

Clee Hill Community Academy

Exploring Spirituality (Religious Education) Policy

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Aims and Objectives

At Clee Hill Community Academy we believe that Religious Education should be referred to as 'Exploring Spirituality' as this summarises our philosophy of self-exploration whilst preparing pupils for life in an increasing multi-cultural society. This is achieved by encouraging them to explore and respond to these aspects of spirituality and religion and draw upon their own experiences.

Our aims and objectives in Exploring Spirituality are to:

- develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion through exploration of the beliefs and practices of the principal world faiths represented in locally (Shropshire), nationally (Great Britain) and internationally;
- enable children to reflect on what it means to have a faith whilst developing their own spiritual knowledge and understanding;
- address fundamental questions concerning the meaning of life and existence;
- prompt children to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society;
- encourage empathy, generosity and compassion;
- develop respect, sensitivity, tolerance and consideration for the beliefs and traditions of others;
- combat prejudice and negative discrimination;
- develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- nurture children's respect for different faiths and cultures as part of our British values.

The National Legal Framework for RE

Our Exploring Spirituality Policy is informed by current RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010 and should be read in conjunction with the **Shropshire Agreed Syllabus 2014**. Our school curriculum is underpinned and meets all the requirements set out in the **Shropshire Agreed Syllabus 2014** for Key Stage Two, created by SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Exploring Spirituality).

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) stipulates that RE is compulsory for all pupils attending a maintained school. 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 main religions. We expect all children to take part in RE lessons, however, the ERA allows parents and carers to withdraw their child from Exploring Spirituality if they so wish.

RE Teaching and Learning

Each unit of work originates from one of the Key Questions that forms the core of the RE Shropshire Agreed Syllabus 2014. Through exploration, reflection and investigation, each unit provides children with the opportunity to **Learn about Religion (AT1 - investigating, describing, explaining)** and **Learn from Religion (AT2 - responding, analysing, evaluating)**. The questions are revisited throughout the key stage in a stimulating and increasingly challenging way.

The units ensure that:

- Christianity is taught in more depth;
- two other religions (Judaism and Islam) are taught in more depth;
- other religions taught provide pupils with enrichment experiences, but do not need to be taught in depth;
- there is evidence of attention being given to those faiths represented in the community;
- show how religious belief can be applied to life;
- there is continuity and progression for pupils and opportunities for assessment in both attainment targets;
- there are a range of teaching and learning activities to ensure that pupils learn effectively and with interest;
- RE is taught either as a discrete subject or as part of a cross curricular approach where appropriate;
- there are opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills, knowledge and attitudes in each unit;
- the progression planned into the unit of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school;
- visitors will be invited to support the teaching of RE, and where possible, there will be planned visits to places of worship;

Key Skills in RE

We strongly believe that Exploring Spirituality is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. We seek to develop children's skills in investigation, enquiry, communication, interpretation, analysis, reflection and evaluation. These are important life skills for children to develop and use in their daily lives. In our Exploring Spirituality planning, key questions form the basic of the lesson and teachers are encouraged to pose open ended questions which may cause lessons to take a different direction to the original plan. This child-led approach to Exploring Spirituality allows pupils the opportunity to pose questions, debate, ponder and 'be wowed'

Key skills may include:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live and the different ways people express their beliefs).

- Communication (sharing their ideas and those within religions and beliefs in a lively, informed way including different styles of writing, oral contributions and the use of ICT).
- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts).
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others).

Key Attitudes in Exploring Spirituality

As with skills, Exploring Spirituality has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote.

These include:

- Self-esteem (so that every child feels valued and significant).
- Respect (including being sensitive to the beliefs, feelings and values of others).
- Open-mindedness and tolerance (being willing to learn and gain new understanding).
- Appreciation and wonder (developing children's imagination and curiosity).

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through our RE, PSHE and assemblies, we teach the pupils about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote 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, we enable pupils to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society. Refer to our **PSHE Policy** for more information.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Through teaching RE in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual reflection and opportunities for spiritual development. Pupils consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Pupils explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing; they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives. Refer to our **SMSC Policy** for more information.

Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting

Clear learning outcomes, specific high level questioning to assess understanding, evaluative marking and observations of children at work underpin the assessment process. Children's standards and achievements in RE are assessed in line with our **Assessment Policy**. Assessment is based upon the child's ability in understanding various ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour.

Assessment in RE takes place through on-going Assessment for Learning (AFL) practices within class and group sessions, including the sharing of and reference being made to Learning Objective and Success Criteria and self and peer assessments of understanding, outcomes and progress.

We also recognise that some of the most important learning in RE (eg how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed, so we assess the pupil's using informal judgements and formative assessment throughout lessons to ensure pupils are challenged. Thus ensuring that barriers to learning are eliminated and pupils reach their full potential. We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and through marking diagnostically. Children are involved in self-assessment, and can record their own progress. Learning objectives are clear, enabling children to assess if they have met the learning criteria.

Evidence of RE Implementation and Coverage

At Clee Hill Community Academy evidence is collected from whole class RE/Spirituality books, teachers' planning, wall displays and photographic records which show implementation of coverage. There is **no** expectation that written work should be on a regular basis or be kept in RE books. Our Exploring Spirituality planning on the website shows our coverage across the Academy with a focus on Christianity and Judaism in KS1 and Hinduism as an additional focus in KS2.

Equal Opportunities

RE is a fundamental way of supporting the ethos of the school. All children have equal access to the curriculum, regardless of their gender, disability, ethnicity, social, cultural or religious background. Staff promote equal opportunities and enable pupils to challenge discrimination and stereotyping.

Inclusion

The RE Syllabus can be modified, where necessary, to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. This should provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work.

The three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive RE Syllabus include:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Subject Monitoring and Review

The RE subject leader and link governor are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in RE. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing direction for the subject in the school.