



Richmond Methodist Primary School
Religious Education Policy

Document Status			
Date of Next Review	To be reviewed Summer 2018	Responsibility	<i>FGB</i>
Success Criteria for review completion		Responsibility	<i>Jan Lindsey, Char of Governors</i>
Date of Policy Creation	May 2017	Responsibility	<i>Julie Swinbank RE Subject Leader</i>
Date of Policy Adoption by Governing Body		Signed	
Method of Communication (e.g Website, Noticeboard, etc)			
Staff Meetings and Website			

Richmond Methodist Primary School

Religious Education Policy

BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all registered pupils. As RE is not nationally determined, the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for us to follow. It is this North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2013-2018, which we have used as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE (note 1).

At our school we have children from practising Christian families, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with “learning about religions and beliefs” and “learning from religions and beliefs” and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child’s family is respected at all times.

Parental rights to withdraw children from RE

Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the RE programme. Where parents have concerns about their children taking part in RE, they are asked to discuss their concerns first with the Headteacher. S/he will be able to discuss the RE programme and teaching methods in greater detail and give parents access to the RE unit materials and resources used. Agreement on alternative provision for the children would need to be reached should they be withdrawn from the RE programme.

Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE (note 2).

A. VALUES AND AIMS

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. We study Christianity (**and** specifically Methodism),

Judaism and Islam in depth but also include Buddhism, Hinduism and Sikhism; each of which is represented in North Yorkshire;

2. develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, including the local community;
3. develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions;
4. enhance their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
 - a. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;
 - b. responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - c. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - d. expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
5. recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within an ethnically and socially diverse society.

B. OBJECTIVES

Learning

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses.

Religious Education should encourage all participants to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to acknowledge that others hold beliefs different from their own.

Religious Education has two closely related aspects:

Learning about religions and beliefs (AT 1) and Learning from religions and beliefs (AT 2)

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum. RE is at its most effective when these two attainment targets are closely related in the learning experience.

AT1 Learning about religions and beliefs

Building up knowledge and understanding of religions and beliefs:

This includes investigating, thinking about and interpreting religious beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life and ways of expressing meaning with reference to the specific beliefs and religions studied.

AT2 Learning from Religion

Building up investigative, reasoning and evaluation skills:

This includes engaging with, reflecting on and responding to questions of identity, belonging, diversity, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments, making increasingly insightful links to the specific beliefs and religions studied.

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.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches. Providing a balance between the two key attainment targets underpins the teaching of RE at this school.

At Foundation Stage pupils learn about Christianity and with some coverage of Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and Islam.

At Key Stage 1 pupils learn about Christianity, Methodism and Islam.

At Key Stage 2 pupils build on their understanding of Christianity, Methodism and also study Islam and Judaism.

In all years, where appropriate, learning may include any of the world faiths if appropriately linked. Christian values weave through all subjects/learning and there is a close affiliation with the school's framework for Personal and Social Education.

RE teaching 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

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles will be used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, artefacts, visits and faith visitors, to ensure pupils are actively engaged in learning.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING (see school Assessment policy)

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined following the Eight Level Scale in the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2013-2018, which is exemplified in detail in the North Yorkshire

Agreed Syllabus Guidance Document D. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing. (note 3).

Through activities, for example discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At this school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment.

As a staff we plan moderation exercises to ensure that we are familiar with the statements and what they mean in the context of a pupil's work.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and RE is reported on as part of the 'development of the whole child'.

TIME ALLOCATION

In line with the recommendations of the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2013-2018, approximately 5% of curriculum time is given to RE. At Foundation Stage RE will be delivered flexibly according to the statutory requirements of the EYFS. At Key Stage 1 pupils spend 60 hours over 2 years (approximately 10 hours per term) and 156 hours over 4 years (approximately 13 hours per term) at Key Stage 2. The time allocation does include visits and RE curriculum days, but not school productions related to festivals or collective worship time. (See Collective Worship policy: note 4).

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. In addition we use R.E Today materials to plan from.

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. As we have some mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not have to repeat topics.

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. 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 focus, 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).

CROSS CURRICULAR OPPORTUNITIES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality to enable mutual respect and tolerance in line with British values. This also supports the school's PREVENT training against radicalisation.

Children's skills in speaking, listening and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

Provision for RE is in accordance with the schools equal opportunities policy. As a Methodist school, we are committed to inclusion on every level.

