



Religious Education

March 2017

Version	Date	Author	Status	Summary
1.0	5.03.17	Wendy Southgate		Update in light of the Hampshire syllabus "Living Difference Revised 2011" document

Last Reviewed By: Wendy Southgate

Date of Review: March 2017

Expiry Date: March 2020

Ratified By: Full Governing Body

Background to Religious Education at Southwood Infant School

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must, by law, be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. (Schedule 19, Schools Standards and Framework Act, 1998). As RE is not nationally determined, the Local Education Authority must provide an Agreed Syllabus for schools to follow. In Hampshire, it is the “Living Difference” locally agreed syllabus covering Hampshire, Southampton and Portsmouth, that forms the basis of our planning.

Families who send their children to Southwood Infant School are from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds. RE is concerned with “learning about religions” and “learning from religion” 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.

Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from religious education (RE). If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE teaching, the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes this may consult the headteacher. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE (see further information below on the right of withdrawal).

The Purpose of Religious Education in Hampshire

The purpose of Religious Education is to support the development of children’s own values and contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This entails enabling children to interpret and respond to a variety of concepts, beliefs and practices within religions and to their own and others cultural and life experiences. This takes the form of encountering religious stories, festivals, artefacts, places of worship, rituals and beliefs.

Values and Aims

At Southwood Infant School we believe 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.

We aim:

- To provide a wide range of encounters with religion which will help children to form a view of the world that they can apply to their own experiences.
- To encourage and develop children’s interest and opinions about simple concepts that are common to themselves and religions, and recognise and express their own values and beliefs.
- To enable children to consider the effects religion has on people’s lives.

Curriculum Content and Approaches to Teaching RE

RE is taught as a separate subject in accordance with the agreed Hampshire Syllabus. Although the main learning focus is Christianity, the children are taught one other key religion, which, at Southwood Infant School, is Judaism. Foundation Stage pupils are required to engage with aspects of Christianity and the other religion being explored in Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 1 pupils are required to study Christianity and at least one other religion.

In the Foundation Stage, children will engage with concepts within their own experience. These concepts are also evident in religious practice and belief. Examples of concepts for Foundation Stage children are **belonging**, **celebration** and being **special**.

In Key Stage 1, children will also engage with concepts within their own experience. These concepts are also evident in religious practice and belief, for example, **happy and sad**, **remembering** and **thanking**. Older pupils within the key stage (Year 2) also explore concepts such as **God** and **symbol**.

At Southwood Infant School, RE topics will build on the children's own experiences and progressively develop an understanding of the key concepts, features, beliefs, celebrations and values of key religions. Whilst studying these topics, children will learn to appreciate the significance of faiths to their believers.

The Living Difference Syllabus recommends that RE should be taught in the Early Years Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 for a minimum of 36 hours per year. At Southwood Infant School, RE will be blocked into one week units each half term and will be the focus for learning during this week. Links are made with other areas of the curriculum where appropriate.

A wide range of teaching methods including whole class, co-operative group and individual tasks will support learning in RE. Children will experience the following as part of RE teaching:

- Visits to places of worship.
- Exploration of religious artefacts.
- Listening to religious stories.
- Visits by members of faith communities.
- Reflection on religious symbols, sounds and the use of silence.
- Using IT where appropriate.
- Art, music, dance, etc.
- Experiential learning through drama.

Equal opportunities

The teaching of RE is planned with due regard for the school's policy for Equal Opportunities (see our Single Equality Scheme). Pupils with special needs will receive support from the class teacher to undertake work which is planned for their level of ability and which allows them to make an effective and valuable contribution. More able children will be suitably challenged in their thinking through higher order questioning and opportunities for additional or independent enquiry.

Cross Curricular Issues

RE teaching and learning will naturally link too many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. RE topics will provide opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and a 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.

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

Role of the RE Leader

The RE leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with the requirements of all subject leaders. Key aspects of their role are:

- To promote and sustain pupils' attainment in RE throughout the school.
- To take the lead in policy development.
- To take the lead in long term and medium term planning, ensuring progression and continuity in the teaching of RE at the school.
- To support staff in order to develop effective teaching and learning via short term planning.
- To take responsibility for the purchase and organisation of resources for RE.
- To monitor progress in RE and advise the headteacher on action needed.
- To evaluate the teaching of RE within the school and identify good practice and areas for improvement, and take action to further improve the quality of teaching (through inset days, demonstrations, team teaching, etc).
- To establish and maintain parents' interest and support by informing them of the teaching and learning in RE.
- To develop effective links with the local community (e.g. by arranging trips and visitors for RE).

- To keep up-to-date with developments in RE and disseminate information to colleagues as appropriate, e.g., through twilight staff meetings.
- To identify training needs and lead professional development (e.g. arranging for training about a particular religion).
- To ensure that newly appointed teachers are provided with the school's RE policy, plans and guidelines.
- To keep the Headteacher and governors well informed about the provision for RE within the school, its strengths and areas for improvement.
- To maintain an ongoing RE development plan in consultation with the Headteacher.

Resources

RE resources are stored centrally. These resources include religious artefacts, books, posters, and image media and are organized in topic boxes according to the religion to which they relate.

The RE leader maintains a file of the school's long term and medium term planning, together with a collection of information, assessment level descriptors, articles and ideas which will support staff with short term planning. Photocopies of appropriate medium term plans are given to year group leaders and teachers in planning sessions.

Continuity and Progression

RE units of work are planned to ensure continuity and progression. Where similar themes are explored then a different concept is taught. For example both year 1 and 2 learn The Easter Story but the year 1 concept is sadness and happiness and the year 2 concept is welcoming.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements. Assessment opportunities taken from the syllabus have been identified in our medium term plans. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

We use questioning in whole class, group and individual activities, observation, marking of work and pupil conferencing with selected pupils in order to gather assessment information.

Children's progress in RE is reported to parents annually.

Monitoring

The RE Leader carries out a range of monitoring activities in line with all subject leaders. These include collecting evidence of children's work for a portfolio exemplifying standards, carrying out conferencing (discussion) activities with pupils, lesson observations and work-sampling. Moderation is done through work-sampling, where outcomes are compared across year groups and the whole school. This provides further information which both supports assessment and future teaching.

Parental Right of Withdrawal

In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1998, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the teaching of RE. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from parts of or all RE lessons and they are not legally obliged to state their reasons.

Pupils who are withdrawn are supervised and provided with alternative activities.

Teachers Right of Withdrawal

In accordance with DFE circular 1/94, we recognise the legal right of teachers to withdraw from the teaching of RE. Any teacher wishing to withdraw must confirm this in writing to the headteacher and Governing Body. In event of this right being exercised, the teaching of RE would be implemented by the Year Group Team / RE Leader after discussion with the headteacher.

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