



# Benhurst Primary School Policy Statement

*'Only my best is good enough for me'*



<b>Policy</b>	<b>R.E.</b>
<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>May 2015</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>May 2018</b>

## Introduction

According to the Education Act of 2002, every pupil in a maintained school should have a statutory entitlement to religious education. Religious Education should promote tolerance, respect and understanding between those of different faiths; it involves an understanding of explicit beliefs and practices and implicit questions of meaning and value. It should provide pupils with the skills needed both to **learn about religion** and to **learn from religion**, and therefore contributes to the development of the whole person.

## Aims and Objectives

Religious education should enable children to investigate and reflect on some of the fundamental questions asked by people. At Benhurst School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address fundamental questions associated with belief; for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity along with 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 learn **from** religion, as well as **about** religion.

At Benhurst School we aim to help children to:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- gain knowledge and understanding of Christianity 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 make reasoned judgments about religious issues;
- have respect for the views of other people, and celebrate the diversity in society.

## The legal position of Religious Education

Our School Curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). This stipulates that Religious Education is compulsory for all children, including those in the Reception class who are less than five years old. Parents may 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, although only after they have given due notice of their intentions to the school governors.

The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions. The

RE curriculum for State schools is determined by a Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education or SACRE. There is one SACRE for each education authority. This curriculum is compulsory for all state schools in the Local Education Authority (LEA).

The RE curriculum at Benhurst School is based on the London Borough of Havering's Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, and meets the requirements set out in that document in accordance with SACRE. It forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching, and also promotes education for citizenship.

### **Teaching and learning styles**

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that it should allow 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 curriculum.

Children are encouraged to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences of religious festivals such as Easter, Eid, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. 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 various 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 celebration. Children investigate religious and moral issues either individually or in groups, using various resources, including the Internet.

We recognize 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 various ways. For example:

- 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);
- setting different tasks as appropriate for each ability group;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

### **Curriculum planning in Religious Education**

Our Religious Education curriculum is planned in accordance with Havering's Agreed Syllabus (see 2.1). We ensure that the topics studied build upon prior learning. Children of all abilities are given opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge of each unit, and the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Religious Education is planned in three phrases; long-term, medium-term and short-term. The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each key stage. This plan, while based on the Havering Syllabus, is agreed with colleagues in each year group to ensure most effective teaching alongside other aspects of the curriculum - where appropriate, religious education topics are taught in conjunction with other subjects, especially in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. These are kept on the school's computer network, and are available at all times for staff to view. The RE co ordinator reviews these plans on a regular basis, adapting as appropriate. As we have mixed- age classes in Key Stage 2, we carry out medium-term planning on a two-year cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus, but do not have to repeat topics.

Lesson plans are produced by the class teachers following the guidance provided on the Medium Term units, listing the specific learning objectives, activities, and expected outcomes. These plans are retained on the school computer network, and are discussed informally with the RE subject leader as appropriate.

### **The Foundation Stage**

At Benhurst School, religious education is taught to all children, including those in the reception classes.

In the reception classes, religious education is an integral part of the topics covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the aspects of religious education to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals, which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged from three to five years. Medium term planning identifies links to Personal, Social and Emotional Well-being, Communication and Language, Knowledge and Understanding of the World and Creative Development.

### **Contribution of RE to the teaching of other curriculum areas**

#### **English**

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school, by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Occasionally, texts used within the Literacy sessions have religious content, prompting discussions, and the RE sessions themselves encourage children to listen and share their views through questioning and discussion. Children are also encouraged to express their ideas and record information about the religious topics using various writing genres, in order to develop their writing ability.

#### **Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship**

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral benefits that underpin individual choices of behaviour. 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 society.

#### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Through religious education at Benhurst 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 gain a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and consequently develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

The Havering Syllabus was updated in 2010 to identify opportunities for cross-curricular links with other areas of the curriculum, in addition to those above including creative work, science, geography and history. These can be seen on the Medium Term plans.

#### **RE and ICT**

Information and communication technology plays an important role in religious education at Benhurst School and is utilized wherever appropriate, in all key stages. The children select and analyse information, using the Internet and CD-ROMs. They also use ICT to review, modify and evaluate their work, and to improve its presentation. Each class has a projector linked to their main computer, and the staff make use of a wide range of stored resources and Religious Education websites to display images, or related sounds, when applicable to their lesson plan. Digital cameras and video recorders are also available to record events and samples of drama or other class work based on religious themes.

## RE and inclusion

At Benhurst School we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education for all children. Through our teaching of religious education, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We aim to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those who are gifted or talented, and those learning English as a foreign language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, please see our separate Inclusion policy.

If progress falls significantly outside the expected range, a child may have special educational needs. We then consider a range of factors, such as classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching techniques and differentiation, which may be acted upon, to enable the child to learn more effectively.

Intervention through School Action and School Action Plus enables an Individual Action Plan (IEP) to be produced for a child with special educational needs. The IEP may include, if appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities relating to religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the school, such as a visit to a Gurdwara or church, a risk assessment is carried out prior to the activity, to ensure the safety and suitability of the activity for all pupils. If required, additional support is provided.

## Assessment for learning

Children demonstrate their ability in RE through a variety of different ways. For example, younger children might act out a well-known Bible story, whilst older pupils might produce a Powerpoint presentation about the life story of a religious leader. Teachers will assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe children during lessons. On completion of work, a child will receive either written or verbal feedback to help guide progress. As in other subject areas, older children will be encouraged to review their own work, and "good" examples may be presented to the class. At the end of a termly unit, levels of attainment will be assessed using the guidance provide in the medium-term plans. This information can then be used to assess the progress of each child, set new goals, and to inform the next teacher.

## Resources

Religious education resources are regularly reviewed and updated, to ensure that staff are able to teach the units effectively, to all pupils. Most general RE resources are stored in the central mezzanine area to be given to year groups as required. There is a wide range of religious artefacts, and a variety of Bibles are available, to enable use by all age groups. A wide selection of religious topic books is available in the library. The school also makes regular use of the excellent resources available from the Internet, including Espresso "Faiths" and RE Quest.

## Monitoring and Review

The RE co ordinator is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school. Termly monitoring takes the form of a questionnaire given to all staff, to review their completed unit, and enables staff to consider any issues for future consideration. There is regular communication with the Havering's HIAS Religious Education advisor, and meetings are held regularly, at times within Benhurst School, to enable local religious education co -ordinators to share ideas and issues relating to the religious curriculum.

This policy will be reviewed every three years.