In accordance with the aims of the school the pupils will develop an appreciation of and respect for the beliefs and philosophies of others. Pupils will be encouraged to value the rich variety of cultural traditions and lifestyles represented in Great Britain and the World. Children will also appreciate why some people choose not to practice a religious faith or are agnostic. It is acknowledged and respected that deep beliefs are held in the area of Religious Education. It is therefore our aim to deal with any matters arising as sensitively as possible.

Provision for children with special educational needs, including more able children will follow the school's policies in these areas. Children's needs are carefully monitored and supported through teacher planning and assessment. This enables objectives, tasks, teaching methods, resources and teacher/adult input to be matched to pupil needs. It includes the use of more challenging objectives or extension materials and tasks for the more able

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The RE subject leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with the school's job description for subject leaders. He/she attends North Yorkshire network meetings to ensure the school is up to date with current practice in RE.

There is a yearly staff meeting on RE, led by the subject leader; where areas for development are discussed. This policy is reviewed at that meeting to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school. It is understood that as a faith school, all teachers lead the modelling and implementation of Christian values and in particular practice the all-inclusive ethos of Methodism.

Complaints procedure

(Appropriate paragraph from school complaints policy)

PROCEDURE

a) Informal Stage

Anyone with a concern about any aspect of the school is encouraged to raise their concern, either personally or through someone else, with their child's class teacher, a senior member of staff or with the Headteacher. Everything possible should be done at this stage to resolve the matter.

Guidance from the DFE Toolkit 2014:

Informal Stage: Complaint Heard by Staff Member

It is in everyone's interest that complaints are resolved at the earliest possible stage. The experience of the first contact between the complainant and the school can be crucial in determining whether the complaint will escalate. To that end, if staff are made aware of the procedures, they know what to do when they receive a complaint.

It would assist the procedure if the school respected the views of a complainant who indicates that he/she would have difficulty discussing a complaint with a particular member of staff. In these cases, the complaint can be referred to another staff member including the head teacher.

Similarly, if the member of staff directly involved feels too compromised to deal with a complaint, the school may consider referring the complainant to another staff member. The member of staff may be more senior but does not have to be. The ability to consider the complaint objectively and impartially is crucial.

Where the first approach is made to a governor, the next step would be to refer the complainant to the appropriate person and advise them about the procedure. It would be useful if governors did not act unilaterally on an individual complaint outside the formal procedure or be involved at the early stages in case they are needed to sit on a panel at a later stage of the procedure.

- If the concern cannot be resolved by informal means then the person expressing the concern will be told of the option of pursuing a formal complaint and be provided with a copy of the school's procedure and complainant leaflet.

b) Formal Complaint – Stage One (See Complaints Policy Appendix letters D and F)

Investigation by a designated member of staff/Headteacher

- Formal complaints must be detailed in writing (a complaints form is attached for this purpose). To ensure that the complaint is properly investigated it must be as clear as possible. If necessary clarification will be sought from the complainant about any aspect of the complaint which is unclear.
- The Headteacher or designated staff member should make every effort to resolve the issue as quickly as possible. See above "Resolving Complaints".
- If a complainant requires help to put their complaint in writing then they will be offered the opportunity to meet with the designated member of staff/Headteacher who will make a written note of the complaint and agree it with the complainant;
- The designated member of staff/Headteacher will send an acknowledgement letter within 5 working days of receiving the written complaint and will confirm:
 - ✓ details of the complaint to be investigated;
 - ✓ who will be investigating the complaint;
 - ✓ that a substantive response to the complaint will be given within 20 working days of receipt. If this timescale cannot be met an explanation will be given with a revised timescale;
- The complaint will be recorded including date;
- The designated member of staff/Headteacher will investigate the complaint in accordance with the principles of the Complaints Policy;
- The designated member of staff/Headteacher will write to the complainant within 20 days of receipt of the complaint (or by date given in the acknowledgement letter) and advise him/her of the outcome of the investigations in writing.

