

## Religious Education Policy

1. **Status of Religious Education:** Religious Education has equal status with the National Curriculum and is to be provided for all pupils throughout their school career. The 1988 Education Reform Act established that the RE curriculum should be determined locally by the Local Education Authority (LEA) endorsed by a Standing Advisory Council on RE (SACRE).

2. **Agreed Syllabus:** All religious education taught at Medina House School will be in accordance with the Medina House School RE scheme of work and the Equals RE scheme of work

3. **School Population:** Medina House School caters for the education of pupils aged 2 - 11 years. Most parents have declared a Christian affiliation on school registration forms.

4. **Special Considerations:**

4.1. All pupils in school (5 - 11) have a Statement of Special Educational Needs which show severe and/or complex learning difficulties.

4.2. All pupils in the Nursery (2 - 4+) have a range of special educational needs.

4.3. Every class has pupils with an extremely wide range of special educational needs, therefore differentiating activities related to the RE focus is of vital importance.

4.4. The very nature of Medina House being a primary school for children with severe and complex needs means that planning the content, progression and for individual stages of development, with age appropriate activities, is of special importance.

4.5. Our pupils everyday experience of the increasingly pluralistic nature of British Society is restricted. Our pupils commute to Medina House from across the island. The island itself is extremely limited in faith communities and places of worship other than Christianity.

5. **Context of R.E.:** It is generally understood that RE sets out to teach pupils about the world around them, giving them a sense of their own identity and of relationships with other individuals and groups. It should also help pupils to convey their feelings and thoughts, to experience and develop a deeper awareness of the spiritual dimensions of life and eventually to approach questions of ultimate value. In other words, Religious Education is seen as an ongoing process, the underlying goal being educational. Although the viewpoint of the individual is respected, what is taught does not seek to commend a particular faith or viewpoint.

6. **Parents Right of Withdrawal from R.E.:** Parents may ask that their child be withdrawn from attending RE and we will ensure that the pupil is well supervised under these circumstances. Before withdrawal occurs every effort will be made to ensure parents clearly understand the content of our RE programme. Parents are informed of their rights in the school prospectus.

7. **Aims:**

- to awaken a desire to communicate and participate by reflecting and responding
- to appreciate what it is to be valued and respected as a person
- to give the opportunity to celebrate all that is best within pupils' experience and to express joy at their own achievements and those of other people
- to help pupils find an 'inner strength' that will sustain through fear, sorrow, disappointment and frustration
- to raise questions about the meaning and purpose of life
- to foster respect and positive attitudes towards the religious beliefs and practices of others.
- To ensure that every learner, parent/carer and member of staff can make a positive contribution in an environment in which they are kept and feel safe and valued through the promotion of health, achievement, enjoyment and spiritual and emotional well being.

- to develop caring attitudes towards all living things and the environment

**8. Planning for R.E.:** Teaching RE, like any subject, must be related to the ability of the pupils and their appropriate stage of development. We also recognise that there are wide variations of ability between children of the same age and that it is not possible to relate age to learning development. Priority must be given to ensure that the RE curriculum is practical, meaningful, age appropriate and realistic.

Our approach to teaching and learning methods is one of flexibility and adaptability in order to meet individual and group needs. We aim to differentiate the content, delivery and materials to meet those individual needs where ever possible.

### 9. Stages of Development

Pupils will begin RE by exploring their experiences of themselves as individuals, of the world around them and of relationships with others. They should be encouraged to reflect on their own feelings of pleasure, pain, awe, wonder, mystery, beauty and express their own feelings through speaking, signs, symbols, writing, I.T., movement, music, art and drama. This reflection provides opportunity for stimulating their imaginations and for forming their earliest world view.

Pupils should be given the opportunity to develop curiosity about their own feelings and about people, objects, places and events around them. They will be encouraged to ask questions, some simple, some profound, and will be encouraged to continue to ask questions rather than arrive at conclusions.

#### **P Levels One to Three:**

Initial exploration will be through the senses - seeing, hearing, touching, tasting, smelling and a greater awareness of feelings about what is precious. Their experience will enable them to become aware that certain people, objects, places, clothing, foods and occasions have special importance.

Gradually pupils will begin to recognise and explore the similarities and differences between themselves and others. Pupils should be encouraged to accept and value themselves and to celebrate a common bond between all people.

The pupils' personal experience of religious groups and activities will vary greatly: Some children will have none. However, they should be encouraged to explore and share such experience as they have.

At this stage, a systematic study of religions is not appropriate - some aspects will be dealt with as experiences arise naturally in the pupils' lives, others should be skilfully introduced by the teacher. Planning, at this stage, is for experiences and enrichment from religion which will help to form their present view of the world and to provide a foundation for future exploration. Through simple stories, pictures, puppets and drama, children will 'meet' people of other communities, and begin to understand 'living,' religions e.g. what it means to be a Christian.

