



Mount Hawke Academy

RE Policy

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that ‘Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils’.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes:

“a major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument, and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world”. (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013).

Mount Hawke Academy is an Academy school. We use the Discovery RE programme and Plan Bee resources as our schemes of work.

This RE policy is informed by current national guidance:

- RE in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010
- RE: realising the potential Ofsted 2013
- A Curriculum Framework for RE in England, REC 2013

The aims of our RE Scheme of Work

Our RE Scheme of Work meets national requirements and is aligned to the non-statutory guidance described above.

By following our RE Scheme of Work, at Mount Hawke Academy we intend that Religious Education will:

- Adopt an enquiry- based approach as recommended by Ofsted, beginning with the children’s own life experience before moving into learning about and from religion.
- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. It develops pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.

- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses.
- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- Teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Nurture children's own spiritual development.

RE makes an important contribution to an academy's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.

Mount Hawke Academy will use RE to help promote community cohesion:

- Within the academy, through the exploration, promotion and celebration of diversity, beliefs and values.
- At the local level, investigating patterns of diversity of religion and belief, and forging links with different groups.
- At the national level, through the study of the diversity of religion and belief across the UK and how this influences national life.
- At the global level, through the study of matters of international significance, recognising the impact of the diversity of religion and belief on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting an inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

RE Content

Our RE teaching covers all areas of RE for the primary phase; Christianity plus two other religions in each group forms the pattern.

Further details are available from the school.

RE teaching brings together learning about and from religion, questioning and spiritual development in a comprehensive scheme of learning. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Each enquiry starts from the children's own life experiences using these as a bridge into the investigation of the religion being studied.

Learning is assessed and children have opportunity to express their own thoughts and beliefs and empathise with believers of that religion or belief position.

Differentiation /SEN

Inclusivity is part of our school philosophy. Teachers will tailor each enquiry to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential. To further help teachers differentiate for children in KS1 and 2 classes with special educational needs, each enquiry has level exemplars for the full range likely for that age group, allowing children to evidence levels of learning.

Assessment

Teachers ensure that children are making progress with their learning throughout their RE. Therefore, each enquiry has built-in assessment. This task is the formal opportunity for teacher assessment of the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This stand-alone evidence is used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions and annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in reaching a best-fit level. Each enquiry has assessment levels and exemplars based on the current nationally agreed levels.

The RE leader in school monitors delivery of RE through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children and scrutiny of their written work to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision.

Evaluation of the curriculum's effectiveness is conducted on the basis of:

- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes
- Staff meetings to review and share experience
- Monitoring of assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights

External Contributors

External contributors from the community, e.g. local clergy, local members / speakers from different religions make a valuable contribution to the RE programme, as do visits to places of worship. This input is carefully planned and monitored so as to fit into and complement the programme.

Teachers are always present during these sessions and remain responsible for the effective delivery of the RE programme.

The Learning Environment

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for other views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion or none is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care.

Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues involving carers and parents

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs.

Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should not discuss their own beliefs and must not influence or restrict the children's own expression.

Withdrawal from RE Lessons

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to see the Head of School and/or RE Leader who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils, and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents will be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

As a school it is our duty to inform our local Standing Advisory Council on RE regarding the numbers of children being withdrawn.

This policy is reviewed annually.