



Religious Education Policy



Approved by Governing Body on: 12/12/24

Signed Chair of Governors:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'H. P. Hopewell'.

Head Teacher: Elizabeth Hopewell

Date of Review: December 2027

Vision Statement

We aim to create a safe, happy and nurturing environment for all our children!

Mission Statement

The Orchard School strives to provide the best quality teaching and learning with an inclusive and personalised curriculum, where all achievements are celebrated!

Introduction

Religious Education is for all pupils. RE is a statutory part a broad and balanced curriculum in all maintained schools. It is taught according to a locally agreed syllabus in England and Wales, according to the Religious and Moral Education Guidelines (1992) in Scotland, and according to the Revised Core Syllabus in Northern Ireland.

In special schools the legal requirement to provide Religious Education is varied by section 71(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998: **special schools should provide RE 'so far as is practicable'**, with all children taking part unless withdrawn by their parents. Parents do have the right to withdraw their child from the daily act of collective worship and from Religious Education if they wish.

The RE curriculum reflects the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

The principal aim of religious education in Sandwell, guided by Sandwell SACRE (agreed syllabus), is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living. At Orchard, our aim is to provide a foundation of knowledge and experience to develop awareness, curiosity and enjoyment of religious experience of people within our school community.

Intent

Religious Education at the Orchard aims to recognise and celebrate the cultural diversity of our school, wider community and country by learning about and celebrating the religious beliefs of our pupils and their families.

A key aspect of learning about other religions is the element of awe and wonder, filled with a richness of music and sounds, colourful food and clothing, artefacts, people and stories. All of these provide experiences outside of the individual pupil's immediate world and personal experience of religion. Equally it offers an opportunity to develop, celebrate and share each pupil's own experiences of religion. RE can offer times of peace, reflection and calm.

Sandwell SACRE has provided an agreed RE syllabus for Sandwell schools. It offers a wealth of information and ideas which the Orchard School has drawn upon to create appropriate RE provision for our pupils. At The Orchard, RE falls within 'Understanding the World' providing teaching and learning to support children to make sense of their physical world and their community through opportunities to explore, observe and find out about people, places, technology and the environment.

Across the year, pupils will explore religions that reflect the Sandwell/Orchard population. Each half term has a spotlight on one religion, focusing on one of three focus areas of learning, see charts below. Key religious events are marked across the year through department and whole school / family events, promoting and celebrating the diversity of the school community.

RE makes up a key part of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) learning at The Orchard School.

Spiritual- Being reflective about their own religious experiences, feelings and values. Enjoying learning about themselves and others and the world around them through religious education.

Moral – recognising the difference between right and wrong, kind acts and cruel behaviour, through religious stories.

Social – develop social skills in different contexts and with different people. Understanding the need to follow social rules and respect and enjoy learning about other people's beliefs.

Cultural – develop some awareness and understanding of their own cultural heritage and religion and that of others. By participating in different artistic, musical and cultural activities.

Key elements

- Each half term, the school explores on one key religion (see chart below). Each term has one or two festivals that school will celebrate.
- Each department has a different focus to guide the content of teaching and learning for that half term period.
- The focus area changes each half term so that learning experiences are varied for class groups across the year.
- Teaching and learning links to the religious event /festival (if there is one that half term) that will be marked/ celebrated in that half term. Varying the focus should ensure that the experiences for that event will vary for the same class group, year on year.
- All classes are encouraged to visit at least one place of worship in the school year, where possible.
- Alternatively, it is encouraged to invite family members of religious leaders from the community to take part, possibly lead, events in school where possible.

FOCUS 1: SPECIAL WORDS, COLOURS, SOUNDS AND PATTERNS	FOCUS 2: SPECIAL PEOPLE, STORIES AND PLACES	FOCUS 3: SPECIAL THINGS- (symbolic items to have, to use, to wear, to eat)
---	--	---

AUTUMN 1	AUTUMN 2	SPRING 1	SPRING 2	SUMMER 1	SUMMER 2
HINDUISM	CHRISTIANITY	SIKHISM	CHRISTIANITY	ISLAM	CHRISTIANITY
Festival: Diwali (Hindu/Sikh) Variable date Oct -Nov	Festival: Christmas	(World Religions Day)	Festival: Easter	Festival: Ramadan Eid Al-Fitr	
Lower Focus 1	Lower Focus 2	Lower focus 3	Lower Focus 1	Lower Focus 2	Lower Focus 3
Middle Focus 2	Middle Focus 3	Middle Focus 1	Middle Focus 2	Middle Focus 3	Middle focus 1
Upper Focus 3	Upper Focus 1	Upper focus 2	Upper Focus 3	Upper focus 1	Upper Focus 2

Implementation – planning

At the Orchard, teachers take into account the needs of their pupils when planning the RE curriculum; adapt the RE curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils, selecting aspects that connect with the lives and experiences of learners appropriate to their abilities and understanding, ensuring multi-sensory learning strategies are implemented rather than discussion or written tasks.

