

Religious Education – Mrs G. Powton

“Now is the time to understand more, so that we may fear less.”

Humanism, Marie Curie

At Newton Hall Infants' School our Religious Education Curriculum is taught in line with the *Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Durham* (Revised 2020).

What are the aims of Religious Education?

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education aims to ensure that pupils:

- develop deepening **knowledge and understanding** about a range of religious and non-religious worldviews so that they can:
 - describe and explain beliefs and theological concepts
 - describe and explain some sources of authority and teachings within and across religious and non-religious traditions
 - describe and explain ways in which beliefs are expressed
 - know and understand the significance and impact of beliefs and practices on individuals, communities and societies
 - connect these together into a coherent framework of belief and practices

- gain and deploy deepening understanding of specialist vocabulary and terms
- know and understand about religious diversity within the local community (in KS1)
- know and understand how religion can be defined and what is meant by “religious and non-religious worldviews” and with increasing clarity know that these worldviews are complex, diverse and plural
- gain and deploy skills that enable **critical thinking** and enquiry in relation to the material they study
- reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, experiences, ideas, values and beliefs with increasing discernment

How is the content chosen?

The content of RE lessons is designed to be coherent and progressive, enabling our pupils to deepen their **knowledge and understanding** of religious and non-religious worldviews and their understanding of the complex, diverse and plural nature of belief systems.

It is a requirement of the *Agreed Syllabus* that pupils study Christianity at each of the Key Stages (KS1 to KS4) and at least one of the other five principle religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism).

By the end of Key Stage One, pupils will have explored key themes related to:

- Christianity – introduction to beliefs and practices and their impact.
- Buddhism – introduction to some beliefs and practices and their impact.
- Religious Diversity – introduction to the diverse religious and non-religious landscape in the local area (including differing denominations).

How do we ensure progression of knowledge and skills?

We have communicated and worked collaboratively with outside subject specialists to ensure that we offer excellent progression throughout our school. As a result, our long term, medium term and short term planning is sequenced to ensure appropriate content for specific year groups. This allows for a breadth of coverage without repeating but building upon knowledge related to specific religions. We take a whole school approach to the teaching of Christmas and Easter so that these topics are taught at the same time and build on learning in the previous year. Within the *Agreed Syllabus* there are opportunities for differentiation, in order to meet the needs of all our children and personal cohort to our school.

How is the subject taught?

At Newton Hall Infants' we teach RE in KS1 through weekly lessons that allow for pupils to explore particular themes through an enquiry-based approach. This approach enables pupils to build on previous learning and deepen their understanding.

Lessons allow for pupils to build religious literacy by:

- developing knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews
- becoming increasingly able to respond to religious and non-religious worldviews in an informed and insightful way (critical thinking)
- reflecting on their own ideas and the ideas of others (personal reflection)

How is RE taught in Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)?

During the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), Religious Education may be taught as part of whole class topics or themes. The themes taken from the *Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Durham* are 'Special' and 'Belonging'. Children are encouraged to explore these themes through topics such as special times, special objects, special people, special books,

and how we show belonging. At this stage, we draw on Christianity as well as aspects of the other principle religions as appropriate. We recognise that all children are unique, welcoming and celebrating differences within our school community. Therefore, our curriculum is child centred following the interests and fascinations of the current year group. This is especially important in Religious Education as we aim to nurture our pupils' enquiring minds while modelling and encouraging empathy for others.

How do we know that our children are making progress?

Ongoing assessments of the children's knowledge and understanding and **critical thinking** skills are observed weekly by the class teacher. **Personal reflection** is not assessed. Teachers ensure that children are aware of learning objectives and that assessment criteria are shared clearly with pupils before any formal assessment. Misconceptions are addressed and next steps carefully planned. Children's outcomes are compared to the Benchmark Expectations in the *Agreed Syllabus* or EYFS Framework. Senior leaders and subject leaders gather an overview of children's learning and outcomes through monitoring activities. Regular assessments are collated for children in EYFS and Key Stage 1 which are used to plan appropriate next steps for their future learning, as well as provide an overview of learning within Religious Education across the whole school. Progress is monitored closely by subject leaders and senior management.

In Religious Education it is important that pupils:

- make progress in knowing about and evaluating the beliefs and practices of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews
- know and understand the progress they are making in Religious Education
- know and understand what they need to do to make further progress
- are challenged by the enquiries, activities and tasks in which they are engaged
- achieve standards which match their expected capabilities (attainment and achievement).

Impact of our RE teaching

At Newton Hall Infants' School, we value the impact of Religious Education on children as they grow up in an increasingly globalised world. Our pupils are encouraged to wonder, enquire and discuss and in doing so they contribute constructively to their own learning about religious topics. We recognise that Religious Education is central to good local, national and global citizenship. As such, it makes a significant contribution to the active promotion of mutual respect and tolerance of others' faiths and beliefs, a fundamental British value.