



RE in the Early Years

INTENT

“Children in EYFS should encounter religious and non-religious worldviews through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They should listen to and talk about stories, poems and songs. Children can be introduced to subject-specific words and use all their senses to explore beliefs, practices and forms of expression in religions and worldviews. They ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of, and wonder at, the world in which they live”.

The RE Agreed Syllabus, 2024-2029 Bedford Borough and Central Bedfordshire

At St Leonard’s Lower School RE is a compulsory part of the EYFS curriculum.

RE sits very firmly within the areas of personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world in the EYFS curriculum. This framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. Our pupils will learn through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Children will have the opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness

Our children learn through:

- Playing and exploring: children investigate and experience things, and ‘have a go’.
- Active learning: children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically: children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas and develop strategies for doing things.

Religions and worldviews in the Reception class, children should encounter local examples of religion, including Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it, in line with the law about RE.

Good Early Years teaching stems from children’s own experiences and we aim to find ways to draw on the wealth of religious or spiritual experiences that some families may bring with them.

Following DfE Guidance (‘Development Matters’, 2021) RE can be taught through all areas of the curriculum, developing children’s knowledge and abilities through the following possible opportunities.

Prime area: Communication and Language.

RE enables children to:

- Develop their spoken language through quality conversation in a language-rich environment, gaining new vocabulary about religion and worldviews
- Engage actively with stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems from the RE field, taking opportunities to use and embed new words in a range of contexts
- Share their ideas via conversation, story-telling and role play, responding to support and modelling from their teacher, and sensitive questioning that invites them to elaborate their thoughts in the RE field
- Become comfortable using a rich range of vocabulary and language structures in relation to RE content.
- Offer explanations and answers to ‘why’ questions about faith stories, non-fiction, rhymes, songs, poems.

Prime area: Personal, Social and Emotional Development.

RE enables children to:

- Observe and join in warm and supportive relationships with adults and learn how to understand their own feelings and those of others, using a widening vocabulary of emotions and feelings
- Manage emotions and develop a positive sense of self, understanding their own feelings and those of others e.g. through religious story, through talking about how experiences make us feel
- Talk and think about simple values as they learn how to make good friendships, co-operate and resolve conflicts peaceably
- Notice and respond to ideas of caring, sharing, generosity + kindness from RE content: stories, sayings and songs.

Prime area: Physical Development. RE enables children to:

- Use and develop their motor skills through RE based arts and craft activities and, for example, small world play, visual representations of their ideas and thoughts, role play

Specific area: Literacy.

RE enables children to:

- Build their abilities in language comprehension through talking with adults about the world around them, including the world of religion and belief
- Engage with stories and non-fiction in RE settings and enjoy rhymes, poems and songs together
- Build their skills in RE-related word reading, recognizing religious words and discovering new vocabulary in relation to religions and worldviews
- Articulate ideas and use RE examples to write simple phrases or sentences that can be read by others

Specific area: Mathematics.

RE enables children to:

- Develop their spatial reasoning skills, noticing shape, space and measures in relation to RE content
- Look for patterns and relationships and spot connections, sorting and ordering objects simply in relation to RE content.

Specific area: Understanding the World.

RE enables children to:

- Make sense of their physical world and their community, e.g. on visits to places of worship, or by meeting members of religious communities
- Listen to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems to foster understanding of our culturally, socially and ecologically diverse world
- Extend their knowledge and familiarity with words that support understanding of values, religion and belief
- Talk about the lives of people around them, understanding characters and events from stories
- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read, seen and experienced in class
- Explore the natural world around them making observations of animals and plants, environments and seasons, making space for responses of joy, wonder, awe and questioning

Specific area: Expressive Arts and Design.

