



Subject routeway

Subject: Religious Education

1. Curriculum intent:

Our programme of Religious Education aims to ensure that by the end of Year 6, children have a secure knowledge base and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews. They will be able to express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of those religions and worldviews, and will develop and use the skills needed to engage seriously with them.

The foundations for RE are laid in the EYFS, where children start to learn how people and families are similar and different, and to understand family and religious customs and celebrations. Our schools follow the Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Trafford Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022–2027, which fully meets the National Curriculum requirement that schools are required to teach religious education at all key stages. The Manchester scheme systematically covers all the main religions and worldviews, including humanism, agnosticism and atheism. It encourages children to explore big questions about life and find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live so that children can make sense of religion and reflect on their own ideas and ways of living.

We build positively on the wide range of beliefs and religions held within the school community, encouraging children to feel proud and secure in their own faith, and asking them to share their knowledge with their classmates to increase understanding and tolerance. We work hard to ensure that children are confident in their own faith and recognise that learning about another religion does not mean they are being taught to believe in that religion.

As a Rights Respecting School, we teach children that everybody has the right to their own language, culture and religion. This includes the right to hold non-religious beliefs and worldviews, practices and ways of life. We consult and inform parents and carers about the content and delivery of our RE curriculum. We recognise parents and carers' legal right to withdraw their child from Religious Education, but we encourage families to allow their children to participate in all aspects of Religious Education with the aim of increasing understanding and respect across different religions and cultures. We believe that our community is strongest when we all have knowledge, understanding and respect for each other's way of life. For this reason, we positively recognise and mark celebrations and festivals from different cultures and offer an extensive range of visits to local places of worship to support children's understanding of the groups that make up our rich and diverse community.

2. Implementation:

The Manchester Scheme on which we have built our RE curriculum identifies the three strands of Believing, Expressing and Living. Each strand is broken down into 'threads', so that teachers can see what learning has gone before and what is to follow.

Our curriculum starts with the Discovery Phase in EYFS, where children build a strong awareness of different religious festivals, beliefs and world views. In KS1, the Exploring Phase deepens their knowledge and builds respect and understanding. In lower KS2, the Connecting Phase explores similarities and differences and looks at common themes across one or more religions. In upper KS2 the Applying/Interpreting Phase gives the opportunity to consider deeper questions about how religion can shape our actions in the contemporary world, considering how religion can affect our actions and responses to a range of social issues such as the environment, grief and death, art and architecture etc.

The Manchester Scheme gives considerable flexibility for schools to decide their own order of teaching. We have devised our own long-term plan which covers all the scheme units, and returns to some units in greater depth over progressive years.

We are developing our own detailed teacher support materials, based on the Manchester scheme but with added information about prior and subsequent learning to ensure pupils are deepening their understanding and making strong cognitive connections as they progress through the key stages. Our detailed planning defines exactly what it means to revisit a key theme in a subsequent year group, so that children are revisiting but not repeating the same content. For example, children will learn about the Christmas Story every year up to Year 4, but will progress from knowing that Christmas celebrates the birth of Jesus in Year 1 to analysing whether Christmas has lost its religious meaning in year 4. Their knowledge of the key beliefs, festivals and stories of the major religions then prepares them for the deeper questions of the Applying/Interpreting Phase in UKS2.

3. Impact

We have developed our own unit objectives for each module, based on the detailed outcomes specified in the Manchester planning. We then break this down into individual outcomes for each lesson in the sequence. There is constant formative assessment throughout all lessons to check understanding and retention. We use quizzing to assess retention of content at the start of lessons and at the end of each unit. This checks for retention and misconceptions and informs subsequent planning and scaffolding. This is supplemented by our programme of pupil voice group discussions, book scrutiny and lesson observations/learning walks.

4. Inclusion

We build on the Manchester plan to adapt lessons and develop scaffolded support to ensure all pupils are able to access the core concepts and knowledge content of each unit. This might include focusing on the “emerging” outcomes rather than the “expected” or “exceeding” outcomes for a specific lesson, adding visual cues and support materials to support understanding or using targeted questioning to help children with SEND make connections and understand core concepts. We ensure all pupils are able to access enhancement opportunities such as trips and visitors e.g. providing alternative transport, selecting fully accessible venues, etc. We avoid making assumptions about children’s own experience of religion and consider how we can acknowledge children’s own faith, or non-religious world view, in all our content.

5. Professional development

We have developed our own programme of resources to support the Manchester scheme. This provided detailed teacher notes highlighting key teaching points, any areas of sensitivity, and notes on scaffolding to ensure all children can access the full curriculum. The RE lead attended the full citywide training on the new scheme in 2022, and is available for coaching support as needed. We are members of NATRE and draw on their resources, publications and training.