



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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EARLHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Introduction.

At Earlham Religious Education is taught according to the Newham Agreed Syllabus. It is approached with the following principles in mind:

- We value the religious background of all members of the school community in order to give individuals a sense of self and belonging so that they will feel comfortable to share their religious experiences with others.
- All religions and their communities are treated with respect and sensitivity and we value the links which can be made between home, school and a faith community.
- We acknowledge that each religion studied contributes to the education of all our pupils.

The Aims of Religious Education

The aims of RE at Earlham are “to celebrate the diversity of religious and human experience, fostering the development of unique individuals with the knowledge, skills and understanding to promote harmony within their community and the world beyond”. (from “Exploring Beliefs, Celebrating Diversity” – The Newham Agreed Syllabus for RE 2003). These aims are exemplified as follows:

Developing a sense of self.

- To develop a sense of personal worth, individuality and identity.
- To awaken and develop an awareness of the spiritual dimension in life.
- To develop the ability to reflect on, analyse and evaluate their beliefs, values and practices and communicate their responses.

Developing a sense of community.

- To explore issues within and between a variety of different world views, helping children to understand and respect different religious beliefs, values and traditions, and understanding the influence of these on individuals and communities.
- To develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain, including Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Judaism and Buddhism.
- To develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in multi-cultural and multi-faith communities.

Developing a sense of the world beyond.

- To consider questions relating to human existence and purpose.
- To explore religious and other world views in the context of the world today.

The Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development of Children

The 1988 Education Reform Act requires schools to ‘promote the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school and in society’ (paragraph 1:2) through the provision of a broad and balanced curriculum.

The Newham agreed syllabus links RE with six forms of development: spiritual, moral, social, cultural, emotional and intellectual.

RE has a key role in promoting pupils’ **spiritual development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:

- how they relate to themselves, to others, to the world around them and, for some, to God;
- paradox, mystery, silence and the deepest questions of life such as ‘Why are we here?’, ‘Why do people die?’

and ‘Why is there so much suffering in the world?’;

- the lives of individuals and groups who have inspired others;
- what different religious, spiritual and secular traditions teach about the meaning and purpose of life; and
- values such as justice, honesty and truth.

RE has a key role in promoting pupils’ **moral development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:

- personal issues and values like why should I tell the truth, and how can I be good?
- a range of ethical and moral issues;
- the role of ethical rules and codes within communities and society; and
- what different religious, spiritual and secular traditions teach about right and wrong.

RE has a key role in promoting pupils’ **social development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:

- their own growing sense of identity, place in society and different experiences of community, eg family, school, national, religious;
- their experience of working in diverse groups and social settings;
- a range of social issues relating to the quality of life in contemporary society;
- how religious teachings have shaped and influenced different communities and societies;
- commonly shared experiences that communities seek to celebrate and mark, eg rites of passage;
- how religious, spiritual and secular traditions lead to particular actions and concerns; and
- how religion has inspired individuals with a sense of social responsibility that has generated great social change historically.

RE has a key role in promoting pupils’ **cultural development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:

- the place of culture and tradition in their own and others’ lives;
- the relationship between culture and religion, and how religions and beliefs contribute to cultural identity and practice;
- the ways in which those from different cultures have expressed themselves through the creative and expressive arts; and
- the many ways in which meaning, belief and value can be expressed and communicated.

RE has a key role in promoting pupils’ **emotional development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration and response to, for example:

- the relationship between our emotions and ability to learn;
- the skills that underpin our roles as effective communicators, including how to listen;
- the many ways in which we use empathy to understand the feelings and opinions of others;

- the way we can engage pupils in motivating themselves and see a purpose in what they are doing; and
- developing the way in which positive relationships can occur.

RE has a key role in promoting pupils' **intellectual development** by fostering skills to enable the exploration of and response to, for example:

- identify issues that warrant philosophical or ethical enquiry;
- reflect on and communicate their own thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, values and aspirations;

RE may be taught as a separate subject, or incorporated into the current class topic if the teacher deems that all the necessary aspects of RE can be included.

Visitors from a range of faith communities may be invited into school to work with the children. Establishing links with local faith communities is therefore useful.

Teaching, Curriculum and School Organisation

The content of the Religious Education programme at Earlham draws on the Agreed Syllabus. There are two strands:

- Attainment Target 1 – Learning about religion and
- Attainment Target 2 – Learning from religion and experience.

At Earlham it has been agreed that having taken into account the requirements and guidelines presented in the Agreed Syllabus, the following religions have been selected for study:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Hinduism
- Sikhism
- Judaism
- Buddhism

Other religions and belief systems may be covered as part of the different themes that are taught.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

It is recognised that parents have the right to withdraw their child from Religious Education – in its entirety or in part. If a parent chooses to withdraw their child from Religious Education then arrangements are made for that child to be withdrawn during Religious Education lessons by the class teacher in consultation with the Headteacher.

Evaluation, Assessment and Monitoring

Progress in RE Education is reported annually to parents and assessment is being developed in line with school policy and LEA guidelines.

The RE subject leader monitors provision and standards in line with the expectations for all subjects at Earlham.

Equal Opportunities, Special Needs & Providing for Children with English as an Additional Language

All teaching and non-teaching staff are responsible for ensuring that the pupils in their care, irrespective of gender, ethnicity, language group, disability, religious beliefs, social circumstances and ability, have equal access to the whole curriculum and equal opportunity to undertake all aspects of work in order to make the maximum progress.

We aim to do this by

- taking the individual needs of children into account
- using language which is appropriate to each child's ability
- avoiding the negative use of written, spoken and body language
- choosing books, worksheets, posters, tapes etc., which display positive images, which represent the different backgrounds of our pupils and which avoid gender stereotypes
- choosing resources which are user friendly and easily accessible to all children
- showing in our planning how tasks are differentiated and targeted for children of differing abilities
- ensuring that recording and assessment is fair, gives equal value to different activities and avoids stereotypical assumptions.

Monitoring

This policy was written in February 2011. It will be reviewed as part of the policy review cycle by the Pupil Wellbeing Committee. It is next due to be reviewed in Spring 2015.