Religious Education is a component of ‘Understanding the World’ and the milestone statements for each development STEP for the curriculum identifies the level of understanding for each pupil within this area of learning. This guides teachers to best plan for RE. (see Orchard Curriculum Policy for more detail of our developmental curriculum).

The content and style of delivery will differ depending on the make-up of the class group and the specific focus for the half term. Teachers and class teams will match appropriate content and experiences for the pupils in class. Teachers will take aspects which are meaningful and appropriate to match each pupil's level of understanding. Lessons will build up to the celebration of a religious event that falls in that half-term.

RE is planned and taught weekly in every class, linked to a particular religion and focus guided by our Long Term plan. The duration of the lesson and its content depend on the levels and needs of the class. Teachers can also teach RE through other subjects leading up to the celebration event e.g Making crafts/ food for Christmas, Diwali, Eid. Teachers would decide which method is most appropriate for the class group. However, it is an expectation that every class has provision for the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

Visits to local places of worship are a rich experience and should be planned for wherever possible to complement the pupils' learning. There may also be special assemblies linked to religious celebrations and school will invite religious representatives from our community to come into school to support with events. For some of these families would be invited to attend and take part. School has a wide variety of religious artefacts, books, clothing etc to support learning.

Impact – assessing learning

The milestone points for cognition and learning will give an indication of the current level of understanding for each pupil within RE (as a part of Understanding the World). There is no formal assessment for RE but there are cross curricular links where RE lessons provide opportunity to enrich learning in other curriculum areas. Teachers will make use of assessment of other curriculum areas to support identifying a child's level of understanding.

As the pupils engage in the lessons, teachers would be assessing their understanding and adapt new learning in the light of this. Key moments of learning for RE are reflected on Evidence for Learning for each child within Understanding the World.

Daily Act of Worship

Under the Education Act 1996, all maintained schools, except maintained special schools, must provide daily collective worship for all registered pupils. Daily collective worship is not required in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS).

Maintained special schools are regulated under separate legislation, the Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994. Collective worship in special schools is regulated under the Education (Special Schools) Regulations 1994. Regulation 10 says:

Collective worship and Religious education

Section 10. *Arrangements shall be made to secure that, so far as practicable, every pupil attending the school will attend daily collective worship and receive religious education, or will be withdrawn from attendance at such worship or from receiving such education, in accordance with the wishes of his parent.*

At Orchard, we encourage all classes to create opportunities for pupils to experience a daily act of worship every day, as part of the school day. This will look very different in each class and might be a short time of quiet reflection, singing, listening to music, sharing a candle and thinking about people we love and who care for us. It will look very different for each class group but is always created in a way that is appropriate and meaningful for the pupils taking part.

Assemblies

Assemblies take place across the year for a variety of religious and celebratory occasions. These are important occasions for classes and departments to come together to sing and celebrate. Some of the assemblies' welcome parents and families, where appropriate such as our Achievement assemblies for each phase at the end of the school year.

We have now developed Sensory assemblies where classes get together based on their need for key events in the year such as our Harvest assembly and Nativity Sensation assembly; this enables pupils to play an active role in the assemblies. In these assemblies, children explore sensory materials linked to the key themes of the assembly and the choir perform songs linked to the celebration.

In addition to whole school-based assemblies, classes also have their own assemblies in class to celebrate individual achievements with our Pupil of the Week award.

For some pupils, assemblies offer opportunities to develop their personal and social skills by helping to plan, deliver and be a part of a routine event with other pupils from across school. However, it is recognised that, for some pupils, attending assemblies can be a very difficult and challenging experience and for these pupils the question of the value of the experience is always the leading factor for taking part. For some pupils, maintaining a short routine assembly in class is much more relevant.

Parents have the right to withdraw their child from the daily act of collective worship and from Religious Education if they wish.

Monitoring and coverage of RE

The curriculum leader monitors the planning and delivery of RE through the year. Coverage on Evidence for Learning is monitored.

Key events are planned across the year (e.g. Harvest and events to link to topics), and class assemblies take place on a weekly basis.

Resources are maintained for half termly topics by the RE curriculum team, (part of the Understanding the World team).

In addition to the agreed topic layout, classes are encouraged to mark events that occur through the year, such as a wedding, baby blessing. Times of bereavement, whilst challenging, can also be supported through RE where appropriate.

Reviewed December 2024 Charlotte Hughes