

# Clee Hill Community Academy

## Exploring Spirituality (Religious Education) Policy

Written: March 2024  
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### Context

- Clee Hill Community Academy is a small rural primary school, serving children in the age range of 2-11 years.
- We deliver Religious Education (RE) in line with the Shropshire Locally Agreed Syllabus
- Clee Hill Community Academy recognises and values the religious backgrounds and non-religious backgrounds of each of our pupils. We intend to be sensitive to the home background of all and therefore work to ensure that RE is accessible to all pupils and teachers of any religious persuasion or none.
- We have a strong understanding of how RE can play a leading role in pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- At Clee Hill Community Academy, we know how relationships with members of local communities and local faith communities can enrich pupils' experiences in RE and we strive to cultivate and maintain these relationships.

### Legal requirements

Clee Hill Community will meet legal requirements by:

- its inclusion in the curriculum of all registered pupils. In primary school, this is a requirement for all pupils in Reception to Year 6, but does not include children in nursery classes. However, at Clee Hill Community Academy pupils in nursery also take part in RE.
- reflecting the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain.
- teaching RE in accordance with Shropshire Locally Agreed Syllabus.  
[https://www.shropshirelq.net/media/w4pomxte/21-20408-shropshire-agreed-syllabus\\_extract.pdf](https://www.shropshirelq.net/media/w4pomxte/21-20408-shropshire-agreed-syllabus_extract.pdf)

### Aims and Objectives

At Clee Hill Community Academy we believe that Religious Education should be referred to as 'Exploring Spirituality' as this summarises our philosophy of self-exploration whilst preparing pupils for life in an increasing multi-cultural society. This is achieved by encouraging them to explore and respond to these aspects of spirituality and religion and draw upon their own experiences.

Our curriculum explores big questions about life, to find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can make sense of religion, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Our aims and objectives in Exploring Spirituality are to:

- A Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and among individuals
  - identify, investigate and respond to questions posed and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews

- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- B Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:
- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
  - express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
  - appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.
- C Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:
- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
  - enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
  - articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

*These aims are taken from A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England and Wales (Religious Education Council 2013).*

### **Exploring Spirituality in the Curriculum**

The National Curriculum states the legal requirement that:

*All state schools ... must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage ... All schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online.*

*(DfE, The National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, July 2013, p.4)*

The Curriculum Framework for RE (2013) is the latest in a chain of documents to recognise RE as a core subject and it is regarded as such at Clee Hill Community Academy.

We make cross-curricular links with other subjects where those links are beneficial for pupils' learning and progress in RE. On occasions when strong cross-curricular links cannot be forged with other subjects, RE is taught as a discrete subject.

We recognise that RE can make a positive contribution to much of pupils' life in school. It can be linked especially well to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, Citizenship (including social cohesion) and Personal, Social, Health and Economic education and we strive to make good links where we can.

In order to maximise the impact of RE sessions and pupils' progress in this subject, we teach RE in designated regular RE lessons at Clee Hill Community Academy.

A wide range of imaginative teaching methods and pupil groupings should be used in effective RE sessions. Clee Hill Community Academy recognises that 'enquiry' can be instrumental to good learning in RE as referenced in recent Ofsted RE subject reports, and we aim to help pupils develop skills to enquire independently. Pupils should be given time to generate pertinent questions where appropriate and teachers of RE should ensure that the atmosphere in an RE session is conducive to question raising and reflective thought whenever appropriate.

We appreciate the positive impact that local communities and local faith communities can have on pupils' experiences in RE. Clee Hill Community Academy caters for this by having a visit to a place of worship in each year group from Reception onwards and inviting visitors from faith communities into RE lessons.

It is vitally important that teachers demonstrate respectful attitudes towards all faiths, modelling the attitudes and responses we would expect from our pupils.

### **Religions and worldviews**

Clee Hill Community Academy has followed the *recommendations* of the Local Agreed Syllabus for RE guidelines and has selected the following religions and worldviews for focused study in each key stage. All key stages will consider people who do not have a religious belief where it is appropriate to do so.

Reception: Children will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.

KS1: Christians, Jews and Muslims.

KS2: Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jews.

If teachers feel the need to develop their subject knowledge in order to teach these units, they can do so in a number of ways. For example: reading the knowledge organisers, discussion with the Subject Leader and personal research.

### **Key Skills in Exploring Spirituality**

We strongly believe that Exploring Spirituality is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. We seek to develop children's skills in investigation, enquiry, communication, interpretation, analysis, reflection and evaluation. These are important life skills for children to develop and use in their daily lives.

In our Exploring Spirituality planning, key questions form the basic of the lesson and teachers are encouraged to pose open ended questions which may cause lessons to take a different direction to the original plan. This child-led approach to Exploring Spirituality allows pupils the opportunity to pose questions, debate, ponder and 'be wowed' (see long term planning below):

### **Exploring Spirituality in the Early Years Foundation Stage**

Activities children engage in during their nursery years are experiences which provide the building blocks for later development. Starting with things which are familiar to the children and providing lots of hands-on activities and learning are an important part of pupils' learning at this stage.

