



## Religious Education Policy

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## Curriculum Intentions

At Foxhills Federation, we aim to introduce children to what a religious way of looking at and existing in the world may offer in leading one's life individually and collectively. We seek to enable children to recognise and acknowledge that the question as to what it means to lead one's life with such an orientation can be answered in a number of qualitatively different ways.

We are committed to delivering a Religious Education curriculum which explores Christianity and other principal religions so that the children understand how different religious and cultural viewpoints affect and impact our lives. We want our children to demonstrate a curiosity about other people's views and beliefs and develop appreciation and tolerance of others. Planned learning enables the children to develop enquiry skills, to Communicate, Apply, Inquire, Contextualise and Evaluate, to explore their own lives in relation to what it can mean to live with a religious orientation on life, including those informed by a non-religious perspective, and to engage with this intellectually.

### **At Foxhills Federation, the characteristics of a learner with an appreciation for religion are**

- The ability to express curiosity and question their own and others' experiences
- The ability to understand and use religious language
- The ability to have awareness and respect for other people's faith and viewpoint
- The ability to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn.
- The ability to understand that for some questions there are no right or wrong answers
- The ability to respect similarities and differences
- The ability to make informed responses to religious and moral issues

### **The Legal Status of Religious Education**

Section 352 of the Education Act 1996 identifies the distinctive place of Religious Education alongside the National Curriculum. Religious Education is of equal significance to the core and foundation subjects. It differs from these subjects only in that it is not subject to national prescription. It is a matter for the Agreed Syllabus Conferences to recommend locally prescribed procedures for the Local Authority (LA).

**The Education Act 1996, School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and Education Act 2002 require that:**

- Religious Education should be taught to all children and young people other than those in nursery classes and except for those withdrawn at the wish of their parents. Teachers' rights are safeguarded, should they wish to withdraw from the teaching of religious education;
- Religious Education in all community, foundation and voluntary controlled schools should be taught in accordance with an Agreed Syllabus;
- An Agreed Syllabus 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 in Great Britain;
- An Agreed Syllabus must not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils.

**Curriculum Implementation**

At Foxhills Federation, we follow *Living Difference IV* – the Agreed Syllabus for schools in Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and the Isle of Wight – to teach Religious Education. This document is the statutory framework, which defines the matters, skills and processes that need to be taught. *Living Difference IV* is an approach to enquiry in Religious Education. It takes as its starting point an exploration, with children, of what it means to exist in and with the world. It builds on the approach to religious education, enriched by philosophical and theological enquiry, as well as current research.

**Equal Opportunities**

In line with all our other school policies, all children - regardless of any Special Education Needs or Disabilities, level of ability, cultural background or belief will be fully included. All children are entitled to access Religious Education provision at our school.

**Our School Context**

RE is taught by starting from our children's own life experiences and relating these to similar or different experiences of other people in the local community progressing to our wider national and then international community.

Staff may have their own religious beliefs/faith however, the teaching of RE must not be used to indoctrinate or challenge children's faiths/beliefs which may be different from their own.

Staff at Foxhills Federation will be sensitive about the language that they use, recognising that even within one religion, there will be different practices and views held. Therefore, when

teaching, teachers will not share their own beliefs but instead use 'some', 'many' and 'most' when discussing followers of a religion.

### **Time allocated for Religious Education:**

At our school we expect that sufficient time should be prioritised for the teaching of Religious Education.

*NB: The following is a minimum recommendation:*

- **Reception:** approximately 36 hours per year
- **Key Stage 1:** 36 hours per year
- **Key Stage 2:** 45 hours per year

At Foxhills Federation, we recognise that Collective Worship is distinct from Religious Education and therefore cannot be considered as part of the recommended time for teaching the Agreed Syllabus. Relationships Health and Sex Education (RHSE) is taught in a distinct way from Religious Education.

## **The Teaching and Learning of Religious Education**

### **Living Difference IV**

The *Living Difference IV* approach is a process of enquiry into concepts, where a concept is understood as a name for, or way of referring to, an idea that exists or has the possibility of existing in a particular kind of way under particular conditions.

Concepts are divided into three broad groups. Each group contains individual concepts of greater and lesser complexity. At different key stages, children are progressively introduced to different groups of concepts, as follows:

**A concepts** that are common to all human experience (EYFS & KS1)

**B concepts** that are shared by many religions and are used in the study of religion (KS1 & 2)

**C concepts** that are specific to particular religions (KS2)

As children progress through Foxhills Federation, they will have opportunities to engage with all three groups of concepts.

### **The Process for a Cycle of Enquiry:**

The *Living Difference IV* approach to enquiry in Religious Education enables teachers to explore children's own experience of particular concepts, before enquiring into related religious as well as non-religious ways of living, represented in Great Britain and beyond. This approach to religious education is consistent with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, particularly Articles 8,12, 13, 14, 29 and 30, and supports the work of rights respecting education (RRE).

