

RE Curriculum Purpose and Rationale

At Arden Forest our vision is to enable our whole school community with the skills to be happy, successful and independent life-long learners with healthy mind, bodies and spirit.

'Little Learners, Big Achievers'



Taken from Arden Forest vision statement and school motto.

Statutory Commitment

EYFS Framework – Understanding the World (Sept 2021)

Educational Programmes – Understanding the World

Understanding the world involves guiding children **to make sense of** their physical world and **their community**. **The frequency and range of children's personal experiences increases their knowledge and sense of the world around them** – from visiting parks, libraries and museums to **meeting important members of society** such as police officers, nurses and firefighters. In addition, listening to a broad selection of stories, non-fiction, rhymes and poems will foster their **understanding of our culturally, socially, technologically and ecologically diverse world**. As well as building important knowledge, this extends their familiarity with words that support understanding across domains. Enriching and widening children's vocabulary will support later reading comprehension.

Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017–2022

Arden Forest Infant School follows the *Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017–2022* which provides experiences and opportunities and appropriate topics for children in the Foundation Stage.

'The suggestions made for the EYFS RE are good learning in themselves. These also connect to the EYFS 7 areas of learning. RE sits very firmly within the areas of personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. This

KS1 National Curriculum – RE (2013)

There is not a National Curriculum for RE, all maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum requirements to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes RE.

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

All state schools.....must teach religious education..... All Schools must publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online.'

(National Curriculum 2013, p.4)

Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017–2022

Arden Forest Infant School follows the *Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017–2022* which states its Principal aim as follows:

'The principal aim of RE is to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own.'

framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships They will do this 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 opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.'

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017)

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Know about and understand a range of religions and worldview
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews'

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017)

School Commitment

Our Curriculum Intent (Appendix A) identifies what opportunities and experiences our pupils have on entering our school. This also recognises what our pupils need in order that we fully enable our school vision in both phases in our school. It maintains a fidelity to the new EYFS Statutory Framework and KS1 national Curriculum as well as a commitment to alignment across the two phases in our school.

We have a diverse range of cultural and family backgrounds which are valued and shape our unique relationships with our school community. However, we have observed that our children tend to have a limited cultural experiences or awareness of their wider community.

Through our RE curriculum, we want to engage, inspire, challenge and encourage all pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions, explore different religious beliefs, values and traditions that are followed in our multi-cultural society. We want them to know how religious education promotes tolerance and combats prejudice; therefore producing positive citizens, preparing them for adult life, employment and life-long learning.

Our Growth Mindset Learning Behaviours help children develop the right attitudes to RE in order that they fulfil their personal characteristics and relationships principles; being responsible, showing kindness, respect, positivity, tolerance and resilience. Children are encouraged to show kindness, respect and tolerance of one another's views as well as their relationships with others.

Within RE, there are opportunities for pupils to develop all their School Responsibilities' especially being kind and respectful.

Why do learners at Arden Forest Infant School need to study RE?

At Arden Forest Infant School, our teaching of RE supports aims to engage, inspire, challenge and encourage all pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions, explore different religious beliefs, values and traditions that are followed in our multi-cultural society.

At Arden Forest Infant School, our teaching of RE supports our vision of inclusive practice and it enables all children to be ready to engage with others, including their peers and adults alike, this is achieved by promoting particular citizenship qualities that help develop a well-rounded child.

The National Curriculum states the legal requirement that "Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly-based, and which promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life." Also, "All state schools ... must teach religious education to pupils at every key stage ... All schools must publish their school curriculum by subject and academic year online."

(DfE National Curriculum Framework, July 2013, p5).

The new RE Agreed Syllabus for Coventry and Warwickshire establishes what shall be taught in RE and provides teachers in both Authorities with a framework of support and guidance.

Therefore, 'children in EYFS should encounter religions and worldviews through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They should listen to and talk about stories. Children can be introduced to subject specific words and use all their senses to explore beliefs, practices and forms of expression. 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.'

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017)

In KS1, 'pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.'

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017)

Therefore, our RE lessons the children will have access to a wide range of high quality religious resources and artefacts. This will enable them to learn about other religions and the wider world.

