

Curriculum Subject Statement: Religious Education

Requests to Withdraw a pupil from RE lessons

Parents have the statutory right under Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 to request their child/ren are wholly or partly excused from:

- RE lessons in accordance with the schools' basic curriculum
- Acts of Collective Worship in schools

As parents, you do not have to provide a reason for requesting the withdrawal. However before exercising any right of withdrawal we would recommend you discuss your concerns with Ellie Williams (RE Lead), Adam Haywood (Quality of Education Lead) or David Sansom (Headteacher).

Important - limitations to withdraw

- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching. A pupil may be required to work in another area of the school, such as library/middle area.
- Whilst parents or carers have a right to withdraw children from RE, they should note that children may also encounter religions and beliefs and wider aspects of faith in other areas of the National Curriculum from which there is no right of withdrawal.
- On occasion, spontaneous questions about religious matters are raised by pupils or issues related to religion arise in other curriculum subjects such as history or PSHE. For example, schools promote community cohesion and help pupils to understand ideas about identity and diversity, feelings and emotions within both religious and non-religious contexts.

Managing the Right of Withdrawal

All requests for withdrawals should be made in writing, addressed to the headteacher.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises where it is feasible and appropriate.

Where a request for withdrawal is made, the school must comply and excuse the pupil until the request is rescinded. Though not legally required, it is good practice for a headteacher to invite parents to discuss their written request.

The principles for River Bank Primary school's curriculum design follows Dylan William's Principled Curriculum Design (2013), which are:

- Balanced*
- Rigorous*
- Coherent*
- Vertically Integrated*
- Appropriate*
- Focused*
- Relevant*

Details of how these have been incorporated into our overall curriculum design can be found on the River Bank Primary Curriculum Intent Statement document.

In specificity to Religious Education, some of the applications are further explained, below.

A 'Balanced' Religious Education Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

- 1. All learning content for Religious Education is taken from the Luton SACRE programme of study and all linked objectives are covered throughout KS1 and KS2. This syllabus aligns with the standards set by OFSTED and endeavours to provide a broad and balanced education that prepares pupils for life in modern society. The statutory requirements for RE focus more on the provision and delivery of the subject rather than specifying specific learning outcomes.*
- 2. Religious Education has six sequenced topics in each year group, which are taught weekly, and are protected from being replaced by core subjects. Curriculum content is not 'blocked', but individual lessons can be extended in cases where more time is essential to understanding.*

A 'Rigorous' Religious Education Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

- 1. All of the Religious Education is taught in line with the evolution of society's religious and non-religious landscape, that highlights the importance for pupils to build up accurate knowledge of the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion. This is taught from EYFS through to year 6.*
- 2. Cultural understanding and diversity are sequenced through all the years. There are six themes covered within our curriculum which are based around understanding the relationship between both religion and worldviews. These themes are: God and faith, Humanity, Nature, Science and technology and Society. A different theme is taught every half-term; God and faith is taught twice across the year. These themes encompass all walks of life and cover Humanities, Social sciences, Natural sciences and Applied sciences - all from the perspective of religion and worldviews.*
- 3. This syllabus aims to equip pupils with a real world understanding of religions and worldviews which fosters criticality, understanding and mutual respect. By developing engaging and new*

themes, pupils will see how religions and worldviews interact with contemporary and emerging real-world issues, whilst also having an understanding of the past.

4. In all the above, religions and diversity of Luton and the children's own religious understanding and diversity is explored and celebrated in order to prepare them to reside in a multi-diverse community.

A 'Coherent' Religious Education Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

1. The curriculum is sequenced logically where foundational ideas are then built upon. The themes progress vertically and horizontally across the year groups with pre-requisite knowledge being taught before higher level skills are utilised.

The aims of progression can be summarised through the following:

- Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst 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.
- Express with increasing judgement their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- Explain their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities.
- Appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.
- Enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all.
- Articulate belief and values in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

A 'Vertically Integrated' Religious Education Curriculum

1. Religious Education material taught at one point in time builds on materials taught earlier, and feeds what is to be taught. An example of this would be: 'Exploring religion and nature in year 1', children are exploring how different religions understand where the natural world came from. This is further developed in 'Courtesy to Nature' in year 2, where children are exploring and identifying ways in which we can take care of our environment, and why we should preserve it. In year 3, they go on to study 'Environmental Crisis and Religious Responses' exploring and identifying how the world experiences many environmental challenges and learning how these challenges make it harder for plants, animals and people. Children will be able to link these challenges to human actions, self-reflecting on what they can do to protect the environment.

An 'Appropriate' Religious Education Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

- 1. Religious Education material is sequenced and taught from the Luton SACRE document on a 'year by year' basis. This Luton SACRE document was published in June 2024.*
- 2. Children are not set according to ability in Religious Education.*
- 3. In Religious Education, independent learning tasks are set by the teachers using the 'Slope of Difficulty' approach, with any misconceptions / misunderstanding picked up through feedback in the next section or same-week intervention.*
- 4. Essential knowledge is tested as part of low-stakes retrieval practice at the start of each Religious Education session.*
- 5. Encourage children to think, discuss, emphasise and question content for a better understanding.*

A 'Focused' Religious Education Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

- 1. Religious Education medium-term planning highlights material we consider essential amongst other important material. For example, in year 6 children look at the importance of social justice.*
- 2. The essential Religious Education knowledge makes up much of the retrieval practice that takes place at the start of each session.*
- 3. Each year, the Religious Education content is reviewed and refined with teachers, year leaders and curriculum leaders.*

A 'Relevant' Religious Education Curriculum

At River Bank Primary School this is evident in our curriculum design in the following ways:

- 1. In Religious Education the material within our curriculum areas is relevant to the children's own interests and helps our pupils be good citizens of the future. This includes: significant places, showing care for planet Earth, showing care for others, deeper meanings of festivals and justice and poverty.*