



Religious Education Policy



Approved by Trustees: August 2015

**Consultation with Staff: September
2015**

Date for Review: September 2017

1 Background

All state-funded schools in England are required to teach religious education (RE) to all its pupils. In the case of Akaal Primary School, as a Free School, this requirement is built into the school's funding agreement. Akaal Primary School is designated as having a Sikh religious character and the funding agreement also states that the school will teach RE according to the tenets of the Sikh faith.

Akaal Primary School is a Sikh faith school established to provide a holistic education based on the key principles of Sikhi. Sikhi is world faith based on the individual as part of a whole – the Sikh community, the wider community and the global community. Faith is not just a matter of belief and practice but also a way to live and actively engage with individuals in society.

All pupils will follow the scheme of work for RE developed for the relevant year group under this policy. As in other schools, parents are able to withdraw their child from religious education lessons under section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. In practice, we expect few, if any to do so, as the policy sets out a broad and balanced framework for RE, developed from the tenets of the Sikh faith, that is applicable to pupils from all faiths and none.

The major tenets of the Sikh faith encourage working towards four main goals.

1. **Economic independence through honest earning (*Kirat Karni*)**, hence minimising dependency on the state or others. Everyone should exercise their God-given skills, abilities and talents for the benefit and improvement of the individual and society at large, and practice truthfulness and honesty in all dealings.
2. **Individual and collective welfare (*Naam Japna*)** or creating mental peace and self-management to reduce impulsive anti-social behaviour and to realise corporate responsibility or well-being for all. The singing, quiet meditation and the listening to sacred scriptures are of critical importance in Sikhi.
3. **Learning to share (*Vand Chhakana*)** all forms of wealth such as money, skills, knowledge and other resources with all to create equality in society. Such a life is an inspiration and a support to the entire community. This concept acknowledges the fact that everything one receives is by the Hukam (God's Will).
4. **Service beyond self (*Sewa*)** as selfless service to humanity equals service to God in the Sikh faith. Giving and serving others should form part of the normal school environment. Teachers, other staff, parents and volunteers can serve as exemplary role models.

This policy articulates the school's commitment to its Sikh faith values and to the religious and moral development of our pupils. Its implementation will ensure that, in striving to achieve academic excellence, this school will also provide holistic educational and spiritual development so that each pupil may develop into well-rounded, confident citizens.

2 Roles and Responsibilities

It is essential that all members of the school community commit themselves to the implementation and practice of this policy.

The Akaal Academy Trust Derby should:

- promote and support the Sikh values and the ethos of the school
- approve the policy, ensure its implementation, encourage and monitor its progress.

The Singh Sabha Gurdwara should:

- be the religious body that provides a spiritual link with the Akaal Primary School Trust
- help in the implementation of the faith policy in Akaal Primary School by providing expert advice and interpretations of religious scriptures
- help in the inspections of schools under section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Senior leaders should:

- put procedures in place to ensure the effective implementation of this policy
- monitor and report progress to the Trust and its committees.

All school staff should:

- ensure they understand the values underpinning Sikh education
- engage fully in the implementation and cultivation of the values of the Sikh faith in the life of the school.

Parents and carers should:

- accept responsibility as the primary religious educators of their children
- fully support this policy and its implementation.

Pupils should:

- participate in the school's full curriculum
- undertake to live by the values of the Sikh faith to the best of their ability and endeavour to be involved in Sikh celebrations
- take part in events that stem from the values of the Sikh faith (or *Sikhi*) and the Sikh way of life.

3 Aims

The main aim of Akaal Primary School is to educate pupils as responsible and compassionate global citizens, with the skills and knowledge to question and understand the world around them and to respect the beliefs, cultures and opinions of others. As a Sikh faith school, each member of the school community will have a responsibility to live and work in a way that upholds Sikh values and beliefs so that faith permeates all aspects of our school life.

Religious education contributes creatively to children's education by provoking challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, people's religious beliefs, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and learn from religions in local, national and global contexts, so that they can explore, consider and discover a range of different answers to these questions.

