation and environment).
- What do the religious and non-religious worldviews teach about 'the good life'? (Ethics).

In exploring these aspects of the religions, the children will also reflect on:

- Their own sense of who they are and their uniqueness as a person in a family, community, and world.
- What they believe, what they think is important, and how these influences their day-to-day living.

## Learning approaches in RE

The Buckinghamshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education encourages teachers to adopt a wide range of teaching approaches and RE Pedagogies, including:

- The Phenomenological Approach in which pupils study the rituals and dimensions of religions in order to understand their meaning and significance to members of the faith community.
- The Experiential Approach which focuses on how RE can help pupils make sense of their own experience in the light of their learning about and from religious and non-religious worldviews.
- The Interpretive Approach in which pupils learn about the faith through encounter with the experiences, views, beliefs, perspectives, beliefs and ways of life of the members of different religious and non-religious worldviews and reflect on the light these shed on their own worldview and experience.
- The Conceptual Approach where the pupils explore the concepts of religious and non-religious worldviews and reflect on the insights these shed on different ways of understanding and making sense of
- The Personal Quest Approach focusing on how the study of religious and non-religious worldviews helps pupils to develop their own self-understanding.
- The Ultimate Questions Approach where the focus is on exploring meaning, purpose, value and identity through the study of religious and non-religious worldviews responses to the questions that life throws at

There is overlap across all these approaches, and no one approach adequately covers all aspects of learning in RE, although teachers have their natural preferences. What is most important is identifying which approaches are best suited to achieving the particular purposes of the RE that is being taught and the needs of the pupils.

## **Impact**

At Loudwater School we aim for children to learn from religions as well as about religions.

Through an understanding of religious traditions, children will develop an appreciation of cultural differences and similarities in the UK today and have respect for other people's views, and hence celebrate diversity in society.

We seek to ensure that all pupils in our school are educated to develop spiritually, academically, emotionally and morally to enable them to better understand themselves and others and to cope with the opportunities, challenges and responsibilities of living in a rapidly changing, multicultural world.

## **Assessment**

We use the progression statements and end of Key Stage statements to measure and report progress; RE should be no different from any other subject in terms of assessment. High-quality assessment in RE uses assessment sufficiently, but not excessively. Most assessment should be formative (assessment for learning) and there should be no more than five formal summative assessments (assessment of learning) across Key Stages 2, and fewer in Key Stage 1. Most assessment should be through tasks and quizzes planned into the learning itself. We recognise that there are aspects of RE, such as personal development and personal beliefs and attitudes, that cannot and should not be assessed in themselves.

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