

Bessacarr Primary School

R.E. Policy

Religious Education is taught as part of a cross-curricular approach to citizenship education. Through this, we aim to promote the spiritual, moral, and cultural development of all pupils. Religious Education is a compulsory subject and forms part of the national curriculum. The RE syllabus used at Bessacarr Primary School follows the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus for Key Stage One and Key Stage Two and follows the Early Years Framework subjects of The World and People and Communities.

Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from RE. Where parents are wishing to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that the parents meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the parent/carer of the child(ren) would still like to withdraw their child from RE then a letter to the headteacher requesting this should be put into place. The school will make arrangements with the class teacher for the child(ren) to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.

School Context

Religious representation at Bessacarr Primary School (2015-2016)

No religion	44.3%
Christian	30.26%
Sikh	8.47%
Muslim	7.5%
Other religion	3.38%
Roman Catholic	3.38%
Hindu	1.93%
Not stated	0.48%
Methodist	0.24%

RE is taught, as in other curriculum areas, by starting from the pupils' own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community and in the wider national and international community. The religious background of a large proportion of children at Bessacarr Primary School is stated to be Christian, however the vast majority of pupils appear to have little experience of any strong faith or belief.

Aims of the RE Curriculum

RE is an important part of the school curriculum and is taught relevant to the child's stage of development and experience and in accordance with the Doncaster R.E agreed syllabus. We seek to provide a clearer idea of what religion is about, the importance that it plays in many people's lives and how that faith is expressed in their daily lives and routines.

The overall aims are:

- That all children form their own opinions about religious beliefs and customs and that they develop an understanding and tolerance of people who hold a faith.
- That children enjoy learning about religion because it is taught in a stimulating and interesting way that arouses their curiosity and develops positive skills and attitudes.
- That children develop a sense of awe and wonder about the world around them.
- To help pupils understand some of the impact of religion throughout the world, its influences on the lives of individuals and communities and its effect on the cultural diversity of their own and other societies both presently and in the past.
- To support pupils personal and spiritual development by encouraging self-awareness and self-respect.
- To help pupils develop their social and moral development by encouraging a positive attitude and valuing the beliefs of others, however different from their own.

Equal Opportunities

Every child is entitled to be taught RE regardless of their age, culture, gender, background or special need or disability. RE develops a balanced view of the multi-cultural society which we live in without compromising the faith, non-faith or cultural background of any pupil.
(Please see the Equality Policy)

Health, Safety and Well-Being

Visits to places of worship and other RE related venues are encouraged as an important part of developing a child's understanding of the role religion plays in communities. Prior to all visits, staff will carry out a formal risk assessment, if necessary, visiting the venue prior to creating the risk assessment.

Staff will ensure that the context of the learning that will take place during the visit, will not undermine a child's own faith or challenge their belief and will only be presenting a knowledge base about a faith.

Permission will be sought from parents/carers for each child to attend the visit. We acknowledge the sensitivity that some families may have with regard to their child visiting another place of worship, staff must ensure that they do all they can to assure parents and encourage pupil participation.

Time-Tabling for RE

The children in the Early Years are taught RE through the areas of Understanding the World and People and Communities in accordance with the Early Years Framework.

In KS1 and KS2 RE may be taught either discreetly or as part of a cross-curricular approach eg through PSHE, history, geography, art or as part of a focus day or period of time eg Christmas, Diwali, Wesak.

Teaching and Learning

As outlined in the Doncaster Agrees Syllabus, Religious education depends on the development of many skills which should be evident in the learning opportunities at every key stage. Some of these skills are common to other areas of the curriculum such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. There are, however, other skills which make a particular contribution to pupils' learning in religious education. These include the skills of:

- Investigation
- Interpretation
- Reflection
- Evaluation
- Empathy
- Synthesis
- Application
- Expression

A variety of teaching methods should be used to teach RE, such as role play/drama, stories and music. Visitors to school should also be encouraged to give children the opportunity to listen to and ask questions about another person's experiences of living/celebrating through different faiths.

The Early Years and KS1 forms the basis of children's future understanding and therefore should begin with children's own experiences and feelings, particularly around 'special times, people, places and objects/symbols. Many opportunities should be given for thinking, talking, listening and responding to others respectfully. Much emphasis

should be placed on valuing and caring for other people in our local community and also for children to relate their understanding to a wider/global community. In KS2, similar opportunities should be offered and children should be encouraged to openly discuss their understanding, opinions and attitudes about religion.

It is likely that a teacher may have their own religious beliefs/faith. The teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own. Teachers must be sensitive about the language that they use, for instance swapping, 'I go to church on Sundays' to, 'Christians go to church on Sundays'. If children are inquisitive of a teacher's faith, they are to reply in honesty.

Planning for RE

RE should be planned using the Doncaster Agreed Syllabus as a content guide. This has two main attainment targets;

- **Learning about religion**

This includes enquiry into, and investigation of the nature of religion, the range of beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Through this, the pupils should develop an understanding of ethical issues and an understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other. Pupils should also develop an understanding of the nature and characteristics of religions.

- **Learning from religion**

This focuses on developing pupils' reflection on and in response to their own and other's experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Pupils should develop the skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they have learned about religions. Pupils should learn to communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, values and commitments.

Assessment

As RE involves a process of personal development and emerging/changing views, it is difficult to formally assess all but the ability of children to recall facts and to be able to express a view about religions.

Teachers should therefore, assess what pupils know about religions, what their attitudes are to religions and how well they are able to express their own views and feelings towards other religions. This should be formally reported to parents as part of the child's end of year report.

Planning should be part of a child-initiated process, beginning with children's' current levels of understanding and following areas that children would wish to explore further. Examples of work produced, videos, photographic experiences should also be kept as an evidence base for making evaluations about the teaching of RE and the successful levels of learning that have been achieved.