Pupils learn to weigh up the value of other people's view, of ideas from different sources. They learn to develop and express their own insights in response, and then respectfully to agree or disagree. Teaching should therefore equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. This will promote critical learning and thinking skills in the pupils of Akaal Primary School.

RE should develop in pupils an appetite for dialogue about the issues that arise in RE so that they can participate positively in discussion about them. This will enable them to leave education as mature young people who will be able to find a place in modern British society with its diversity of religions, cultures and worldviews. Pupils should gain and use the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of authority and wisdom, and other evidence. As they mature, they will learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

4 The importance of RE

RE is an important school subject because it:

- develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of principal world religions and other religious traditions
- provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human
- gives pupils an awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression
- gives pupils insights into the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures
- opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development
- encourages pupils to learn about and learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questioning how faith affects their lives
- challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses
- encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging
- enables pupils to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community
- has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning
- enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own
- promotes tolerance and enables pupils to combat prejudice and discrimination.

5 Areas of learning

The RE curriculum at Akaal Primary School will focus on three areas of learning. The curriculum for RE will ensure that all pupils:

1: Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered, by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

2: Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues;
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or worldviews.

3: Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:

- explore and find out about key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

The term 'religions and worldviews' is used in this policy to refer to the Sikh faith, Christianity and other principal religions represented in Britain, together with smaller religious communities and non-religious worldviews such as Humanism. The term is used inclusively, and its precise meaning depends on the context in which it occurs, for example in terms of belief, practice or identity.

The sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews will include the key texts, the teachings of key leaders, and key thinkers from different traditions and communities. Examples include Guru Nanak, Jesus Christ, the Prophet Muhammad, the Buddha and humanist philosophers; and the Guru Granth Sahib, the Bible, the Quran, the Torah and the Bhagavad Gita. Other sources of wisdom might come from texts, thinkers, leaders and scientists in the contemporary world as well as from experience and informed personal reflection and conscience.

6 Approaches to learning

The scheme of work for RE will be developed to include, in an age-appropriate way:

- enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression
- the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation in the context of religion and beliefs and the skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion
- communication of knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary
- identification and understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues

- knowledge and understanding of how individual religions relate to each other
- exploring the nature and characteristics of religions and their impact on the lives of believers
- evaluating critically the claims made by religions and belief systems
- reflection on and responses to their own and others' personal experiences in the light of pupils' knowledge and understanding of religion
- development and communication pupils' own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.

7 Progression

The RE curriculum will build in clear and visible progression, showing pupils, teachers and parents how they are making progress in RE. The main drivers of progression are related to the three areas of learning:

- extending and deepening knowledge (for example through increasing use of subject-specific vocabulary and concepts)
- asking questions and expressing views (for example with increasing depth of reasoning, and use of relevant material)
- deeper analysis of ideas and concepts and their impact on people's lives.

As pupils become older and more mature, the following features should become apparent:

- the study of specific religions, worldviews, concepts and ideas should become deeper and more comprehensive
- vocabulary should become wider, more abstract and used more competently
- enquiries, concepts, content and source materials should become more challenging and complex
- concepts should be more integrated into a coherent narrative in relation to the matters studied
- pupils should ask more challenging and perceptive questions
- pupils' responses should become more complex and more closely identified with the material and sources they are studying.

8 Assessment

Assessment in RE will follow the school's assessment arrangements in other subjects, with regular reviews of pupils' attainment and progress.

9 Delivery and organisation

Methodology

The policy itself does not lay down precise methodology for teaching RE as that is the place of the scheme of work. Models of delivery are likely to include:

- some specific RE units taught intensively over a period of time
- a timetabled weekly slot for discrete RE
- some cross-curricular units with RE linked to other areas of the curriculum
- occasional 'off-timetable' focus days on a selected topic

Sequencing of the six world religions

Sikhi will feature in the schemes of work in all year groups. Christianity, along with the remaining world religions and Humanism, will be introduced progressively so that pupils will have encountered, at an age-appropriate level, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism by the end of Year 2, again by the end of Year 4 and again by the end of Year 6.