The knowledge and skills gained in RE provides children with good knowledge for the wider multi-cultural community in later life.

How we promote personal characteristics and relationships?

At Arden Forest Infant School, the RE curriculum delivers a vast range of social, moral, spiritual and cultural aspects (Appendix D) which reflects the school's Personal Characteristics and Relationships principles. It encourages the children to be responsible, show kindness,

respect, positivity, tolerance and resilience. It encourages kindness, respect and tolerance of one another's views as well as our relationships with others.

Within RE, children will often have opportunities to work responsibly, explore and share religious resources to support their learning. Children are encouraged to support each other positively and respectfully when discussing different religions and cultures. This demonstrates respect and tolerance for each other and each other's religion. Children learn how to respect different cultures within RE and questioning is encouraged to consolidate understanding of controversial or sensitive issues. Together, children will experience and learn about different religions and cultures, which will help shape their view and understanding of the wider community.

We believe that there are particular citizenship qualities that help develop a well-rounded child. Therefore, our SMSC Curriculum is interwoven through our Assembly Themes, PSHE, RSE and RE curriculum which includes British Values (Appendix E). The six themes are: Being responsible, Kindness, Positivity, Respect, Resilience and Tolerance.

What are the aims for the RE Curriculum? (What do we want learners to be able to know and do by the time they leave Arden Forest Infant?)

At Arden Forest Infant School; Religious Education aims to engage, inspire, challenge and encourage all pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions, explore different religious beliefs, values and traditions that are followed in our multi-cultural society. We want them to know how religious education promotes tolerance and combats prejudice; therefore producing positive citizens, preparing them for adult life, employment and life-long learning.

Our Religious Education curriculum follows The Coventry & Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022, whose threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim; and aims to ensure that all pupils;

- Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews

In order to achieve our aims and to widen our children's cultural experiences and the awareness of their wider community, the RE curriculum at Arden Forest, provides lots of first hand and real-life experiences to make learning relevant and purposeful. These opportunities will give children access to a range of religious resources which support their social, cultural and moral development in order that we can widen their life experiences. The children will be asked questions at the beginning and end of each lesson to check they are knowing and remembering more. In RE lessons the children are given the opportunity to have reflective thinking time.

How does RE help our pupils to be aspirational lifelong learners?

Having good knowledge of several religions and cultures when they leave Arden Forest Infant school, the children will be able to show

respect and tolerance for the multi-cultural society, they live in as children and prepare them for adult life, employment and life-long learning. Our citizenship qualities; being responsible, Kindness, Positivity, Respect, Resilience and Tolerance are also important for any career they choose in their future adult life, for some this may also include missionary work.

Why has the specific knowledge been selected?

At Arden Forest Infant School, the RE curriculum is taught discreetly, however children will draw upon skills and knowledge from other subject areas such as PSHE and assemblies. It is designed to help our children to know and remember more. Each year, they will increase their knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and cultures, linked to both religions that are familiar and unfamiliar to them eg Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.

How is RE implemented?

Both in EYFS and KS1, RE is taught in discreet lessons, following The Coventry & Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017-2022. There is an emphasis on first hand and real-life experiences to make learning relevant and purposeful. The teaching of RE allows collaborative work between pupils and it is fully inclusive of pupils of all ability and allows opportunities for scaffolded support. The development of subject specific vocabulary is given high priority. Pupils have the opportunity to explore resources and learning from discrete lessons and apply their learning across the environment in Reception.

What is the impact?


The impact of our RE curriculum can be seen in our children's RE books in KS1 and Tapestry in EYFS. But it may also be seen through pupils' conversations and the school environment, eg Teacher assessment observations. Monitoring of RE ensures that standards in teaching and learning remain high.

Our children are given a broad range of experiences in RE, they are able to increase their knowledge of different cultures and religions, express their feelings and views in a safe environment.

There are end of unit outcomes which include emerging, expected and exceeding statements (as outlined in the Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017) and children are 'best-fit assessed' against these.

