



Religious Education Policy

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1. Religious Education at Hope Community School

RE gives children and young people the opportunity to learn about and learn from those aspects of religion and human experience that give rise to 'big' questions such as 'What is the meaning of life?' and 'Is death the end?' Religious Education also provides an opportunity for children and young people to understand each other's beliefs, practices and ways of life, making a vital contribution to promoting community cohesion and the spiritual development of children and young people.

While knowledge, skills and understanding are central to Religious Education, it is also vital that the subject encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of themselves and others. They should be offered opportunities to undertake critical enquiry and to engage empathetically with individuals and communities representing a wide range of different beliefs and viewpoints. So our overarching approach in Religious Education is to develop these skills of enquiry – of encouraging pupils to ask and to be supported towards discovering a range of answers and responses to these questions. We want to promote learning based upon enquiry and exploration.

Hope Community School is a Free School and governors agreed to formally adopt the Bexley Agreed Syllabus for Education

As outlined in the Bexley Locally Agreed Syllabus' principle aims, in Religious Education at Hope Community School we want our children to engage with learning that will:-

- **Bring learners into contact with and provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **Provide a safe and secure setting where learners are encouraged to explore their own beliefs and understanding of major religious and spiritual concepts and ideas** (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- **Provide a supportive context that enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **Enable learners to develop understanding, respect and empathy for others** of different faiths, beliefs and practices, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **Enable learners to consider, understand and live up to their responsibilities** to themselves, their families and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery

2. The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion and Prevent

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion and Prevent, anti – radicalisation education. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and other forms of discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at Each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance.

The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

3. Approaches to teaching RE

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning, diocesan advice and in schools, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content.

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

Religious Education at Hope Community School is delivered through the Bexley Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

4. RE at the Foundation Stage

Religious Education is mandatory for all registered pupils on the school roll. The Early Years Foundation Stage curriculum consists of three characteristics of effective learning :

- Playing and exploring
- Active learning
- Creating and thinking critically

Alongside these characteristics, which ignite children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, there are three Prime areas and four Specific areas of learning and development

PRIME

- Personal, social and emotional development
- Communication and language
- Physical development

SPECIFIC

- Literacy
- Mathematics
- Understanding the world
- Expressive arts and design

All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected. The Prime areas are especially crucial to support early learning and development on which to build capacity for further learning. In the early years, young children are encouraged to play and explore, to learn actively and to think critically, RE makes a considerable contribution to each area.

At Hope we incorporate the RE entitlement for Reception into our curriculum ...

- Children begin to explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and visiting places of worship
- Children listen to and talk about stories
- Specialist words are introduced and senses are used to explore religious beliefs and practices and forms of expression
- Reflection upon feelings and experiences
- Using imagination and curiosity to develop a sense of awe and wonder of the world in which they live.

5. Organisation of RE at Hope Community School

Discrete subject and in addition cross cultural approach where appropriate

At KS 1 pupils study Christianity for 1 hour a week

At KS 2 pupils study Christianity for 1 hour 15 minutes a week

6. Assessment and Recording of RE

RE is assessed through the appropriate areas of development in the Early Years Foundation Stage. In KS1, RE is assessed at the end of each theme and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that each pupil is set work that is appropriately challenging.

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils using the '1' statements. At the end of the year, the class teacher on a separate pro forma will record achievement by each pupil. This will be used by the co-ordinator to track pupil progress through the school.

7. Arrangements for monitoring standards of teaching and learning in RE

The co-ordinator will monitor RE within the school through analysis of this assessment data and scrutiny of work, learning walks and lesson observations.

The co-ordinator is responsible for contributing to Hope Community School self evaluation process.

8. Responsibilities for RE within the school

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the School Council and Principal should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for families on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress.

9. The right of withdrawal from RE

At Hope Community School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Principal to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Hope Community School.

10. Complaints Procedure

If anyone in the school community feels this policy is not being followed then they should raise the matter first with the Principal and, if concern persists, with the Chair of the School Council who will facilitate the appropriate action; this may include an investigation. If there is a formal complaint then the school's complaints procedure will be followed.

Copies of this policy will be available from the school office and on the school website. This policy has been agreed by the Governing Body.