RE enables children to:

- Develop artistic and cultural awareness in relation to RE materials in relation to art, music, dance, imaginative play, and role-play and stories to represent their own ideas, thoughts and feelings
- Build their imagination and creativity by exploring and playing with a wide range of media and materials using RE content, responding in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, smell, touch and taste
- See, hear and participate in a wide range of examples of religious and spiritual expression, developing their understanding, self-expression, creativity, vocabulary and ability to communicate through the arts
- Create work drawing from religions and beliefs with a variety of materials and tools, sharing their creations and explaining the meaning of their work
- Adapt and recount religious stories inventively, imaginatively and expressively, and sing, perform and learn from well-known songs in RE imaginatively and expressively

IMPLEMENTATION

We teach 36 hours of RE provision in the Reception year (e.g. short sessions of 30 minutes twice a week, implemented through continuous provision)

Three units of teaching focus on Christianity, and the others include opportunities to encounter Christians, Hindus, Jews and Muslims, as well as non-religious responses and ways of living.

Understanding Christianity and RE Today resources are used to support our teaching of the following units:

Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?

Why is Christmas special for Christians?

Why is Easter special for Christians?

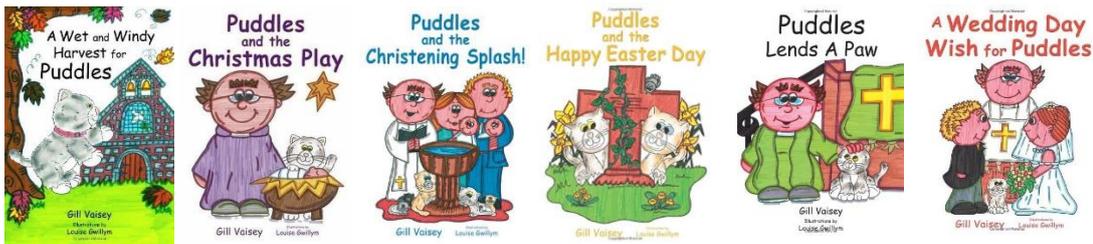
Being special: where do we belong? Learn from at least two religions / worldviews

Which places are specially valued and why? Learn from at least two religions / worldviews

Which stories are specially valued and why? Learn from at least two religions /worldviews

In addition we use Gill Vaisey resources to support teaching and learning in Christianity and other Worldviews:

Puddles resources



Belonging and Believing resources



IMPACT

We aim to assess:

- Substantive knowledge: Are pupils able to make sense of the different beliefs, ideas and practices encountered and of their impact.
- Ways of knowing / Disciplinary knowledge: Pupils are able to use different methods to study religion in age appropriate ways.
- Personal knowledge: Can pupils 'make connections' between their own worldviews and the materials they study.

By the end of EYFS pupils should be able to: • **Making sense** • **Understanding impact** • **Making connections**

Recognise and retell religious stories, talking about what they say about the world

Know that Christians believe that God created the world

Know that God came to Earth as Jesus

Say why Easter was a special time for Christians

Begin to recognise that different religions have holy buildings that link to their beliefs about God

Begin to recognise that different religion have holy books that link to their beliefs about God

Say how and why Christians may link to thank their creator

Recall what happened at a traditional Christian festival (Christmas)

Recognise some symbols and traditions Christians use at Easter and talk about why

Recall simply what happens at a traditional Christian baptism and begin to understand that other religions have traditions to welcome a baby into a religion.

Say why some religious people have places that are special to them

Talk about the things that are special and valued in places of worship

Talk about what some religious stories teach believers

Talk about things that they find interesting, puzzling or wonderful and also about their own experiences and feelings about the world

Think about the wonders of the natural world, expressing ideas and feelings

Talk about what people do to mess up the world and what they do to look after it

Talk about who is special to them and say why

Make connections with personal experiences

Talk about new life in nature (Easter and Spring)

Talk about places that make them feel special and why

Talk about things that have happened in their life that have made them feel special and why

Talk about their thoughts and feelings when visiting a Church

Identify some of their own feelings in the stories they hear.