

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Policy Statement

At our school, the daily act of collective worship is viewed as an integral and important part of school life. Through this and in the general daily environment of the school life we aim to promote our vision and ethos.

To produce children with confidence, skills and knowledge to be prepared for life in 21st Century Britain. To be proud of their Muslim identity and to use all these values to contribute positively to society as equal British Citizens.

To integrate a caring and nurturing environment through positive Islamic foundations and teaching, where children will learn to be strong academically and spiritually and contribute to society as good well-rounded individuals with excellent manners and respect for all.

Collective worship is a time where we come together to share our love of Allah and celebrate our achievements together. The worship of the school is based on promoting the Islamic values which permeate the ethos of the school. As such, the contributions of staff, pupils, local religious leaders and other visitors are valued highly.

Through Islamic values, although difficult to define, we identify the values of love, forgiveness, fairness, respect and tolerance of others, integrity, compassion, honesty and self-worth. These values are embodied in the Quran and the Sunnah. We also actively seek to encourage the attitudes of awe, wonder and reflection.

Collective worship aids our aims to promote the development of each child's intellectual, emotional, physical and social wellbeing in order to achieve their full potential in all areas of life. For them to feel a part of a society and community and also to see their place as a citizen in Great Britain.

We acknowledge the legal requirement stated in the 1988 Education Reform Act 6 (1) and 9 (3), which states the need for each child to attend a daily act of worship either as a whole school, class or group. Parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from the act of worship either partially or wholly. Any parents wishing to do so should contact the Head Teacher. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from leading and taking part in worship.

The responsibility for the organisation of worship lies with the Head Teacher and the delegation and overseeing of all aspects lies with him/her.

The acts of worship must be appropriate for the pupils, in that they should take account of the pupil's ages, aptitudes and family backgrounds.

Principles

The nature of collective worship

Inclusive

It should be an activity to which all can contribute and from which all can gain, no matter what their personal commitments or life-stance. It should acknowledge diversity and respect the integrity of all participants. It should involve children and adults as active participants and foster a sense of community through an expression of shared values, identity, perception, outlook and purpose.

Educational

It should provide quality learning experiences related to children's own lives. Acts of worship should be properly prepared, executed, evaluated and recorded. They can be a focus of work going on in the school and a celebration of educational achievement. They must always be in line with the curriculum aims of the school.

Spiritual

It should provide a breathing space in the busy whirl of school activity; a time to gather, to be still and to reflect in an atmosphere of peace and fellowship. It should be regarded by all participants as a special time with an effort made to create a special atmosphere. Purposeful silence can be a time to 'feed the spirit' with opportunity for individual reflection and response.

Aims

Our aim is to provide collective worship which makes a positive contribution to life of the school within the framework of legal requirements. We do this by planning acts of collective worship which:

1. Develop a sense of community within the school and of being part of a wider community.
2. Make explicit and celebrate the shared values implicit in the school's ethos and learning environment.
3. Allow every individual to feel that he/she is an essential and valued part of school community.
4. Encourage reflection on the experience of life and so make a definite contribution to the spiritual development of the individual and of the school as a whole.
5. Provide opportunities for children and adults to share what is meaningful and significant to them.
6. Celebrate difference and diversity and encourage respect of others.
7. Increase sensitivity to religious beliefs and opportunities for the children to explore their own beliefs.
8. Introduce children to aspects of religious worship.
9. Encourage participation and response.

Nature

All children take part in a daily act of collective worship in school mostly as a whole school assembly but can be either in a class or year group gathering. It is shared experience with adults and children playing an active role. It can be led by teachers, guest speakers or the children. We will use the opportunity to discuss and reflect on many moral issues and themes and also to promote diversity and tolerance. We give the opportunity for question and discussion. This can continue in individual classrooms even after collective worship time is completed.

Children are grouped together to take part in daily prayers when falling within school hours, this gives further opportunity for quiet time and reflection within a busy school day.

Other Faiths

Although our worship reflects our Islamic beliefs and values, we are committed to respecting other's faith stance and culture, showing tolerance and understanding regardless of pupils', teachers', or visitors' beliefs.

Parents have a right to withdraw their children from the collective act of worship. Parents wishing to take such an action should discuss the matter with the Head teacher and they will be informed of what alternative arrangements can be made.

In conclusion collective worship makes an important contribution to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of students. It prepares students for the challenges, opportunities and responsibilities of adult life in a multi-faith society.

Religious Education

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At our school we aim to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, through studying the Islamic faith, as is the ethos of our school, but also enabling children to develop a sound knowledge of other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- Develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Islam and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- Be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- Develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- Develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- Have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

Teaching and learning style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use opportunities of major religious festivals to develop their religious thinking and tolerance. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues often through cross-curricular activities and links with other schools.

Curriculum planning in religious education

We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term.

The class teacher writes the plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson. S/he keeps these individual plans and often discusses them on an informal basis with the SMSCD lead.

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

In Early Years, religious education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five. Additional RE topics covered throughout the year are outlined in the long term plan.

Contribution of religious education to the teaching of other subjects

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a visit to a Sikh temple, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the expectations of the unit. We record the attainment grades in our assessment files, which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for setting new goals, and for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in the library and the whole school can obtain access. Teachers can add objects or artefacts to lesson as required to fit with the plan.

Monitoring and review

The head teacher and SMSCD lead will regularly review and assess the religious education in our school and will advise as appropriate.