



DURANTS SCHOOL – POLICY DOCUMENT

Religious Education

October 2024

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Next review date: October 2027

Introduction

For many people religion is a way of looking at life, considering values and facing basic questions; for many it has particular relevance because of personal faith. Aspects of life which can be seen as spiritual may be important to people who are or are not themselves religious. Religious belief may be linked to cultural or ethnic background.

In our multi-faith, multicultural society it is especially important to develop understanding of and respect for different religious and cultural practices so that difficulties between various groups can be minimised and positive relationships can be fostered.

For some pupils with special educational needs, development of understanding about and from religion will be limited by the abstract nature of the subject. However R.E. is an important element of the curriculum that, when delivered in an appropriate and meaningful way, can enable pupils to experience and share routines and rituals from the major religions and begin to make connections between them and their own lives. Provision of experiences and activities linked to the concepts underlying the formal R.E. curriculum can, among other things, help students develop a sense of self and the ability to relate to other people, promote self-esteem and confidence, enhance sensory awareness (especially the numinous sense) and engender a sense of community and belonging.

Legal Requirements

R.E. is part of the basic curriculum by law and statutory requirements are to be found in the Education Act (1944) and the Education Reform Act (1988). Under the 1996 Education Act schools must provide religious education for all pupils although parents can choose to withdraw their children (section 71 of School Standards & Framework Act 1998)

Schools (apart from voluntary aided and religious schools) must teach R.E. according to the locally Agreed Syllabus (section 375 (3) of Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998).

All Agreed Syllabuses should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented i.e. Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism and Sikhism.

While R.E. must not be denominational, teaching about denominational differences is permitted.

Aims

Teaching R.E. offers pupils with learning difficulties opportunities to;

- Develop their self-confidence and awareness.
- Understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups.
- Bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom.
- Develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience.
- Reflect on and consider their values and those of others.
- Deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour.

Opportunities at KS3 and KS4 to learn about religions through:

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- exploring and asking about their beliefs and key features, for example, ideas, sounds, music, symbols, people, events, times, objects, books, places, activities and stories of Christianity and other religions represented in the UK
- knowing how people express their religious beliefs, for example, praying, singing
- collecting examples and evidence of religion in their surrounding area and the wider world, for example, visiting a religious group and finding out how its members work in the community
- understanding the importance of religion in their local community, for example, meeting those involved
- Recognising similarities and differences between different religions, for example, the story of the Garden of Eden as known in Islam, Judaism and Christianity
- being aware of how a religion began, who started it and what it was like
- to learn from religion:
 - that spiritual practices, for example, prayer and meditation, silence and reflection, are important
 - to use periods of silence and stillness as times of reflection
 - to consider the place of stories, pictures and music, thoughts, life experiences and the natural world
 - that people can communicate and express their views, ideas, feelings and beliefs in many different ways
 - that it is valuable to find out about how people share feelings and experiences – stories about values and relationships
 - to develop a sense of responsibility to others, for example, in groups and communities
 - about right and wrong, fair and unfair in appropriate situations, including some understanding of moral and social issues
 - the value of asking questions (even questions that are very difficult to answer) and listening to the views of others – stories from different religions and cultures – that people are different and that what they believe in is part of them
 - that others have the right to hold and practice different beliefs and to respect that right
 - to relate their knowledge to their own lives and to develop a sense of identity

Methodology

In order to meet the needs of our pupils, in the Lower and Middle departments we have modified the Enfield Agreed Syllabuses, and taken account of the Foundation Stage Curriculum and the QCA non-statutory guidance for R.E. The upper department follow a post 16 curriculum. This incorporates R.E by fostering positive relationships and a healthy mental health well-being and continuing to develop an awareness of their values and the values of others through cross curriculum AQA units.

All pupils have goals and targets that relate to R.E. and reflect their individual ages and developmental level; these might relate to specific knowledge or activities, to the development of concepts or the development of a sense of self and of positive attitudes. (see R.E. pupil experiences in Humanities, RSE, AQA Units etc)

Planning for R.E. is done in a variety of ways across the school including: pupil I.E.P.s; defining learning outcomes for a specific topic; completion of short and medium term planning sheets which contain details of experiences and activities that pupils will participate in; completion of assembly and acts of collective worship planning sheets etc.

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R.E. is addressed through direct teaching, ASDAN scheme of work, cross-curricular activities or within topics. Assemblies, Acts of collective worship and Class group time are additional occasions when education about religions takes place and when pupils have opportunities to develop positive relationships and consider attitudes such as friendship, helpfulness etc. However, at all levels it is important that R.E. is presented meaningfully and realistically with *clear links drawn between pupils' own experiences and understanding and religious knowledge*.

Assessment, Recording & Reporting

Evidence of a pupil's progress and/or experiences in R.E. is gathered through observation, oral discussion, photographs, written tasks and drawing etc. A variety of ways of recording progress/experiences in R.E. across the school include: pupils individual assessments 'I can statements', EHCP reports, ASDAN, IEP data and End of year reports.

Arrangements for Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

Senior leaders observe appropriate class/group sessions and provide feedback to staff on these; they also pass on information to staff about relevant courses, teaching approaches, and resources.

Heads of Departments monitor planning and recording and also observe group lessons.

Governors monitor practice and progress via co-ordinators reports within the development planning process.

Resources

There is a selection of religious and cultural artefacts and objects in the central resource room that can be borrowed by staff. There are also DVD's and books giving ideas and information about religious stories and practices in the resource area of the Library.

The R.E. co-ordinator also has collections of materials, artefacts, music and books relating to religious festivals and occasions as well as stories relating to R.E. concepts such as feelings, life cycles etc.

Local religious leaders are often willing to visit school and pupils can be involved in visits to places of worship – in this part of London it is easy to get to places of worship for Muslims, Hindus, Jews, Christians, Sikhs and Buddhists and most will welcome visitors.

Health & Safety

General health and safety procedures should be employed when any R.E. activity is carried out that could pose a potential risk are e.g. use of lighted candles, flammable materials, visits etc.

Equal Opportunities

At Durant's we recognise the variety of needs of pupils within the school and the diversity of their cultural and religious heritage.

The school believes it is important for all pupils to have access to opportunities for spiritual development.

R.E. provides many opportunities for pupils from religious or non-religious backgrounds and from various ethnic communities to learn about and from each other and to share their own experiences with peers and staff.

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We ensure that R.E is approached in a way that promotes respect for people of all faiths or none.

Celebrations of religious festivals provide natural occasions for pupils’ parents and families to be involved in school activities.

We recognise the importance of taking account of and respecting the wishes of parents and families regarding cultural practices.

Review of Policy

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years, unless changes of circumstances or legislation require it to be amended earlier.