

## **CURRICULUM POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

At Magdalen Court School Religious Education is an entitlement of the core curriculum and develops understanding of the world and the people living in it. Much of the work in Religious Education begins with the pupils' own experiences and emphasises how special and unique they are.

## **THE IMPORTANCE OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM**

Religious Education encourages pupils to question the world around them and develop a greater understanding of themselves and empathy for others. RE provides the opportunity for pupils to develop their own moral framework, to broaden their appreciation of other points of view and to help them develop empathy with those less fortunate than themselves. Through a course that covers the world's major religions from a secular standpoint, we feel our pupils can develop their own understanding of the world around them.

## **AIMS**

- To give all pupils the opportunity to gain knowledge and understanding of major religions
- To develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals and whole communities
- To consider a range of questions, helping pupils develop enquiry and response skills
- To give pupils the opportunity to develop a sensitivity towards others and different points of view
- To enable pupils to develop their spiritual, moral, cultural and social development through reflection on their thoughts, feelings and relationships
- To give pupils time to reflect and consider their own values and commitments
- To develop a charitable spirit directed towards helping others, within the school and beyond

At Magdalen Court School we see the role of the teacher as one of helping pupils to explore a range of beliefs and practices as we enable them to learn about religion and learn from religion.

## **SKILLS**

Investigation – Interpretation – Reflection – Empathy – Evaluation – Analysis  
Synthesis – Application – Expression

## **Through the teaching of Religious Education the following attitudes are promoted**

Commitment – Fairness – Respect – Self-Awareness – Tolerance

## **Teaching strategies and planning**

At Magdalen Court School we aim to develop skills and attitudes as well as knowledge and understanding. Pupils are taught in whole class situations, groups and in pairs. The Religious Education curriculum is delivered through discussion, allowing pupils to share their own experiences, through stories, use of visual artefacts, pictures, guest speakers, DVDs and local visits within the community to promote awareness, enquiry and instil a desire for further understanding. Pupils' work may be presented in written form, by photographs or drama work. There will be a range of teacher resources, posters and artefacts that can be used to deliver the national curriculum in this subject covering the major religions.

We believe that our pupils deserve to be taught in a mature and grown up manner appropriate to their age. RE seeks to provide answers and stimulate further questions about the world around us. We also aim to equip our pupils with self-awareness to be clear in what they believe and the understanding to appreciate the consideration of others; in so doing, helping our young adults become ready to fully enter the world around them.

## **The Legal Position of Religious Education**

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) allows parents to withdraw their pupil from Religious Education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the Headmaster. All staff working at The Magdalen Court School and the parent community are supportive of the schools Christian ethos. The Religious Education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social

teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. The Religious Education scheme at The Magdalen Court School, whilst reflecting the Christian nature of the school, takes account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

### **EQUALITY OF ACCESS**

Across the whole school, we are committed to every pupil having equal access to the curriculum and to have the same opportunities to achieve success. Within this provision there is flexibility to engage in extension work for those pupils who are capable of dealing with it. These extension activities are highlighted in the schemes of work and should be made available at all times as pupils are taught mainly in mixed ability classes. However, within reason, all pupils should be given the same academic opportunities; however the work may be paced differently.

There are minimum standards which all pupils are expected to achieve at all key stages and the work of the department will be focussed on ensuring that every pupil reaches his/her potential and that success is celebrated for each individual at every opportunity. During Years 10 & 11 all pupils have access to the full GCSE curriculum.

### **Teaching and Learning Style**

We base our teaching and learning style in Religious Education on the key principle that good teaching in Religious Education allows pupils both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables pupils to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable pupils to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at certain festivals such as Christmas, Easter, etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organize visits to local places of worship.

Pupils carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as how the world began. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have pupils of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all pupils by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the pupil. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all pupils to complete all tasks);
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the pupil;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of pupils.

The school is fully aware that not all pupils have the same school or home background and understands that their initial knowledge will vary. Small class sizes ensure that individual needs are catered for. The most able pupils are stretched and support is given unstintingly to those who require it.

