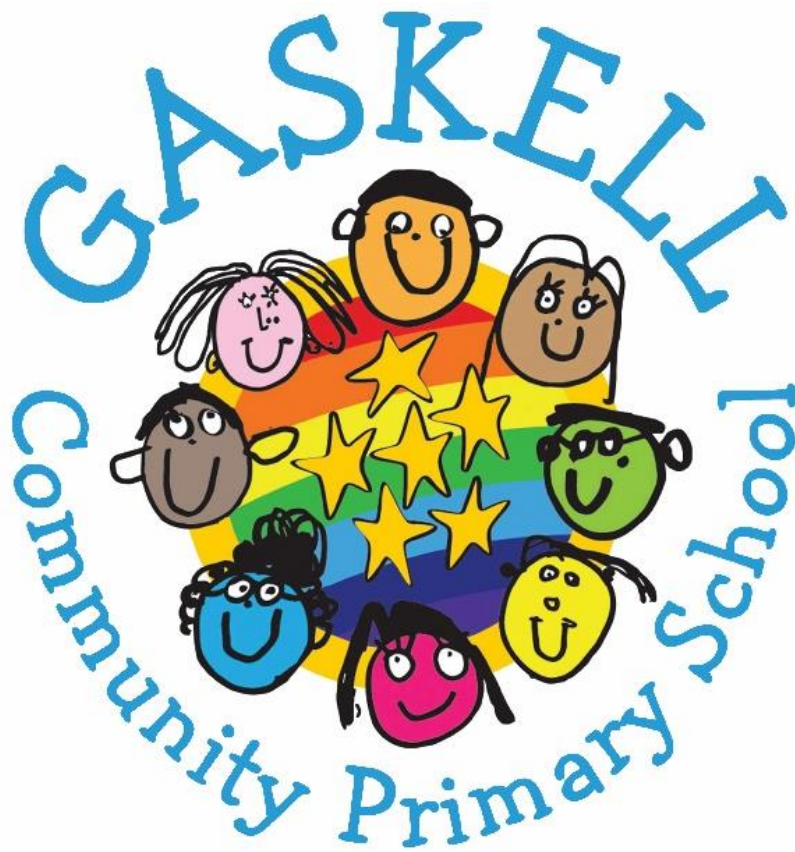




RE Policy

Approved by: Headteacher & SLT

Last reviewed: September 2023

Next review: July 2025

Introduction

Gaskell Primary School includes members of staff and children who originate from many nationalities, cultures and faith groups. As a school, we aim to celebrate this diversity and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all of our children, including new arrivals and non-native English speakers. We believe that Religious Education provides an opportunity to celebrate and foster the awareness of these differences within our school and the wider world. It is a subject that celebrates diversity and challenges stereotypes.

Legal Requirements

RE is for all pupils:

- Every child has an entitlement to Religious Education (RE).
- RE is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and must be provided for all of the registered children in state-funded schools in England, including those who are in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or are withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over).
- This requirement does not apply for the children who are below compulsory school age (although there are many examples of good practice of RE in nursery classes).
- Special schools should ensure that every child receives RE 'as far as is practicable'.
- The 'basic' school curriculum includes the National Curriculum, RE and Relationships and Sex Education.

RE is determined locally, not nationally:

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority.
- Local authority maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless the parents request the locally agreed syllabus.
- Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless the parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.
- Religious Education is also compulsory in academies and free schools, as set out in their funding agreements. Academies may use the locally agreed syllabus, or a different locally agreed syllabus (with the permission of the SACRE concerned) or devise their own curriculum. This agreed syllabus has been written to support academies in Bolton to meet the requirements of their funding agreement.

RE is plural:

- The RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE, or by an academy or free school 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.
- According to case law, the agreed syllabus has a duty 'to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner' and 'must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief'. Note that the term 'religion' encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs.

As the education policy changes, the legal requirement for RE for all registered children remains unchanged. RE is an entitlement for all of the children, unless they have been withdrawn by their parents from some or all of the RE curriculum.

Right of Withdrawal

This was first granted when RE was actually religious instruction and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE is very different now – open, broad and exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. However, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the RE lessons or any part of the RE curriculum and the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Where the child has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parents want the child to receive. These arrangements will be made by the parents; the school is not expected to make these arrangements. This could be provided at the school in question, or by another school in the locality. If neither approach is practicable, the child may receive external RE teaching as long as the withdrawal does not have a significant impact on the child's attendance. Schools should have a policy setting out their approach to provision and withdrawal. More guidance on withdrawal can be found in Religious Education in English schools: non-statutory guidance 2010, available online at www.gov.uk/government/publications/religiouseducation-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010

If parents wish to withdraw their child(ren) from RE lessons, they must speak to the Headteacher.

The Scheme of Work

RE is taught in accordance with the aims of the agreed syllabus produced by Bolton SACRE 2020 Syllabus. In this programme of work, religious education is taught discreetly in units. Planning is completed on the Gaskell Medium Term Plans, referenced to Bolton SACRE. The principal aim of Religious Education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that the children can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle the questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

Teaching and Learning

The teaching and learning approach has three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, underpinning the aims of RE. Teaching and learning in the classroom will encompass all of the three elements, allowing for

overlap between the elements as suits the religion, concept and the question being explored. These elements set the context for open exploration of religion and belief.

Making sense of beliefs

- Identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary.
- Explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities.
- Recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation.

Making connections

- Evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses.
- Challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response.
- Discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding.

Understanding the impact

- Examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways.
- Recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.
- Appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

These elements offer a structure through which the children can encounter diverse religious traditions alongside non-religious worldviews – which reflect the backgrounds of many children in our school. The elements present a broad and flexible strategy that allows for different traditions to be treated with integrity. These elements offer a route through each unit whilst also allowing for a range of questions reflecting different approaches, for example, from religious studies, philosophy, sociology, ethics and theology. The teaching of RE also takes into account the well-being of the children's circumstances and is adapted to suit the needs of the individual classes.

Equal Opportunities

Inclusion and differentiation for the children with SEN and EAL are taken into account in our planning and teaching as they are in all areas of the curriculum. Within the teaching of RE, we make the most of the opportunities to help the children develop their sensitivity to relevant issues such as refugees and religious fasting, and to develop positive attitudes towards themselves and others.

We endeavour to draw on the varied experiences and backgrounds of our children and staff in order to make RE relevant and interesting for our children. Important festivals are celebrated from the different religions within the school and wider community. A class will lead an assembly and the parents are invited to attend.

Through RE, the children have the opportunity to develop many key skills such as thinking, researching, evaluating, reflecting and empathising. Wherever possible, links are made between Religious Education and other curriculum subjects.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for the children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as PSHE, the children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important.

We encourage the children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within the society and their own experience.

Religious Education also strongly supports the school's 'World Citizens' driver by introducing the children to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider communities, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice.

Community

Here at Gaskell Primary School, we aim to develop the community links with our RE. We have also taken part in the Bolton Faith Trails whereby the children can visit mosques, temples and churches. The EYFS have involved the parents with their learning in RE and have invited them in to school for an open afternoon.