

## **Roseacre Academy: Guidance for Visits to Places of Worship 2016-18**

The purpose of this guide is to show that visiting places of worship is an important part of our children's curriculum and also helps develop and support the values and ethos that makes Roseacre a special place to learn.

The experience of visiting places of worship will live long in the memory of the children participating and make a valuable and unique contribution to their education and understanding of the wider community.

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education, which all local authority schools must follow, requires children to learn about many of the world's religions and beliefs - including non-belief.

Visits to places of worship will not involve any worship but will provide an opportunity to find out about what goes on, and why, but children would not participate in any religious practice. The religious integrity of the children and adults taking part is never compromised or threatened.

Please note: Sometimes children and adults might be asked to cover their heads or arms or take their shoes off when entering a place of worship. These actions are signs of respect not a prelude to or part of any act of worship. The school has been invited in to someone else's private space and it is entirely appropriate that children and staff are respectful to their traditions and etiquettes.

### **Rationale**

It is important for us to have a clear rationale available to all parents and others about visits to places of worship. Reasons for arranging such visits include:

- Extending children's knowledge, understanding and experience of the world;
- The opportunities to explore religious practice and belief in a diverse society;
- The opportunity for children to learn experientially, which will enhance learning.
- Expand children's cultural development by enabling them to experience new or different forms of art, architecture and music;
- Providing opportunities for children to consider questions about life, religion and spirituality in ways that are impossible in classrooms;
- Encourage cross-curricular learning: many aspects of the school curriculum can be studied through a religious building including the arts, literacy, history, mathematics and design.

### **Preparing for the visit**

Visits to places of worship will have specific learning linked to the Agreed Syllabus for RE and it is important for teachers to plan carefully the learning that will take place as a consequence of the visit.

There are many creative methods of teaching and learning that can be utilised to help prepare children for the visit.

## **Roseacre Academy: Guidance for Visits to Places of Worship 2016-18**

These include:

- using art to explore patterns, buildings, symbols and shapes;
- listening to music;
- exploring artefacts - their use, meaning and design;
- studying photographs, posters or videos of places of worship to devise research questions;
- interviewing members of the community to understand what it means to belong to a religious community.

### **During the visit**

To help children to realise that the building is about people in the present, as well as the past, they will have an opportunity to meet and talk to people who worship in the building. They might spend some time sitting in silence to appreciate the atmosphere, the splendour or simplicity of the building.

The children will be encouraged to consider key questions in order to encourage respect, empathy and understanding for example:

- What interests you?
- What puzzles you?
- What questions do you want to ask?
- How does it feel to sit here?
- What helps to give it this atmosphere?
- How might this building help people worship?
- What clues are there about how people worship?
- What is similar here to other places of worship?
- What is different here?

Children may be asked to observe design, symbols, colours and objects and to consider their importance:

- Where are objects situated? Why?
- What is this for? Who uses it?
- What books are used? Why? When?
- Who uses this building? Why?
- What posters and notices are there?
- What do they tell us about this worshipping community?

They may: listen to music; listen to a speaker from the faith community; take photographs or video footage – if permission has been granted; draw things that interests them; follow a religious objects trail and make notes and sketch things of interest to them.

## **Roseacre Academy: Guidance for Visits to Places of Worship 2016-18**

### **After the visit**

Follow-up activities will often be cross curricular and may involve work in English, Art, History and Geography, for example, as well as RE.

Children may discuss key questions about the place that they visited and their experiences on the visit for example:

- What are the essential features of the place of worship?
- Why are places of worship different - even those belonging to the same religion or denomination?
- What do you think it means to the people who come here as worshippers?
- What surprised you?
- What did you find interesting?
- Did you learn anything that links to your own life and experiences?
- If the place were to be demolished and you could take one thing from it, what would it be?

Children could:

- Write letters of thanks to their host highlighting the aspects of the visit that interested them – this is an excellent opportunity to promote children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Use books or other resources to compare with what they experienced
- Use their notes, drawings and photographs to create a display, web site or an illustrated guidebook to the building showing its importance to the worshipping community
- Place such a display in the school, in the place of worship visited or in a local library
- Use the display as the basis for assemblies with parents and other children present
- Recap the words used to describe the atmosphere inside the place of worship and write creatively or poetically about it, how they felt and what they saw
- Produce art or music to convey their thoughts and responses to the visit
- Children could produce models or drawings of religious objects and symbols