

Appendix



Blakesley Church of England Primary School

Name of Headteacher: Laurie Hill

Name of RE Subject Leader: Laurie Hill

Our Vision

As a Church of England school at the heart of the community and in partnership with parents, Blakesley C of E Primary School is committed to enabling all pupils to achieve their full potential. It is a place where we learn how to love God, one another and ourselves and to serve the community. We will do this through developing a love of learning within a creative, dynamic and vibrant environment based on Christian values where everyone aspires to excellence.

***‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart,
and with all your soul, and with all your mind, and with all your strength;
and love your neighbour as yourself.’***

Mark 12:30-31

Religious Education (RE) plays a vital role in contributing to our whole school vision. RE ensures that our children’s thinking is challenged through investigation and reflection upon some of the most fundamental questions asked in life. Throughout a child’s journey at Blakesley, RE develops the children’s knowledge and understanding of the Christian and other world faiths. This enables our children to make informed, balanced decisions about their own views and faith. RE at Blakesley provides a safe environment where pupils can express their own beliefs in a respectful way and ask their own ‘big questions’ for enquiry.

At Blakesley we want the children to make knowledgeable decisions and develop a clear understanding of the core concepts of each faith through; looking at each faith’s key text (Making sense of the text), examining how members of that faith might put their beliefs into action (Understanding the Impact) and through reflecting on their own lives and understanding of the world (Making connections).

This encourages our children to understand the world around them and the importance of their own contribution within our school, community and the wider world. From this, each child can develop their own sense of values and develop their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This allows our children to show respect for each other and an appreciation of the value of differences and similarities.

Local Context

Blakesley Primary School is a small, rural school serving children in the age range of four to eleven. The majority of our children are White British and almost all of them will transition to a local secondary school of similar demographic. For this reason, our RE curriculum ensures in depth learning through a spiral curriculum of both Christianity and the other world faiths. This enables our children to have an awareness of other religions, cultures and faiths different to that of their immediate community and thus fostering a respect for difference as they develop.

A large proportion of our children are from relatively affluent families and often they have minimum experience of what it is like to 'go without'; we are active in teaching children about the needs of different people within our society, encouraging the children to show genuine kindness and generous citizenship both within our immediate community and on a wider national and international scale. Many of our children have limited experience of the rich social and cultural diversity within society. Our Curriculum intent statement reflects the contextual needs of our children in its aims:

- Developing our pupils' understanding and appreciation of the rich diversity within society.
- Developing our pupils' courageous aspiration; including qualities of resilience, risk-taking, ambition and perseverance.
- Developing our pupils' sense of generous citizenship; shaping characters that appreciate how they are fortunate, can demonstrate genuine kindness and can use their ability to contribute positively to their wider community.

In our curriculum we therefore celebrate differences and similarities between world faiths, exploring, challenging and developing understanding in our children's opinions of these. Our studies, based on thematic units, encourage the children to have the opportunity, straight from their first year at school in Reception, to compare and contrast religions, developing a clear understanding of respect for other people.

Our pupil numbers have risen for many years now, and for the foreseeable future we have mixed Key Stage 2 classes. To ensure a clear curriculum coverage, for all possible class journeys a child make take through KS2, we have developed our long term curriculum planning around a four-year cycle.

At Blakesley we have close links with St Mary's Church, the vicar and members of the congregation from the village. The Church supports our RE and Collective Worship throughout the Christian year, joining with us in celebrations of the key Christian festivals. Each year the school holds services for Harvest, Christingle, Christmas, Mothers' Day, Easter and Pentecost in the local Church, inviting the local community to join in its celebrations.

The Vicar is well known to the children and joins us to lead our Collective Worship and lead our prayers in weekly Celebration (Praise) assemblies. The children also join the congregation of St Mary's Church, to contribute to Family Services.

We also have close links with the local community. This includes welcoming visitors to the academy from a variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds to support RE lessons and Collective Worship. For example, the Lighthouse trust help us develop the children's understanding of Christianity and visitors from other faiths present and discuss aspects of their faith, e.g. an Imam from a parent's local mosque.

As well as our connections with our local Christian place of worship, pupils also experience visits to diverse places of worship as part of their thematic studies. Teachers organize visits for their classes to the local Gurdwara, Synagogue, Hindu Temple and Buddhist retreat. Here faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with the pupils and share their faith. This is a valuable resource for the children and provides the opportunity for them to experience the celebration of different cultures and festivals other than their own.

Time Allocation

At Blakesley we organise our RE time by following our RE Long Term plan. This Long Term plan is based around a two-year cycle to ensure that our mixed-age Key Stage 2 classes have coverage of the whole curriculum. Teachers follow our spiral curriculum for RE following Understanding Christianity and The Diocese of Peterborough Agreed Syllabus. Key Stage 1 classes follow a two-year cycle teaching Christianity and Judaism.

RE is taught on a weekly basis in both Key Stage 1 and key Stage 2. In Key Stage 2 the children will learn about two other faiths at least in addition to Christianity. Our 'thematic' units allow for children to develop their understanding further through comparing and contrasting the key world faiths. In addition, teachers have the flexibility to adapt their lesson plans to meet the needs of individual classes, 'big questions' asked by the children or to cover recent news headlines. RE may be also be delivered in flexible ways; for example, through RE days, RE weeks, visits and other cross-curriculum topics.

Where possible RE is linked closely to other topic areas to allow children the opportunity to develop schemas, connections and links throughout their learning.

Teaching and Learning Styles

We ensure that a variety of teaching and learning styles are adopted by teachers in RE to allow access by all pupils. The variety enables pupils to encounter their preferred learning style as well as to develop a broad repertoire. The teaching and learning styles used promote a range of skills such as thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and research. Our reflections and responses are captured in both individual RE books and a class floor book of shared work.

Examples of active learning strategies and activities, which we use, are :

- Dramatic conventions;
- Group work;
- Individual reflection;
- Use of music and art;
- Artefact handling;
- Multi - sensory approaches;
- Visits and visitors;
- Use of ICT and Multi Media;
- Use of photos, posters, DVDs.

Resources

A wide range of resources are in place for each theme within RE. These are all individually boxed according to religion and a list of contents for each resource box is displayed on the front of each box. Resources are stored in the central resource cupboard, and should be returned after use.

In addition, books, posters and online resources are accessible to teachers to support their teachings.

We maintain an RE story shelf in the library, which offers books about different world faiths as well as stories from different world faiths and cultures. Teachers may choose to use these in RE.

Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.