

Religious Education can play an essential part in the personal, moral, cultural and spiritual development of children, while developing those skills, capabilities, attitudes and dispositions which they will need for life and work in an increasingly complex and rapidly changing world.

In Gilnahirk Primary School it is our aim for the children to know and understand the basic Christian beliefs, teachings and traditions. Our syllabus is Christian and Non-Denominational.

We aim for the children not only to know the Bible Stories but also to bring them to life by relating them to the children's own everyday experiences.

Although Christianity is the main religion of the children in the school some different religions and cultures are represented. Considering these teachers are encouraged to adopt the following principles:

- To exercise sympathy and understanding in the way R.E. is presented.
- To encourage pupils to be sensitive to the feelings and opinions of their peers.
- To foster an atmosphere of mutual respect.

The Core Syllabus

The core syllabus is based on three main strands, all of which are embraced by the programme of study.

Attainment Target 1

Pupils should develop an awareness, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the key Christian teachings about God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit, about Jesus and about the Bible; and an ability to interpret and relate the Bible to everyday life.

Attainment Target 2

Pupils should develop an awareness, knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the growth of Christianity, of its worship, prayer and religious language; a growing awareness of the meaning of belonging to a Christian tradition and sensitivity to the beliefs of others.

Attainment Target 3

Pupils should develop their ability to think and judge about morality, to relate Christian moral principles to personal and social life and to identify values and attitudes that influence behaviour.

The Aims of Religious Education

Pupils will be provided with opportunities to

1. Develop a knowledge and understanding of key Christian Teaching about God, Jesus and the Bible
2. Develop an awareness of the relevance of the Bible to everyday life.
3. Develop the ability to make moral decisions.
4. Learn to respect the beliefs, values and attitudes of others.
5. Learn about the Christian spiritual experiences of worship, prayer and belonging to the family of God.
6. Develop their own self-awareness and self-esteem.

Learning Experiences and Opportunities

Religious Education in the Foundation Stage and in Key Stage 1 is taught by the class teachers.

Religious Education in Key Stage 2 is taught by class teachers and on some occasions by the P1 to P3 teachers during afternoon sessions.

In Gilnahirk Primary School we aim to make R.E. an enjoyable experience.

Teachers should use a variety of approaches to cater for the different learning styles of the children and should provide a wide range of learning experiences.

Children should have opportunities to:

- Participate in individual, pair, group and whole class work.
- Listen well to stories, viewpoints and ideas of others, including people from different Religious traditions or denominations.
- Participate in discussions, explanations, roleplays and presentations.
- Find, select and use information from a range of sources, for example the Internet, Bibles, Bible dictionaries, maps and reference books and apply this to their learning.
- Use a variety of writing styles, for example when writing letters, diaries, reports, recounts, narratives and poetry to convey their learning in Religious Education.

Differentiation

Teachers should plan for the different levels of ability within the class.

Differentiation should be planned by outcome or task, as appropriate.

Assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process. It helps to provide a picture of a child's or young person's progress and achievements and to identify the next

steps in learning. Assessment approaches need to promote pupil engagement and ensure the appropriate support so that all pupils can achieve their aspirational goals and maximise their potential.

In RE, as in all other areas of learning, teachers should:

- share learning intentions and success criteria with pupils: – displaying the learning intentions in the classroom (these can be written or projected onto the board); – referring to them throughout the lesson and revisiting them at the end; – writing them in words the pupils will understand; and – sharing and agreeing with pupils on what you are looking for (with practice, children should be able to write success criteria themselves);
- ask and encourage effective questions: – asking open-ended questions, giving pupils ‘thinking time’ and using strategies such as think, pair, share; and encouraging pupils to formulate their own questions.
- provide formative feedback showing how attainment can be improved: – using a variety of prompts, scaffolding, examples and reminder prompts; relating feedback given to the success criteria; providing pupils with time to read the comments; and providing pupils with time to act on the comments;

Summative Assessment and Reporting

The statutory summative assessment arrangements for the Northern Ireland Curriculum focus on pupil progression in the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills needed for life and the world of work. These skills are described in the Levels of Progression for the Cross-Curricular Skills of Communication, Using Mathematics and Using ICT.

RE provides a rich context for the acquisition and development of these skills, particularly the skills of Communication (Talking and Listening, Reading and Writing) and in Using ICT. It also provides a very useful context for the acquisition and development of Thinking Skills (Managing Information, Thinking, Problem-Solving and Decision-Making, and Being Creative) and the Personal Capabilities of Self-Management and Working with Others.

When pupils have acquired and developed these skills, teachers should provide them with some opportunities within the context of RE to demonstrate them. Teachers should ensure that assessment activities have a clear purpose and are planned and embedded in learning and teaching.

Teachers must also assess and report annually on each of the Areas of Learning, including RE. This should be carried out following the whole-school policies. While reporting to parents on RE is optional, it is certainly good practice to do so.