Appendices:

- A. Overall School Curriculum Intent
- B. RE aims/end points of specific stages of curriculum
 - EYFS Framework and National Curriculum
- C. See Progression in Learning Framework for RE which overarching maps that show the sequence and progression in learning from the beginning of Reception until the end of Year Two.



D. How RE promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 p102)
E. RE and British values (Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 p105)

Appendix A

Arden Forest Infant School – Curriculum Intent

What do we know about our community of learners? What opportunities/experiences have they had already and what have they not yet benefited from?

Our pupils start Reception from a large number of different pre-school settings. They have a diverse range of cultural and family backgrounds which are valued and shape our unique relationships with our school community.

Communication skills vary on entry, children are often reluctant to engage in extended conversations or articulate their thinking. Children often need support to identify and moderate their own feelings and are not able to solve minor disagreements.

We have an increasing percentage of children with additional needs compared to the national average, including those with ASD. As such, communication and language, physical development and personal and social and emotional development is significantly lower for these children. **Recently, many children have not been able to access outside agency support due to COVID restrictions.**

When our children begin Reception, they are often confident, show curiosity and are eager to explore their environment. However, our pupils' often lack sustained thinking and focus. Children are reluctant to be independent in their learning and life skills, and often their resilience and perseverance in the face of challenge is low which is a barrier to success. They lack experience of opportunities to take calculated risks.

Children typically have good access to outdoor spaces which enable a knowledge of the natural world around and gross motor skills to be typically at age related expectations. However, children's fine motor skills are typically not as developed.

Children generally access books and stories at home. However, the ability to blend and segment in phonics is a barrier for most children which impacts on their reading and writing on entry. Most parents generally take an active role as partners in their children's learning.

The majority of children show everyday application of skills in mathematics. Children usually have access to technology at home. Imagination is often good in small world and role play but children lack creativity and skill with music, art and design **We have observed that our children tend to have a limited cultural experiences of the arts or awareness of their wider community.**

In September 2021, some children starting with us will have lived nearly half of their life with the pandemic.

Our Year One children spent a third of their Reception Year Learning remotely and missed a significant part of their pre-school experience due to lockdown. Our Year Two children spent a third of their time in Year One being taught remotely and missed a significant part of their Reception Year due to lockdown.



Appendix B

RE aims/end points of specific stages of curriculum

EYFS Framework (September 2021)

ELG: People, Culture and Communities

Children at the expected level of development will:

- Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class;

Birth to 5 Matters (Non -statutory March 2021)

As part of **understanding the World: People and Communities**, it states that children in Reception will be learning to:

Range 5:

- Enjoys joining in with family customs and routines.
- Recognises and describes special times or events for family or friends.
- **Shows interest in different** occupations and **ways of life**.
- Knows some of the things that make them unique, and can talk about some of the similarities and differences in relation to friends or family.

Range 6:

- Enjoys joining in with family customs and routines.
- Knows about similarities and differences between themselves and others, and among families, communities and traditions.

End of Key Stage 1 Outcomes

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 p32)

RE should enable pupils to:

A1. Recall and name different beliefs and practices, including festivals, worship, rituals and ways of life, in order to find out about the meanings behind them.	B1. Ask and respond to questions about what individuals and communities do, and why, so that pupils can identify what difference belonging to a community might make.	C1. Explore questions about belonging, meaning and truth so that they can express their own ideas and opinions in response using words, music, art or poetry.
A2. Retell and suggest meanings to some religious and moral stories, exploring and discussing sacred writings and sources of wisdom and recognising the traditions from which they come.	B2. Observe and recount different ways of expressing identity and belonging, responding sensitively for themselves.	C2. Find out about and respond with ideas to examples of cooperation between people who are different.
A3. Recognise some different symbols and actions which express a community's way of life, appreciating some similarities between communities.	B3. Notice and respond sensitively to some similarities between different religions and worldviews.	C3. Find out about questions of right and wrong and begin to express their ideas and opinions in response.



Appendix C

Appendix D

How RE promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 p102)

The ongoing place of SMSC in education What we now call spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) has always been part of education. The notion of developing not just academic and practical skills in the emerging generation but also self-knowledge, moral courage, a capacity for imaginative sympathy for others and so on has long been a desired outcome of education. Over the decades this has been incorporated in a number of policies such as Every Child Matters and Community Cohesion, terms which refer to the sort of person an education system hopes to create.

