



*At Ashfield Valley we care for and value every child in a nurturing, inclusive environment.*

*All members of our school community will work hard to ensure that every pupil achieves their full potential and has the opportunity to shine.*

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# Religious Education Policy

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Reviewed: June 2024

Date of next review: June 2025

## **Rationale**

This policy details the provision we make for the learning and teaching of Religious Education at our school and in particular:

- The significance of Religious Education for the school in developing our pupils' empathy, enquiry and understanding of religious beliefs and practices.
- The importance of Religious Education in providing opportunities to celebrate and foster awareness of differences between our school, community and the wider world.
- To emphasise that high quality teaching and learning of Religious Education is the responsibility of all staff.
- The organisation of the Religious Education curriculum, including progression of skills and knowledge, outcomes and assessment.
- The position of Religious Education as a subject that celebrates diversity, challenges stereotypes and helps develop cohesive communities.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of this policy is to:

- Make clear the aims of our Religious Education curriculum and the core knowledge and skills that need to be taught in each age phase.
- Make explicit that teaching of RE should promote vigorous, thoughtful responses from pupils in a safe environment.
- Ensure that learning processes be employed by teachers in order for pupils to make progress at a good pace and achieve the highest standards of which they are capable.
- Make explicit our expectations in terms of subject outcomes and performance for pupils in RE as they progress through the school.
- Outline the approach to learning and teaching of Religious Education that our school has adopted;
- Highlight the importance of active enquiry during RE lessons to promote curiosity.

## **The value of Religious Education within our curriculum**

*We believe that studying religious and non-religious worldviews is essential if pupils are to be well prepared for life in our increasingly diverse society. Pupils need to acquire the necessary knowledge and skills to make sense of the complex world in which they live so that they can 'respect religious and cultural differences and contribute to a cohesive and compassionate society' (RE Review 2013).*

All staff at Ashfield Valley understand that high quality teaching of Religious Education is fundamental to the development of pupil's knowledge of the beliefs and practices of different religions and worldviews. We believe Religious Education gives pupils valuable insights into the diverse beliefs and opinions held by people today. It helps with their own personal development and supports an understanding of spiritual, moral, social and cultural

questions. Religious Education is important when encouraging pupils to value themselves and the communities within which they live. Religious Education lessons offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate. They allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global.

### **Intent –**

At Ashfield Valley, we recognise the religious and non-religious backgrounds of our pupils and adapt our curriculum in response to the context, strengths and needs of our school. We aim to provide knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews; enabling our pupils to develop their ideas, values and identities and make sense of the world around them. The skills and attitudes developed through RE relate to the promotion of British values and the improvement of community cohesion. We support children with their learning of world faiths and their understanding and awareness of the beliefs, values and traditions of others. We encourage children to ask questions about the world and to reflect on their own views, values and experiences. Our curriculum aims to support pupil's personal search for meaning as they explore what it means to be human.

### **Implementation –**

At Ashfield Valley, Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Rochdale Agreed Syllabus 'SACRE'. Our curriculum is ambitious and enables all pupils to achieve well by the end of each Key Stage. The curriculum is taught from Y1 to Y6 and reflects the religious diversity of Rochdale and Britain. In Early Years, R.E. is taught as part of the 'Understanding of The World' and 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development' strands. The curriculum is progressive and suitably ambitious. We enrich the curriculum by organising visits to places of worship in the immediate vicinity of the school. Faith leaders and other members of the community are also invited into school to contribute to learning in the classroom as an additional valued resource.

We organise our RE curriculum with an over-arching enquiry question for each topic. This provides a focus for the half term and a guide and foundation for all learning. From this we organise the development of skills in a progressive curriculum map.

### **EYFS-**

Religious Education in Early years is taught discreetly and is also embedded in everyday activities and discussions. Key worker sessions are often used to facilitate conversations about the world around us in a familiar and safe environment. We support children in finding out about their own families and the community they live in. We help them learn about the similarities and differences between their lives and of people in other countries. Children are introduced to religions through stories; both fiction and non-fiction, which act as a stimulus for them to reflect on their own feelings and experiences as well as providing new learning. In EYFS we learn about places, people and times that are special, focusing on festivals and celebrations through the learning of Christianity and Islam. Children in EYFS are naturally curious, imaginative and full of wonder; Religious Education helps develop their appreciation and understanding of the world in which they live.

### **KS1**

In Key Stage One children further develop their understanding of Christianity, Islam and also Judaism. Previous knowledge is built on and children are introduced to new learning for each religion, as well as beginning to explore and use subject specific vocabulary. Through group and class discussion children share their own experiences and are encouraged to ask questions about life and the world. We use discussion, art, craft, drama, music, artefacts, pictures, stories and times of reflection to move forward children's learning.

## **KS2**

Within Key Stage Two, pupils have the opportunity to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding through deeper enquiry into known religions. They explore moral values, identity and belonging; discussing in more depth their own beliefs and experiences in order to begin to hold balanced and well-informed conversations. Children are encouraged to debate and communicate about world views and philosophical ideas. They are introduced to a wider range of sources and subject specific vocabulary that they can use in context. 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. Pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express insights in response and to agree or disagree respectfully.

By the end of Key Stage Two, pupils will have discovered more about Islam, Christianity and Judaism, and also been introduced to Sikhism and Hinduism. They will also understand that some people believe and find answers in science and non-religious world views.