Resources

Northern Ireland Curriculum Website www.nicurriculum.org.uk

As well as the RE section devoted to Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, teachers in primary schools may also find some of the RE support and guidance material on the Key Stage 3 section of the website useful for their own background information when planning or researching topics. Click on Key Stage 3 and then on Religious Education.

The following is a list of other useful websites and organisations that may be able to offer support and resources for teaching RE in the primary school.

Barnabas in Schools

www.barnabasinschools.org.uk

Tried and tested resources for assemblies and RE and ideas for exploring values and festivals through drama, discussion, art and games

BBC Learning Zone Class Clips (Primary) www.bbc.co.uk/learningzone/clips

Select RE to find a wide range of short video clips to support many RE topics on Christianity and other religions

BBC Religion and Ethics (Religion Homepage)

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions

Background information on a wide range of religions and religious topics. We recommend 'Featured Religions and Beliefs' and 'Interfaith Calendar'. Many other religious and ethical issues are covered on related pages of this website.

BBC Schools Religion www.bbc.co.uk/schools/religion

Background information on festivals, special times and events in Christianity and other world religions. Much of the material is appropriate for older primary pupils, and there are also downloadable worksheets for teachers. See also the link to BBC Learning Religious Studies for additional materials and further links:

www.bbc.co.uk/learning/subjects/religious_studies.shtml

www.biblegateway.com

Access to a range of downloadable versions of the Bible in English and many other languages.

Channel 4 Learning – RE

www.channel4learning.com/support/websites/re.html

Some resources available for younger primary and early years – Dottie and Buzz: games, songs and simple activities.

Primary Resources – RE

www.primaryresources.co.uk/re/re.htm

A wide range of downloadable resources, including activities, visual presentations, policy guidelines, and so on.

RE Online www.reonline.org.uk

A very comprehensive website with resources for teachers and for pupils of all age groups, with access to photos, video clips, and so on. Well worth extensive exploration.

Saint Patrick Centre

www.saintpatrickcentre.com

The website of the St Patrick interpretive centre in historic Downpatrick. Much of general interest to those teaching about Ireland's patron saint and the development of Christianity in Ireland. We recommend the education section

Northern Ireland Curriculum Thematic Units These were developed by the RE Advisory Group and issued to schools in booklet form in 2010. They are also available in English and Irish for downloading from the RE section of the Northern Ireland Curriculum website (Key Stages 1 and 2):

www.nicurriculum.org.uk/key stages 1 and 2/areas of learning/religious education

- Food for Thought – Thematic Unit and Resource Book on the place of food in religions (for Years 3 and 4)
- Saint Patrick and People of Faith – Thematic Unit and Resource Book featuring Moses, Gandhi and the Dalai Lama as well as the patron saint of Ireland (for Year 5)
- Faith and Light – Thematic Unit and Resource Book featuring festivals and special times such as Advent/Christmas, Hanukkah, Diwali and Ramadan (for Years 6 and 7).

Twinkl Website

Cross Curricular Links

1. R.E. can be included in topic work throughout the primary school and has links to many other subjects. In all the key stages we aim to link R.E. with topics the children are currently studying in P.D.M.U. or The World Around Us.
2. It has much to offer in terms of Literacy, Numeracy and I.C.T. and these can be used to enhance the teaching of R.E.

Withdrawal from R.E.

“Parents have the right to withdraw their children from religious education classes or collective worship, after notifying the principal” (1986 Principal Order Article 21/5)

Links with Charitable Organisations

Pupils are encouraged to put into practice care for one another by participating regularly in fund-raising activities. This encourages pupils to be aware of the needs of the wider community.

Assembly

Religious Education is also linked to the way in which the school organises its Collective Worship. While it is seen as being distinct from Religious Education, there are certain areas where it supplements the teaching of R.E. for example:

- During the variety of forms of Collective Worship there will be time given for the members of the school community to reflect;
- There will be opportunities for Spiritual Development
- A Religious Education theme may be developed;
- Class Teachers may use their year group theme as the focus of their Assembly.

Assemblies are held three times a week.

1. There is a whole school Assembly which is mostly conducted by the Principal.
2. P1-P3 Assembly which is conducted by Class Teachers, Visiting Speakers and Local Ministers on a rota basis.
3. P4-P7 Assembly which is conducted by Local Ministers and Visiting Speakers and supervised by the class teachers on a rota basis.

The children occasionally participate in these Assemblies by taking part in drama or singing in a group.

The school hall is used for special events at Harvest and P1- P3 Nativity Plays at Christmas.

[Links with local churches](#)

The school has formed close links with Gilnahirk Presbyterian, Gilnahirk Baptist and St Dorothea's Parish Church.

Policy Reviewed by the R.E. Co-ordinator April 2018