- If the complaint is upheld the complainant will be informed accordingly and given an indication of the steps that will be taken to put matters right. The school will seek guidance from Legal Services at County Hall before making any admissions which may lead to a legal claim. If, on the basis of the information available, it is not possible to arrive at a definitive decision on the complaint the complainant will be informed accordingly with the reasons why.
- The complainant will also be informed that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation then they have the right to appeal against the outcome to the Chair of the Governing Board and how to do it.

c) Formal Complaint – Stage Two

The Chair of the Governing Board or other designated governor.
(See Complaints Policy Appendix letters F and G)

- Requests for a stage two investigation must be in writing and addressed to the Chair of the Governing Board or other designated governor (DG);
- The Chair or DG will send an acknowledgement letter within 5 working days of receiving the request and tell the complainant that a substantive response to the complaint will be given within 20 working days of receipt. If this timescale cannot be met an explanation will be given with a revised timescale;
- The request will be recorded including date;
- The Chair or DG will investigate the complaint in accordance with the principles of the Complaints Policy and make every effort to resolve the complaint at this stage (see above “Resolving Complaints”)
- The Chair or DG will write to the complainant within 20 days of receipt of the complaint (or by date given in the acknowledgement letter) and advise him/her of the outcome of the investigations in writing.
- The Chair or DG should make every effort to resolve the issue by meeting with the Headteacher, complainant and any other interested persons.
- If the complaint is upheld the complainant will be informed accordingly and given an indication of the steps that will be taken to put matters right. The Chair will seek guidance from Legal Services at County Hall before making any admissions which may lead to a legal claim. If, on the basis of the information available, it is not possible to arrive at a definitive decision on the complaint the complainant will be informed accordingly with the reasons why.
- The complainant will also be informed that if they are dissatisfied with the outcome of the investigation then they have the right to appeal against the outcome to the Complaints Appeals Panel and how to do it.

d) Formal Complaint – Stage Three (See Complaints Policy letters A, B, C.)

Complaints Appeals Panel Hearing

- Requests for a stage three hearing must be in writing and addressed to the Clerk to the Governing Board at the School;
 - ✓ the Clerk will acknowledge the request in writing within 5 working days of receiving the request
 - ✓ the Clerk will set a date for the Panel within 20 working days of receiving the request.*
- The Clerk will ask the investigator at Stage 2 to attend the hearing to present the school's case.
 - ✓ if written submissions are to be made by the Headteacher or complainant they should be submitted to the Clerk at least 10 working days before the hearing to enable copies to be provided to the committee, the complainant, the Head teacher and any other relevant parties.
- At least 7 working days prior to the meeting the clerk will:
 - ✓ notify all parties of the date, time and place of the hearing;
 - ✓ provide all parties with a copy of any written representations submitted;
 - ✓ provide all parties with details of the format of the hearing;
 - ✓ ask the parties whether they have any particular needs for the meeting e.g. induction loop, translator etc;
 - ✓ confirm who will be in attendance at the hearing or whether they wish to rely upon written submissions.
- Within 5 working days following the hearing the clerk shall:
 - ✓ inform all the parties concerned in writing of the decision(s) of the Panel;
 - ✓ the complainant will also be informed that if he/she remains dissatisfied then they may write to the Department for Education, 2nd Floor, Piccadilly Gate. Manchester. M1 2WD. or go to
 - ✓ <https://www.gov.uk/complain-about-school> for more details.

This ends the process for the school. The school (head teacher) must keep all paper work and details concerning the complaint and be prepared to submit them to the DFE if requested. It is important that the school submits the full policy document for scrutiny as well as the Complainants Leaflet.

What will the DFE do?

If a complaint has exhausted the local procedures, SCU (School Complaint Unit) will examine if the complaints policy and any other relevant policies were followed in

accordance with the provisions set out. SCU also examines policies to determine if they adhere to education legislation. However, the department will not re-investigate the substance of the complaint. This remains the responsibility of the school. If legislative or policy breaches are found, SCU will report them to the school and the complainant and, where necessary require remedial action to be taken. Failure to carry out remedial actions could ultimately result in a formal Direction being issued by the Secretary of State.*
(*taken from the DFE Toolkit August 2014)

NOTES

1. Voluntary Controlled schools should follow this pattern. Voluntary Aided schools are not obliged to use the Agreed Syllabus. They must, however teach RE in accordance with their trust deed.
2. DFE Circular 1/94 paragraphs 44-49.
3. See North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus pages 30-31 and the pull-out. More detailed guidance can be found in North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus Guidance Document D: A SACRE tool for using the 8 level scale.
4. The school has a separate policy on Collective Worship.