



Religious Education Policy

Tonacliffe's Vision

We aim to develop our children to their full potential and encourage them to be tolerant, respectful, knowledgeable and reflective where the beliefs, faiths and values of others are concerned. We have high expectations and celebrate success both academically and socially. We aim to provide an outstanding religious education so that our children can grow to make a valuable contribution to the community in which they live.

Statement of Intent

At Tonacliffe, it is our intention to ensure that our RE investigative units centre around the exploration of 'Big Questions'. This is fundamental to our style of learning within RE and as such we adapt the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus to ensure that 'big questions' are at the heart of each and every investigative unit that we teach. Children are not merely learning about different faiths and religions, but learning to question, wonder and reflect upon universal issues and questions that are not easily answered, if at all. At Tonacliffe, our RE lessons aim to engage children in active reflection, giving them the tools to become independent thinkers who are tolerant and respectful of the values and views of others, while being able to maturely express their own beliefs, values and thoughts.

We aim to make RE as exciting and relevant to your child as possible and plan for creative opportunities for children to engage in different experiences of worship. This includes the use of artefacts, stories, resources, music, art, drama. We also invite in, when possible, speakers/visitors from world faiths to engage pupils' interest, as well as organising trips out to places of worship when available and appropriate to enhancing their learning experience.

What we are covering :

As stated, our religious education curriculum follows the Lancashire Agreed Syllabus, which fits the needs of our particular school. This involves the delivery of 3 investigations linked to Christianity (God, Jesus and the Church) each year, as well as investigations based around other major religions : Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam. Children will learn about key beliefs, key festivals and key figures within each religion covered.

Within each investigative unit, the teaching and learning sequence follows the same pattern:

- Shared Human Experience
- Beliefs and Values
- Living Religious Traditions
- Search for Personal Meaning

Religious Education at Tonacliffe encourages your child to ask questions and search for their own answers; staff encourage pupils and each other to reflect and contemplate on their thoughts, feelings and beliefs. In this way we aim for children to develop an understanding of social and moral practises and way of life, as well as a willingness to recognise good wherever it exists.

Why we are covering these areas :

Religious Education at Tonacliffe reflects and represents the religions found within the school community, as well as taking into account the religions found in the immediate geographical area surrounding the school (locally) and beyond (nationally and globally).

Where it takes our children :

We feel it is essential that children have a clear understanding of the fundamental principles of the religions they explore and to be in a position to ponder, reflect and question these principles for themselves in a mature and educated way. This allows them to be more tolerant, understanding and informed about people who may be a part of a different religion or culture to themselves, hence helping them become positive and open minded members of society. Dispelling stereotypes surrounding different religions and their beliefs is important within our curriculum at Tonacliffe, as is making connections between different religions so that our children can have a greater understanding of the principles upon which each religion is built.

Implementation : Teaching and Learning

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to **learn about** religious traditions and **to reflect upon** what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values, and promotes their spiritual growth and development. This is implemented by encouraging children to think about their own values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum. Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions.

At Tonacliffe, we use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover, etc. to develop their religious thinking. Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children investigate religious and moral issues both individually and in groups. We encourage a creative approach in R.E. which is based on age-related expectations and children's levels of understanding. In addition to this, we have a range of resources available to supplement the schemes of work, including a trolley of artefacts central to each major religion explored, and lessons are taught using a variety of different learning styles. We make use of relevant ICT resources, as well as resources gathered from RE network cluster meetings.

Within our school, we ensure continuity and progression in our RE curriculum via the investigative units building upon one another year on year. The exploration of 'big questions' is continued as the children progress throughout the school and learning is predominantly recorded within large class books that act as a reference book for the children, as well as a place where they can record their personal responses to the ideas explored within lessons. The profile of RE is still being raised throughout school by way of whole school assemblies focusing upon a range of key religious events and themes, school plays and productions (such as the nursery 'First Nativity' performance and KS1 performances linked to the story of the birth of the Jesus) and the increased focus we have introduced to discussion based lessons within the teaching of RE. In addition, Tonacliffe partakes in the 'Spirited Arts Competition' each year, which further raises the profile of the subject within our school.