**P Levels Four to Eight and above i.e. National Curriculum:** Pupils are no longer dependent on their sense perceptions and are able to view other people in a more objective and detached way, The emphasis will be on gathering information, especially in relation to those topics which help them to broaden their knowledge of practices associated with religion. They will give close attention to the way in which religions use symbols and dramatic rituals, music and art, to convey important ideas. They will begin to observe relationships between religious activities and to organise and categorise information they gather. For example pupils will:

- begin to associate places of worship with customs and ceremonies marking important moments in people's lives and in the seasons of the year.
- be able to express their own feelings, reactions and responses in creative ways
- be able to participate in short periods of silence/stillness
  
- be able to recognise examples of symbolic actions, gestures, dress and artefacts
- be aware that there are many questions about life that are very puzzling
- be familiar with some examples of religious activity in a family context
- begin to be aware that human beings are dependent on the earth's resources and how people express gratitude for the products of the earth.
- be familiar with some of the stories associated with a small variety of key religious figures.
- be familiar with the stories associated with different festivals.

At these levels pupils will become familiar with some of the rules which are used in religion to guide behaviour. Pupils will be encouraged to relate those rules to our school code of moral behaviour and given the opportunities to question, wherever possible, and discuss them with their peers.

This is an appropriate stage for pupils to begin to build up a framework of understanding of particular religions, viewing them as a whole, and being able to relate behaviour, experience and belief to each other. They will begin to understand, for example, how a variety of different rituals all point towards a central core of beliefs and values and how these in turn shape and inform basic attitudes to life.

#### 10. Programme of Study

There are three areas to the Programme of Study which are inter-linked and should not be used in isolation: all three areas are introduced within each unit of work.

##### Area 1 - Learning about religion

- a) Investigations of a religious approach to life.
- b) Exploring religious practices and lifestyles.
- c) Gaining knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and teachings.
- d) Experience the basis of different ways of expressing meaning.
- e) Begin to develop the ability to judge and discern what is genuine and life enhancing in the spiritual and religious dimension.

##### Area 2 - Learning from Religion

- a) Personal responses to religion resulting from learning about religion.
- b) Begin to reflect upon religious ideas, views and perceptions and how to relate these to personal understanding and life experience.
- c) Begin to develop the skills to ask and respond to questions of;
  - identity
  - purpose
  - meaning
  - values
  - commitment

##### Area 3 - Underlying Concepts

- ultimate questions, human experience, awe and wonder, commitment, worship, prayer/stillness, scripture, inspiration, belief, lifestyle, deity/God, relationships, responsibility, values, authority, sacred place, revelation, celebration, community.

## 11. Statutory Representation of Religious Traditions

**Younger classes:** Christian - Muslim - Jewish

**Older classes:** Christian - Muslim - Jewish - , Sikh, Hindu traditions

Units of work will be planned either as a major focus within a term, stand alone subject teaching, or as part of a cross-curricular topic. Whichever approach is used, the specific RE content must be clearly defined on the topic cycle, planned via agreed formats and recorded at all stages.

The time allocation for RE teaching per year is 5% of curriculum time; approximately 45 mins a week.

**12. Assessment, Recording and Reporting:** RE will be assessed according to our school policy statement on Assessment, Recording and Reporting and via the P-Levels for R.E. Evidence will be collected through children's own drawings, writings, symbols, verbal and non-verbal responses, art work, drama, music, photographic evidence, video footage where applicable. However, we are not involved in assessing the spirituality of pupils, nor the degree to which pupils are willing to reveal their personal beliefs and standpoints.

Not everything that is taught and learned is going to be assessed. We are looking to draw broad, general conclusions from a range of evidence over a period of time rather than trying to measure pupils' progress against a step-by- step scale.

**13. Monitoring, Evaluation and Development of RE:** The RE curriculum co-ordinator is responsible for ensuring there are appropriate standards of achievement, a range of high quality learning experiences and high quality teaching of RE throughout the school.

This will be achieved through monitoring, reviewing and evaluating schemes and work and lesson planning, sampling pupils' portfolios of work, visiting classes during RE lessons and gaining feedback from pupils, parents and inspection reports.

The RE co-ordinator is also responsible for ensuring there are a range of essential, appropriate resources, both human and material, to support the class teacher in delivering RE. These resources include topic files, artefacts, videos, audio tapes, schemes of work, books both factual and stories.

Although our local places of worship are mainly Christian, there are places of worship from the other traditional faiths within easy access for half day visits.

Reviewed April 2008