

PICKERING COMMUNITY INFANT AND NURSERY SCHOOL

RE - Religious Education Policy

Written by the RE Leader, Mrs Sarah Gillam
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Next review Autumn 2022

Signature of Governor

'Religious Education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.' (NYCC agreed RE syllabus, 2019)

Philosophy

We believe that Religious Education (RE) contributes to the personal development of children, inviting them to mature into reflective, sensitive people in a world community enriched by difference and diversity. RE has an important part to play in promoting the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, physical and intellectual development of our children and in helping them to gain a greater understanding of themselves and to be sensitive to the needs, views, beliefs and feelings of others. We feel that RE must be a relevant part of learning for all children, enabling them to relate religious beliefs, values and practices to their own experience. It must also contribute to preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

As a school we:

- respect the faith background of staff and children and encourage our school community to develop the courage to pursue fairness to all.
- support children in understanding the place and significance of different cultures and religions in their own and the wider community.
- provide experiences to develop a continuing exploration of religion, promoting active involvement of the children, where they learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.
- teach children to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and to challenge prejudice.
- encourage children to reflect on their own experiences, to formulate their own ideas, beliefs and values and to develop the ability to use this to make reasoned and informed judgements.
- provide opportunities for children to appreciate, wonder and reflect on the world in which we live by developing imagination, curiosity and learning to question purposefully and sensitively.
- make use of a range of materials, artefacts, visits and visitors both in school and the community.
- support children in understanding the right of people to hold different beliefs within an ethnically and socially diverse society and to respect these.

Participation

All maintained schools have a statutory duty to teach the specific subject of RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum for children from Reception. Some of the ideas in RE such as respect, care and curiosity are threaded throughout the curriculum for all of our children.

Staff have the right to withdraw from teaching RE as outlined in DfE Circular 1/94 paragraphs 44-49. An application to withdraw must be given in writing to the Head Teacher or Chair of Governors. In these cases, the school will make alternative arrangements for that class to be taught RE.

We seek to be an inclusive and broad minded community. However, we respect the right of parents to withdraw their children from Religious Education. Withdrawal from RE will only be made following an opportunity for parental discussion with the Head Teacher and once written confirmation has been received from parents to the Head Teacher. Children withdrawn from RE will be supervised by staff on the school site but no additional teaching will be provided. If parents wish for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parents want the child to receive, these arrangements will be made by the parents. As with all education taking place in the school, the Head Teacher will need oversight of these plans.

The school does not support selective withdrawal from RE. The right of parents to withdraw their child from RE lessons does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by children or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

Teaching RE

We teach RE through the programmes of study for Foundation Stage and Key Stage One outlined in the North Yorkshire syllabus for RE (2019-2024). RE is taught, alongside Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) in Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) and Personal, Social, Health, and Citizenship Education (PSHCE) in Key Stage One. The legal requirements for teaching RE are set out in the Education Act 1996 and School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Act states that the agreed syllabus must reflect that Christianity is the main religious tradition, while taking into account teaching and practices of other principal religions in Great Britain. From Foundation Stage, this begins through developing a growing sense of the child's awareness of self, own community and their place within this. The RE curriculum continues to build on this and will include learning from Christians and Muslims.

Staff must be sensitive about the language that they use in order to avoid displaying a particular viewpoint on religion, for example saying 'Some Christians go to church on Sundays' rather than, 'I go to church on Sundays'. If children are inquisitive of an adult's faith and ask direct questions relating to this then adults are to reply honestly whilst explaining that people have the right to decide for themselves their religious beliefs.