Experiences and opportunities

All pupils should experience some or all of the following opportunities during their time at Akaal Primary School:

- engaging with others' faiths by listening and responding to visitors to the school
- encountering religion through visits to places of worship, taking into account symbols, feelings and their importance in the local and global context
- discussing religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- considering a range of human experiences and feelings
- reflecting quietly on their own, and others', insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning
- expressing and communicating their own and others' insights through art and design, music, dance, drama, and ICT
- developing the use of ICT, particularly in enhancing pupils' awareness of religions and beliefs in the national and global context.

Conceptual development

RE contains many different concepts within a range of belief systems. The schemes of work will build in, as appropriate, concepts and ideas. These will be drawn from general religious concepts that are shared among a range of religions, concepts related to shared human existence more generally, and specific concepts from each of the six major world religions. These are set out in the table below.

| General religious concepts | | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| Asceticism | God | Miracle | Pilgrimage | Ritual |
| Afterlife | Holy | Monotheism | Prayer | Sacred |
| Belief | Initiation | Mysticism | Prophecy | Scripture |
| Ceremony | Interpretation | Myth | Redemption | Symbolism |
| Deity | Martyrdom | Orthodoxy | Revelation | Worship |
| Faith | | | | |

Table continued on next page

| Shared human experience | | | | |
|-------------------------|-------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| Authority | Devotion | Identity | Purpose | Symbol |
| Belief | Evil | Justice | Relationship | Thankfulness |
| Belonging | Fairness | Kindness | Repentance | Trust |
| Celebration | Family | Life | Respect | Truth |
| Change | Forgiveness | Love | Reward | Uniqueness |
| Commitment | Freedom | Loyalty | Sacrifice | Value |
| Community | Good | Peace | Service | Welcoming |
| Creation | Growth | Prejudice | Suffering | Wisdom |
| Death | Hope | | | |

| Concepts linked with specific religions | | | | | |
|---|---------------|----------|------------|-----------|---------------|
| Sikhi: | Christianity: | Islam: | Buddhism: | Hinduism: | Judaism: |
| Ardas | Church | Akhirah | Anatta | Ahimsa | Brit/Covenant |
| Gurmat | Eternal life | Allah | Anicca | Atman | Unity of God |
| Gurmukh | God as Father | Din | Buddhahood | Avatar | Halakhah |
| Guru | Grace | Ibadah | Dhamma | Bhakti | Israel/Zion |
| Haumai | Heaven | Imam | Dukkha | Brahman | Kashrut |
| Hukam | Holy Spirit | Iman | Kamma | Dharma | Mitzvah |
| Ik Onkar | Identity | Islam | Metta | Karma | Shabbat |
| Jivan Mukh | Incarnation | Jihad | Nirbana | Maya | Shalom |
| Khalsa | Jesus the | Risalah | Sangha | Moksha | Teshuvah |
| Langar | Christ | Shari'ah | Tanha | Murti | Torah |
| Panth | Love | Shirk | | Nirvana | Tzedakah |
| Rahit | Mission | Sunnah | | Samsara | |
| Sadhsangat | Mother of | Tawhid | | Shakti | |
| Sat Nam | God | Ummah | | Smriti | |
| Sewa | Resurrection | | | Sruti | |
| Sikh | Salvation | | | Varana | |
| Vand Chhakna | Sin | | | Yoga | |
| Mool Mantra | Trinity | | | | |
| Gur Mantra | Word of God | | | | |
| Shabad | Unity | | | | |

10 Right of withdrawal

Any parent can request permission for their child to be excused from attending religious education or collective worship and the school will make alternative arrangements for the supervision of the child during the period concerned. Parents do not have to explain or give reasons for making such requests.

11 Monitoring and review

The Trust will review this policy and, with the support of senior leaders, the school's provision of religious education regularly. Training is encouraged and available for those who wish to take a lead role in religious education.