Early Years also embark upon their learning journey within Religious Education via adapting the Lancashire approved units to meet the needs of their children. Again, discussion based learning is the focus and the children are immersed in their religious learning via the use of props, artefacts, music, drama and other creative approaches that centre around 'theme' based learning eg celebration – the children will explore Christian celebrations alongside Islamic ones.

Whole School celebration

At Tonacliffe, school assemblies are of a broadly Christian nature; it is not our intention to lead children to any specific faith, but to use RE to encourage Tonacliffe pupils to learn and develop the positive attitudes of curiosity, wonder and appreciation, commitment, fairness and self-awareness of the beliefs and values of others (Lancashire Agreed Syllabus). Tonacliffe Primary is a place where we celebrate diversity.

Making the curriculum work for every child

At Tonacliffe, we ensure RE is accessible to every child. We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities hence we provide suitable

learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, including:

- Setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses
- Enabling the exploration of 'big questions' to occur in a graded fashion – some children will be able to reflect in a more detailed way upon the challenging questions we pose, but ALL children will be able to search for personal meaning within their learning.
- Using mixed ability groupings to allow children to support one another and help one another to grow and learn through discussion
- Using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children
- Providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child where appropriate
- Using topic mats when appropriate to assist children in their learning and as a means of reviewing their understanding

The teaching of RE is not restricted to this subject area but permeates the whole of our school curriculum and our school life. We look at all aspects of our school experience to support children in their understanding, respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs, as well as constantly developing their moral and ethical values.

Assessment

Throughout Years 1-6 children are assessed throughout investigations as part of their ongoing learning. This may be based upon speaking and listening work that has occurred within lessons or a reflective cross curricular piece, such as a piece of annotated art work linked to the religious values and beliefs they have been studying. Children are assessed according to AT1 (Learning about Religion) and AT2 (Learning from Religion) based upon whether they are secure in age related expectations, still working below age related expectations or working at greater depth. Samples of assessments are collected at the end of units to form a portfolio and samples of work are collected from EYFS. We use the Lancashire Tracker to monitor on-going assessments and record judgements termly.

For further information relating to assessment, see the progression grids and end of key stage expectation documents.

British Values : Equalities Statement

Tonacliffe Primary School is committed to serving its community and surrounding areas. We recognise the multi-faith nature of the United Kingdom and understand the role school plays in promoting British Values. We encourage admissions from all those who are entitled to education under British Law, regardless of faith, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or financial status. We are a school for all and, throughout our RE curriculum particularly, encourage within our children a mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Links to SMSC

At Tonacliffe our RE curriculum plays a fundamental role in contributing to the SMSC development of our children. Spiritual development is obviously central to our religious education and we through the focus on a 'search for personal meaning' within our RE lessons, children are encouraged to be reflective about their own beliefs, religious or otherwise, that inform their perspective on life. We also ensure children are encouraged to develop a respect for the faiths, feelings and values of others. In this way we hope to foster a sense of wonder and fascination in our children, in learning about themselves, others and the world around them. Additionally, our religious investigations include a strong focus upon morality and encourage children to reflect upon what is right and wrong and apply this to their own lives. Moral and ethical issues are often debated within the context of different religious beliefs and children are encouraged to reflect upon their own views, as well as to understand and appreciate the viewpoints of others where such issues are concerned.

Monitoring and review of RE

RE is monitored once per term using a variety of approaches, including for example : learning walks, book scrutinies, lesson observations, pupil interviews.

Impact : outcomes

In line with what has already been outlined, we aim to provide an outstanding religious education for our children which informs and educates them about different faiths and beliefs, as well as encouraging them to be tolerant, respectful and reflective about all faiths. We encourage our children to become open minded and to celebrate the goodness that exists within the world, as well as becoming positive, well rounded citizens with strong moral foundations. We hope that our children enter the world as reflective, understanding and empathetic young people, able to positively communicate with and work alongside people of all different cultures, religions, faiths and beliefs. At Tonacliffe, we aim for ALL of our children to ponder, wonder, explore and be curious about the 'big questions' raised within Religious Education that are not easily answered, if at all! The desired outcome is that all of our children will be able to wonder and explore these issues in an informed, sensitive and empathetic manner.

Please note:

It is recognised that any parent has the right to withdraw their child from any religious worship or instruction. The Headteacher should be informed either personally or in writing if this is your intention.

N.Devine, RE Coordinator: Reviewed Autumn 2023