SMSC has been the way this wider development of the whole person has been expressed in education policy since the 1944 Education Act. The 2013 National Curriculum articulates the purpose of education like this: Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based 12 and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Current priorities

The Ofsted Framework for School Inspection (September 2014) makes it clear that inspectors must consider the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils at the school when making judgements about the overall effectiveness of the school. Schools will be considered to have serious weaknesses if 'there are important weaknesses in the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' (para.103, Ofsted School Inspection Handbook, September 2014).

RE: a key contributor but not the only vehicle for SMSC

In terms of RE, there are two specific points to note. Firstly, although RE does make an enormous contribution to SMSC development it is a whole school responsibility. RE lessons should support the school's overall ethos; they may offer more in the way of spiritual or moral education than other subjects and RE teachers may enjoy working on SMSC-related projects with other colleagues, but every subject and every teacher have a duty to promote pupils' SMSC development.

Secondly, the increased priority of SMSC from September 2014 should not mean more work for the average RE teacher. RE lesson content, skills and resources are already rich in SMSC. You may conduct a quick audit to gain an overview of your SMSC provision, or when creating a new display you may decide to give it an SMSC focus, but you should not have to produce more than the high-quality RE you already produce.

Appendix E

RE and British values

(Coventry and Warwickshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2017 p105)

From September 2014, school inspection in England explores and judges the contribution schools make to actively promoting British values. RE can make a key educational contribution to pupils' explorations of British values, and excellent teaching of RE can enable pupils to learn to think for themselves about them.

Questions about whether social and moral values are best described as 'British values' or seen as more universal human values will continue to be debated (not least in the RE classroom!), but for the purposes of teachers of RE, the subject offers opportunities to build an accurate knowledge-base about religions and beliefs in relation to values. This in turn supports children and young people so that they are able to move beyond attitudes of tolerance towards increasing respect, so that they can celebrate diversity.

Values education and moral development are a part of a school's holistic mission to contribute to the wellbeing of each pupil and of all people within our communities. The RE curriculum focuses learning in some of these areas, but pupils' moral development is a whole-school issue.

Mutual tolerance

Schools do not accept intolerant attitudes to members of the community: attitudes which reject other people on the basis of race, faith, gender, sexual orientation or age are rightly challenged. A baseline for a fair community is that each person's right to 'be themselves' is to be accepted by all. Tolerance may not be enough: RE can challenge children and young people to be increasingly respectful and to celebrate diversity, but tolerance is a starting point. It is much better than intolerance.

Respectful attitudes

In the RE curriculum attention focuses on developing mutual respect between those of different faiths and beliefs, promoting an understanding of what a society gains from diversity. Pupils will learn about diversity in religions and worldviews, and will be challenged to respect other persons who see the world differently to themselves. Recognition and celebration of human diversity in many forms can flourish where pupils understand different faiths and beliefs, and are challenged to be broad-minded and open-hearted.

Democracy

In RE pupils learn the significance of each person's ideas and experiences through methods of discussion. In debating the fundamental questions of life, pupils learn to respect a range of perspectives. This contributes to learning about democracy, examining the idea that we all share a responsibility to use our voice and influence for the wellbeing of others.



The rule of law

In RE pupils examine different examples of codes for human life, including commandments, rules or precepts offered by different religious communities. They learn to appreciate how individuals choose between good and evil, right and wrong, and they learn to apply these ideas to their own communities. They learn that fairness requires that the law apply equally to all, irrespective – for example – of a person's status or wealth. They have the opportunity to examine the idea that the 'rule of law' focuses specifically on the relationship between citizens (or subjects) and the state, and to how far this reflects or runs counter to wider moral codes and precepts.

Individual liberty

In RE, pupils consider questions about identity, belonging and diversity, learning what it means to live a life free from constraints. They study examples of pioneers of human freedom, including those from within different religions, so that they can examine tensions between the value of a stable society and the value of change for human development.