12 RE in the Early Years

Children will come from a variety of cultural, religious and secular backgrounds. Some will come from overtly religious homes, some will have occasional experience of religion, others none at all. All children need to be valued whatever their backgrounds or belief systems. It is important that teachers take this variety of experience into account when planning. Sikhi is unequivocal in arguing the case for complete equality, tolerance and respect for all.

Exploring religions, cultures and worldviews in the early years provides rich opportunities for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This will also support children develop knowledge and understanding about where they belong within their family and the wider community. It will also promote the development of appropriate religious vocabulary.

Children will be developing the following attitudes and skills:

- a sense of curiosity
- respect for themselves and others
- interest and enjoyment in discovery
- empathy and open-mindedness
- commenting and asking questions
- expressing feelings and preferences.

Children will begin to explore the world of religion in terms of religious figures, books, times, places and objects and by visiting and/or having visitors from places of worship. Representatives of local religious communities, including children's family members, who can talk about their beliefs and experiences, should be invited into school to enrich pupils' learning.

They will use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They will reflect on their own and others' feelings and experiences. They will use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

Knowledge is not fragmented in the early years, and all learning is part of a creative whole. Children will learn to make sense of the world in their own way through play, first-hand experiences and interactions with people.

13 RE in Key Stage 1

Throughout this key stage, pupils will explore world religions, making links with them through:

- pupils or staff of these faiths in school, people of these faiths in the local community and teachers or pupils having a particular interest in these faiths
- exploring a range of religious and moral stories and sacred writings and talk about their meaning
- exploring a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion or beliefs, recognising the difference they make to individuals, families and the local community
- identifying and suggesting meanings for religious symbols, using a range of religious and moral words and exploring how they express meaning
- recognising the importance for some people of belonging to a religion or holding special beliefs, exploring the difference this makes to their lives
- communicating their ideas about what matters most, and what puzzles them most, in relation to spiritual feelings and concepts
- reflecting on how spiritual qualities and moral values relate to their own behaviour
- recognising that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

Key questions can be explored through religion-specific study or/and thematic approaches across two or more religions and belief systems. Pupils will learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They will encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They will learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary.

Pupils begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families. They will ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imaginations. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

14 RE in Key Stage 2

Throughout this key stage, pupils learn about the six main world religions, including high levels of understanding of the Sikh faith, recognising their impact locally, nationally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions and beliefs, and the importance of dialogue between them. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in RE.

In Years 3 and 4 pupils will:

- explore and discuss some religious and moral stories, sacred writings and sources, placing them in the context of the belief system
- investigate and suggest meanings for celebration, worship and rituals, thinking about similarities and differences
- describe and interpret how symbols and actions are used to express beliefs
- recognise that people can have different identities, beliefs and practices, and different ways of belonging, expressing their interpretations, ideas and feelings
- reflect on questions of meaning and purpose in life, expressing questions and opinions
- investigate questions of right and wrong in life, expressing questions and opinions.

In Years 5 and 6 pupils will:

- describe and discuss some key aspects of the nature of religion and belief
- investigate the significance and impact of religion and belief in some local, national and global communities
- consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, identifying why they are important in religious practice and noting links between them
- reflect on the challenges of belonging and commitment both in their own lives and within traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion or personal belief is shown in a variety of ways
- describe and begin to develop arguments about religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions
- reflect on ideas of right and wrong and apply their own and others' responses to them.

Linked policies

Faith
Collective worship
Teaching and learning
SMSC
Assessment

Acknowledgements

This policy has drawn upon ideas from a range of sources, specifically including those listed below:

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education Pan-Berkshire 2012-17, with the permission of the Chair of the SACRE (Standing Advisory Council for RE) in Slough.

<http://www.oxford.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/Berkshire-RE-Syllabus.pdf>

The National Curriculum Framework for RE (NCRFRE), produced by the RE Council in 2013 and *Religious education in the new curriculum*,

<http://www.reonline.org.uk/religious-education-in-the-new-curriculum/>

A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England, from The Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013,

http://www.natre.org.uk/uploads/Free%20Resources/RE_Review_Summary%20&%20Curriculum%20Framework.pdf