

Meir Heath Academy

RE Policy



Approved by: Melanie Southern **Date:** September 2024

Last reviewed on: September 2024 by Imogen Blackhurst

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The vision for Religious Education (RE) in Staffordshire's

Agreed Syllabus 2023 is as follows:

The role of RE in schools is to help prepare and equip all pupils for life and citizenship in today's diverse and plural Britain, through fostering in each pupil an increasing awareness of, and sensitivity within, the diversity of religious and non-religious beliefs, practices, spiritual insights and world views they will encounter. (Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus 2023)

1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Meir Heath Academy, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address fundamental questions concerning, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children to learn from religions as well as about religions.

We live in an increasingly diverse society, religiously and culturally. Religious Education plays a special role in preparing pupils to flourish in this complex world. Educating pupils to live well in a culturally and religiously plural society means that they must learn how to navigate difference and diversity. This will often mean reflecting on views and behaviours that they have previously not encountered, and which may not correspond neatly with their own views and understandings of the world. Religious Education therefore not only enables pupils to build up a core basis of relevant knowledge and insights and supports them as they explore the "big questions" about life and formulate and express their own views and values. It also challenges pupils to recognise and confront negative attitudes towards diversity, both in society at large and within themselves.

- 1.2 Our aims/objectives in the teaching of RE, based on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus 2023, are that all children should acquire:

a) An increasing core of insightful knowledge concerning religious and beliefs, both in Britain and in more global terms; by **exploring** religious beliefs, teachings and practises.

b) A developing capacity to engage with ultimate questions and to formulate their own sense of identity and values; by **engaging** with fundamental questions.

c) A growing range of the social, spiritual and emotional skills and dispositions appropriate to living well in a religiously plural and open society; by **reflecting**.

2 The legal position of religious education

2.1 Our school curriculum for RE meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (2023), and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

Furthermore, the Staffordshire revised Agreed Syllabus (AS) for Religious Education (RE) for has been determined locally through the Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) of the Staffordshire SACRE, supported by Religious Education professionals.

This AS is a statutory syllabus of RE prepared under

- Schedule 31, section 375 of the Education Act 1996
- The Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998
- National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4)

The RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE or used by an academy or free school,

'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'

[Section 375 Education Act 1996]

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities, and experiences of later life.

All state schools ... must teach religious education ... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online'.

[National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4]

In addition, the schools white paper entitled '*Opportunity for All*' (2022) sets out the DfE's long term vision for the school system. RE remains a core part and will continue to form an essential part of a school's curriculum.

3 Teaching and learning style

- 3.1 We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principles that good teaching in RE allows children to explore, engage and reflect. 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.
- 3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Eid, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.
- 3.3 Children carry out research into religious topics. They study religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups.
- 3.4 We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, e.g. by:
 - setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
 - setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
 - grouping the children by ability in the room, and setting different tasks for each ability group;
 - providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child.
- 3.5 All RE work is to be recorded by the children on assignments on Showbie.

4 RE curriculum planning

- 4.1 RE is a subject in the Basic Curriculum. We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (2023) and use the Entrust long and medium term plans which provide content, that meets the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus' aims and requirements. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and
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knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

- 4.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the RE topics studied in each term during each key stage. Where possible we teach RE topics in conjunction with other subjects and make cross-curricular links.
- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term.
- 4.4 The class teacher/subject leader writes the plans (using keynote planning) for uploads these as assignments to Showbie for children to complete on their iPads.

5 The Foundation Stage

- 5.1 We teach RE to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.
- 5.2 In reception classes, RE 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 RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the early learning goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children from birth to five.

6 Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

6.1 English

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in the English/Guided Reading have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is one of RE's way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters/diary entries and record information, in order to develop their writing ability.

6.2 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our RE 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.

6.3 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through RE 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 multi-cultural 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.

7 RE and ICT

- 7.1 ICT enhances RE, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using their individual iPads, Showbie and the Internet. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation.

8 RE and inclusion

- 8.1 At Meir Heath Academy, teachers set high expectations for **all** pupils. Teachers take account of their duties under the equal opportunities legislation that covers race, SEN/ disability, gender, religion or belief and sexual orientation. They plan, using adaptive teaching methods, in order to stretch those pupils who are working significantly above expected standards, and for those pupils who have low levels of prior attainment and or are from disadvantaged backgrounds. Teachers use appropriate assessment, in order to set deliberately ambitious targets. Teachers ensure that there are no barriers to learning and that **all** pupils access the full curriculum.

9 Assessment for learning

- 9.1 Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. Younger children might, for example, act out a famous story from the Bible, whilst older pupils might produce a PowerPoint presentation based on their investigation of sacred texts. Teachers will assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher assesses the work and gives the child written or verbal feedback to help guide progress. Older children are encouraged to make judgements about how they might improve their work in the future.
- 9.2 We follow the assessment policy as set out by the Staffordshire Agreed Syllabus (2023). This sets out the expected level of attainment for pupils in the form of age-related expectations. The framework provides a statement of age-related expectations for each year group and as a school we use this to determine the extent to which pupils have met the expectations. Children are assessed as working at greater depth within the expected standard, working at the expected standard or working towards the expected standard.
- 9.3 As a whole school, every child completes 'Exit Questions' through voice notes and/or writing to summarise what they have learnt in the lesson or to articulate their understanding on the lessons objective.

10 Monitoring and review

- 10.1 The co-ordination and planning of the RE curriculum are the responsibility of the subject leader, who also:
- supports colleagues in their teaching, by keeping informed about current developments in RE and providing a strategic lead and direction for this subject;
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- uses allocated management time to review evidence of the children's work, and to observe RE lessons across the school when necessary.