### **Curriculum Planning in Religious Education**

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the Christian ethos of the school. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for pupils of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the pupils an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Our teaching of Religious Education across the Key Stages is based on the National Curriculum. We use some of the published material provided but have spent a great deal of time and effort generating our own materials and schemes of work. During each year the pupils tackle a balance of theoretical and practical tasks. The schemes of work are adapted each year to ensure they are up to date. The specific tasks undertaken in lessons are aimed at building up the pupil's experience, theological skills and knowledge. The department is constantly striving to improve its schemes of work for all key stages and will endeavour to keep a broad depth whilst ensuring pupils receive sufficiently stretching depth in the subjects.

We carry out the curriculum planning in Religious Education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the Religious Education topics studied in each term during each key stage. The Religious Education subject leader works out this plan in conjunction with teaching colleagues in each year group. We teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects, especially at Key Stage 1. Some of our medium-term (termly) topics have a particular historical focus. Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The Religious Education subject leader reviews these plans on a regular basis. These form the basis of the lesson plans which each teacher adapts to suit their own class. Each class teacher creates their own short-term plan for weekly RE lessons. The class teacher keeps these individual plans.

### **Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

We use the document "Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage" to inform planning in the Nursery and Reception classes. Our curriculum for the EYFS reflects the areas of learning identified in the Early Learning Goals. Our pupil's learning experiences enable them to develop competency and skill across all the learning areas. The Early Years Goals are organised into six areas and provide the basis for planning throughout the EYFS, so layering secure foundations for future learning.

We relate the religious education aspects of the pupils' work to the objectives set out in the EYFS Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for pupils aged three to five. In the EYFS, we teach RE through the prime area of learning Personal, Social, and Emotional Development and the specific area of Understanding the World through the early learning goals "Children talk about how they and others show feelings" and "Children know about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions." Structured teacher led RE lessons are presented weekly following guidance from Godly Play, an imaginative method for presenting scripture stories to children created by Jerome W. Berryman. In the Autumn term, these lessons focus on stories of the bible and Advent. In the Spring term, these lessons focus on Jesus' life leading up to, and including, Easter. In the Summer term, these lessons focus on stories of the bible such as Noah's Ark, Moses, and Jonah and the Whale.

The EYFS focuses specifically on Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural issues through the inclusion of PSHEE and RE lessons in accordance with the Early Learning Goals set by the Foundation Stage Profile and explored in Development Matters.

To appreciate the approach in EYFS please observe the pupils in this area of the school and consult The EYFS Policy, the "*Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage*" DCFS 2012, and "*Development Matters in the Early Years Foundation Stage*" British Association for Early Childhood Education 2012

### **Contribution of Religious Education to the Teaching of Other Subjects**

#### **English**

Religious education 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 Literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion and this, is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the pupils to write letters, prayers and reflections and record information in order to develop their writing ability. Each class has a prayer book, which was put together as a collection of prayers from the pupils in the school.

#### **Information and Communication Technology (ICT)**

We use ICT where appropriate in Religious Education. The pupils find, 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.

#### **Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHEE) and Citizenship**

Through our Religious Education lessons and assemblies, we teach the pupils 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 pupils to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

**Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development**

Through teaching Religious Education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Pupils 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 multicultural society. Pupils 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.

**Teaching Religious Education to Pupils with Special Educational Needs**

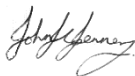
At our school we teach Religious Education to all pupils, whatever their ability. Religious Education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils. Through our Religious Education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each pupil's different needs. Where a pupil requires an Individual Education Plan (IEP); this IEP may include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to RE.

**Monitoring and Review**

The monitoring of the standards of pupils work and of the quality of teaching in RE is the responsibility of the RE coordinator. The work of the coordinator also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, being informed about current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE coordinator gives the Headmaster an annual summary report in which s/he evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.

Date: August 2016

Signed:



Principle