These concepts are introduced, taught and developed through a range of enquiry skills, as follows:

**Communicate** their own responses

**Apply their own beliefs and values to situations in their own lives.**

**Inquire** about the meaning of the concept

**Contextualise** concepts within religious beliefs and practices

**Evaluate** the importance of the concept by exploring the viewpoints of believers, and non-believers

Foxhills Federation Schools have worked together to ensure children will engage with concepts in relation to:

- Foundation Stage – aspects of Christian, Jewish and Sikhi traditions
- Key Stage 1 (Year 1 and 2) – Christian, Jewish and Sikhi traditions
- Key Stage 2 (Year 3 and 4) – Christian and Hindu traditions
- Key Stage 2 (Year 5 and 6) – Christian and Muslim traditions

### **Assessment**

In Religious Education, a child shows that they are making progress by being able to show that they can interpret human experience in relation to religion and a religious way of looking at and existing in the world.

Evidence of children's achievement in Religious Education will be captured and recorded in a number of ways, for example through speaking and listening activities, drama, dialogue and discussion, as well as through a range of pictorial/written forms.

Attainment will be measured against the age related expectations for each year group/ phase found in Living Difference IV and in Year R the profile. This is to ensure there is progression over time in the dispositions and skills of Religious Education. Over the course of a year, teachers will assess one outcome per child for each stage of the cycle.

### **Resources**

Teachers, when bringing children and young people to attend in different ways, will be stimulating and engaging in order to provide children and young people with opportunities to access religious education.

In the process of progression around the cycle, the emphasis is likely to begin with sensory experiences inviting a personal response and for some children interaction. Teachers' knowledge of students' individual needs will guide appropriate use of teaching resources.

A range of strategies to ensure inclusive teaching of religious education might include:

- use of artefacts, big books, posters, DVDs and artwork
- use of art and craft to enable children to express their ideas
- use of food and cooking
- music to create an atmosphere or for expression of ideas and emotions
- visual and tactile stimuli which contribute towards a stimulating sensory environment
- visiting speakers – ensure prior briefing as to children's capabilities, delivery, etc.
- visits, e.g. to places of worship, museums or art galleries
- use of drama, role play, gesture or dance
- use of ICT, e.g. digital cameras, tablets, interactive whiteboards and websites.

## **Curriculum Impact**

Children remembering crucial knowledge and developing the skill of deploying this knowledge in different ways measure the effectiveness of our religious education curriculum; this is how we define knowing more and doing more at Foxhills Federation. Children acquiring the characteristics of effective learning will also support our children at getting better at religious education.

Through the teaching of Religious Education, children are taught about the values and moral beliefs, which underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote, through the teaching of our School values, Care, Learn, Engage, Achieve and Reflect (CLEAR), which is interwoven into all we do, a balanced view of a multi-cultural society, tolerance and British Values.

A child who has acquired the crucial knowledge and developed proficiency in religious education will demonstrate ...

- the idea that to live a religious life means to subscribe to certain propositional beliefs (religion as truth)
- the idea that to live a religious life means to adhere to certain practices (religion as practice)
- the idea that to live a religious life means to exist, to be in and with the world, in a trustful manner or with a particular kind of awareness (religion as existence)

### **Right to Withdraw**

The right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of Religious Education lessons is set out in section 71(1) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, in paragraph 1.

At Foxhills Federation, we ensure that our Religious Education provision respects the integrity of all participants, irrelevant of their faith background. All can participate without compromising their own faith or belief. However, should parent/s wish their child/ren or staff wish to withdraw from all or part of Religious Education lessons they may do so after discussing their concerns with the Head teacher. A record of all children / staff who have withdrawn from collective worship and Religious Education lessons is kept and updated by the school.

However, the right to withdraw does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, for example, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by the children or there are issues related to religious that arise in other subjects such as History.

Staff at Foxhills Federation will work closely with parents to ensure that the school's Religious Education curriculum is shared, together with the concepts that will be covered in order to provide parents with the information needed for them to make well informed decisions. If a child/ren are withdrawn from Religious Education, Foxhills Federation has a duty to supervise them but not to provide additional teaching or incur extra cost as a result.

Parents have the **right to withdraw** their children from parts of, or all Religious Education lessons. Pupils who are withdrawn are supervised and provided with alternative activities.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

At Foxhills Federation, all teachers are responsible for the teaching of the RE curriculum. The provision for RE is currently led by the RE Subject Leaders, Mrs James and Mrs Bailey.

The Subject Leaders will:

- Provide the strategic leadership and direction for this subject;
- Provide support and advice to colleagues planning and resourcing RE.
- Ensure staff are aware of current developments in Religious Education and make sure that this is shared with staff;
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of teaching and learning as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluating;
- Review, evaluate and update the RE policy every two years.

**The Governing Body have a duty to ensure that RE provision fulfils statutory requirements.**

**The Subject Lead will report to Governors at least once a year.**

**This policy will be reviewed at least every two years.**