Some ideas for Religious Education in the nursery can include:

- Creative play, make-believe, role play, dance and drama
- Dressing up and acting out scenes from stories, celebrations or festivals
- Making and eating festival food
- Talking and listening to each other; hearing and discussing stories of all kinds, including religious and secular stories with themes such as goodness, difference, the inner world of thoughts and feelings, and imagination
- Exploring authentic religious artefacts, including those designed for small children such as 'soft toy' artefacts or story books
- Seeing pictures, books and videos of places of worship and meeting believers in class
- Listening to religious music
- Starting to introduce religious terminology
- Work on nature, growing and life cycles or harvest

- Seizing opportunities spontaneously or linking with topical, local events such as celebrations, festivals, the birth of a new baby, weddings or the death of a pet
- Starting to talk about the different ways in which people believe and behave, and encouraging children to ask questions.

Children in EYFS should encounter religions and worldviews through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They should listen to and talk about stories. Children can be introduced to subject specific words and use all their senses to explore beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of and wonder at the world in which they live.

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

Through our RE, PSHE 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 society. Refer to our [PSHE Policy](#) for more information.

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

Through teaching RE in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual reflection and 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. Refer to our [SMSC Policy](#) for more information.

### **Assessment, Record Keeping and Reporting**

Clear learning outcomes, specific high level questioning to assess understanding, evaluative marking and observations of children at work underpin the assessment process. Children's standards and achievements in RE are assessed in line with our [Assessment Policy](#). Assessment is based upon the child's ability in understanding various ideas, beliefs, values, attitudes and behaviour.

Assessment in RE takes place through on-going Assessment for Learning (AFL) practices within class and group sessions, including the sharing of and reference being made to Learning Objective and Success Criteria and self and peer assessments of understanding, outcomes and progress. Assessment materials are available for all key questions to support teachers with the assessment process.

We also recognise that some of the most important learning in RE (eg how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed, so we assess the pupil's using informal judgements and formative assessment throughout lessons to ensure pupils are challenged. Thus ensuring that barriers to learning are eliminated and pupils reach their full potential. We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and through marking diagnostically. Children are involved in self-assessment, and can record their own progress. Learning objectives are clear, enabling children to assess if they have met the learning criteria.

### **Evidence of RE Implementation and Coverage**

At Clee Hill Community Academy evidence is collected from whole class Spirituality books, teachers' planning, wall displays and photographic records which show implementation of coverage. There is no expectation that written work should be on a regular basis or be kept in RE books. Our Exploring Spirituality planning on the website shows our coverage across the Academy with a focus on Christianity and Judaism in KS1 and Hinduism as an additional focus in KS2.

### **Reading opportunities in Exploring Spirituality**

At Clee Hill Community Academy, reading is at the heart of all of our lessons. Children are encouraged to share text through shared and independent reading. This may be through reading text, poems or letters or reading instructions or tasks for the lesson. The majority of Exploring Spirituality lessons rely on reflection and discussion however topic areas often include elements of reading within the lesson. Key text books, such as Badger's Passing Gifts when looking at bereavement or poems which inspire awe and wonder are key elements of our ES scheme.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Our whole school inclusion, English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) policies apply to RE.

Teachers are aware that pupils who have barriers to learning in other areas may have a strong interest in and aptitude for RE. All pupils should be encouraged to progress to their full potential and a variety of teaching methods (e.g. use of art, drama, ICT) should be employed to ensure that this is possible.

Pupils who are Gifted and Talented in RE are given opportunities to demonstrate and develop their strengths.

Some pupils have positive and deep experiences of religion from their lives outside of school. While there is no doubt that these experiences should be valued, they do not necessarily relate to pupils' ability in RE.

### **Pupils with SEND and the Exploring Spirituality Curriculum**

The RE Syllabus can be modified, where necessary, to meet the specific needs of individuals and groups of children. This should provide all pupils with relevant and appropriately challenging work.

The three principles that are essential to developing a more inclusive RE Syllabus include:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

The following document considers how the environment multi-sensory approaches to learning, support from adults and peers and communication strategies can be used to overcome barriers and enable ALL pupils to experience and be part of the learning journey.

<https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/13806/1/religiouseducationre.pdf>

### **Subject Monitoring and Review**

The RE subject leader, Ceri Little, potential subject link TA and SMSC link governor, Mark Beale, are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in RE. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing direction for the subject in the school.

The Subject Leader role includes:

- ensuring staff are familiar with our approach to RE and the requirements for planning
- supporting staff with planning and delivery of RE
- acquiring and organising appropriate resources
- monitoring the teaching and learning of RE and
- providing and sourcing in-service training (INSET) for staff where necessary.

### **Right of withdrawal**

Pupils' families and faith communities have the right to encourage religious nurture of the children, fostering their faith. It is the responsibility of the school to provide Religious Education for all its pupils.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children either partly or wholly from RE. In addition, teachers have the right not to teach the subject. Our approach to RE, however, has been constructed in the hope that parents and teachers will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal.

As stated in our school prospectus and on our school website, those parents who wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons should inform the Headteacher in writing/contact the school office at their earliest convenience.