## **SMSC-**

There is a clear and intended connection between RE and pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Our balanced and broadly-based curriculum promotes the SMSC development of pupils in order to prepare them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils runs through the entire RE curriculum. Ashfield Valley's Religious Education curriculum provides a particular insight into spiritual and moral education within the curriculum and makes a distinctive contribution to the understanding of society and cultural diversity through developing understanding of religions.

## **Inclusion, equality of opportunity and differentiation**

Religious Education forms an integral and statutory element of a pupil's entitlement to learning and at Ashfield Valley we ensure that all pupils can engage with the learning of RE. Mutual respect and the fostering of empathy and community understanding at local, regional, national and global scales lies at the heart of the study of RE and at our school we model this in terms of the inclusive nature of the learning and teaching we provide. We ensure that examples of religious figures reflect all aspects of diversity within society. 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.

Ensuring differentiation is a fundamental and core element of inclusion. As such we plan and resource our learning, in line with our whole school policies, to enable all pupils to make good and sustained progress in Religious Education, including children with special educational needs or disabilities, those identified as greater depth and those with English as an additional language. In our differentiation planning we take due regard of factors such as classroom organisation, learning materials and the learning environment.

### **Connecting Religious Education to other areas of the Curriculum**

Although Religious Education is taught as a separate subject discipline, opportunities arise in lessons for children to apply skills from other subject areas. For example, in English and RHE. This ensures that the curriculum is taught in a creative and engaging manner as well as being knowledge rich and ambitious. Clear links are made to Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural Development (SMSC) where incorporating content and perspectives adds value to and extends the understanding of our pupils. Making such links is important because it highlights to pupils the interconnectedness and interdependence of the real world. Strong connections are made however we maintain discreet teaching and appropriate expectations in Religious Education for each stage of learning.

### **Impact-Expectations of outcomes**

At Ashfield Valley, we understand that pupils need to be exposed to a progressive curriculum that is challenging in a more rigorous manner as they progress through the school. To enable this to happen we have established a curriculum which recognises the crucial importance of identifying not just what we want our pupils to know and do in Religious Education lessons but also the intellectual outcomes we intend them to achieve through their learning. As pupils' progress, this involves developing Religious perspective through:

- Wider, more detailed and secure knowledge.
- More focused and precise methods of enquiry and communication of understanding.
- A deeper understanding of more complex issues and concepts.
- Pursuing valid questions, thoughts and responses.

### **Assessment and reporting-**

We set clear objectives for the pupils in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills acquisition. We ensure that when assessing our pupils, evidence is drawn from a wide range of sources to inform the process including interaction with pupils during discussions and related questioning, day to day observations, practical activities and the gathering, presentation and communication of information. The outcomes of each enquiry serve to inform the teacher's developing picture of the knowledge and understanding of each pupil and to plan future learning accordingly. We do not make summative judgements about individual pieces of pupil work, but rather use the outcomes to build an emerging picture of what the pupil knows, understands and can do.

A summative assessment about the pupil's knowledge and understanding of RE is carried out

at the end of each topic. These assessments are used to inform teachers whether pupils are working below, at or above the age-related expectations for their year group. Each assessment is shared with the Headteacher and the RE Subject Leader and an overall judgement is shared with parents in the form of an end of year report.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation and the role of the subject leader-**

Self-evaluation procedures are used to monitor and evaluate pupil achievement, the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of curriculum provision in Religious Education. The subject leader will maintain a clear overview of the intent, implementation and impact of Religious Education through planned monitoring tasks included with the school's overall monitoring schedule. This might involve reporting to SLT and Governors to support their evaluation and contributing to the school's 'self-evaluation' in preparation for the next Ofsted inspection.

All teachers at our school are responsible for monitoring standards in Religious Education but the RE subject leader, under the direction of the Headteacher, takes a lead in this. Monitoring activities are planned across the year and form part of the Religious Education leader's leadership schedule. In summary, these include:

- Analysing samples of pupils' RE work to moderate standards (attainment and progress against outcomes and end of stage performance descriptors) to ensure consistency
- The moderation of teachers' planning once per term to monitor coverage and delivery of planned objectives.
- Lesson observations and Learning walks to ensure that learning and teaching is appropriately engaging and challenging and that the anticipated subject progress is being made by the pupils.
- The sampling of pupils' work twice per year to ensure that expectations in terms of subject outcomes are being maintained through the curriculum.
- Speaking to pupils about their RE lessons and what they know and remember about the subject;
- In collaboration with the Headteacher, Governors and teaching colleagues the subject leader drafts and finalises an RE Action Plan which is informed by the School Development Plan.

The Religious Education leader has the responsibility to take a lead in developing RE further across the school within the school's development plan; monitoring the effectiveness of teaching and learning; and the use of resources. Teachers and educational support staff can expect support from the RE leader arising from targets identified in the school improvement plan.

To develop staff confidence and competence in teaching Religious Education the leader will:

- Attend subject professional development opportunities as they arise and in the context of the priorities of the whole School Development Plan together with the Religious Education Action Plan.
- Identify and source staff training needs arising.

- Arrange for relevant advice and information from professional development programmes, including courses, to be disseminated.
- Where necessary lead (or arrange) school-based professional development meetings for colleagues.