



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

‘Excellence, courage & respect’

Introduction

Our RE curriculum forms an important part of our school’s spiritual, moral and social teaching. The curriculum is based upon the Oxfordshire Diocesan Scheme for Religious Education and Oxfordshire Local Authority’s (LA) Agreed Syllabus and it meets all requirements of that document.

Religious education at our school explores how individuals and communities make meaning and sense of their lives through the major religions of the world. It enables pupils to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life through learning both *from* religion as well as *about* religion. Religious education is taught in such a way that it inspires pupils to explore their own beliefs and faith (if they have one) and values and have respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others.

Aims

At this school, religious education supports and strengthens the vision, ethos and values, which are at the heart of what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. The importance placed on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the religious education curriculum.

Specifically, religious education aims to enable pupils of all abilities and stages of development to:

- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christian and other world religions’ beliefs and practices so that they understand the importance of religious texts, stories and teachings, the role and impact of religious communities and their places of worship and recognise how faith provides a way of interpreting life and its meaning for many people.
- Understand how belief may impact on culture, relationships, values and

lifestyle.

- Understand how belief can be expressed in a variety of ways including art, dance, music, ritual celebration and in different cultural settings.
- Develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially by helping them to reflect upon personal feelings, responses and relationships.
- Explore ways in which religious values and teaching have an impact on actions and decisions for people of faith.
- Be supported in their own search for meaning and purpose in life.
- Explore concepts such as forgiveness and sacrifice.
- Develop skills of reflection, empathy, communication, analysis, investigation, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis.
- Develop attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness and self-esteem. The purpose of religious education does not include any attempt to alter a child's beliefs. Indeed, reflecting the inclusive ethos of our school our religious education programme is designed not 'to convert pupils or urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils'.

Legal Framework

- In accordance with the law we provide religious education for all pupils and follow the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus. The Syllabus demonstrates the requirements in the Education Acts of 1996, 1998 and 2002. It reflects 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. At Whitchurch, religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects. Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from religious education lessons and we would ask parents to discuss this with the head teacher.

The value of Religious Education

Religious education enables pupils to:

- Learn *about* religions and beliefs, which have influenced the lives of millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures.
- Apply academic skills such as analysis and critical and creative thinking, to their approach to the study of religion with different disciplines as they mature.
- Learn more about themselves and their place in the world from their increasingly academic and creative exploration of religions and beliefs. We aim to create a positive attitude to learning in RE by encouraging our children to:
 - Develop an enthusiastic and enquiring approach to RE.
 - Have confidence when discussing our own beliefs and the beliefs of others and be able to put forward their comments and views.
 - Work both co-operatively and independently.

Planning

The religious education curriculum is based on two key aspects of learning laid down in the locally agreed syllabus:

- Learning *about* religion
- Learning *from* religion
- Teachers will use these strands when planning their lessons, following the Oxford Diocese RE Scheme of Work. As suggested in the aims of the subject, all pupils will learn about Christianity and other world faiths. In addition to Christianity: Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism will be explored in both Key Stage 1 and 2. Children will explore religion in relation to a number of key questions in each key stage:
 - What do people believe about God, humanity and the natural world?
 - What makes some stories special in religion?

- How and why are celebrations important in religion?
- How and why do symbols express religious meaning?
- What makes some teachers and leaders special for religious people?
- What do we get out of belonging to different groups and how do we show that we belong?
- What makes me special?
- How do people's beliefs about and attitudes towards God, the universe and humanity act as a guide through life?
- What do different sacred texts teach about life and how do they influence people differently?
- In what different ways do people worship and what difference does this make in their lives??
- What makes some occasions in life significant and how and why are these recognised and celebrated?
- How religious and spiritual ideas are expressed and why is literal language not adequate?
- What is it about key religious figures that make them inspirational for religious believers?
- How should people's religious and other beliefs, values and attitudes influence their personal lives and is it possible to live up to this?
- How do religious families and communities practice their faith and how is this seen in local communities?
- How do religions and beliefs influence the way people respond to global issues such as human rights, social justice and the environment?

Children of all abilities have the opportunity to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and, through planned progression built into the scheme of work, we offer them an increasing challenge as they move up the school.

Teachers plan units of work to follow a model of enquire, explore, evaluate and reflect in relation to the big questions. Where possible teachers make links between subjects to provide experiences that enrich learning and to consolidate and apply the skills that the children have learnt in a variety of contexts.

Teaching and Learning

Learning will focus on pupils' own experiences and self-concept, universal human experiences and concepts as well as religious experiences and concepts.

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate. Pupils will engage in activities, which will also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt.

RE is taught to individual year groups – although years 5 and 6 are taught together. Activities are carried out in small groups, pairs and individually according to the task, age and ability of the pupils. Not all work is recorded in books: much is discursive or learning is completed in class books.

We recognise the fact that there are children of different abilities and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by:

- Setting common tasks, which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Setting tasks of varying difficulty based on prior assessment.
- Providing a range of challenges using different resources.
- Using teaching assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

- We teach RE in the EYFS as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year, relating the Understanding the World aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. RE makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a child's understanding of the world; peoples and communities.

Key Stage 1 At Key Stage 1 children develop their knowledge about Christianity

and Judaism, Sikhism and Islam through questions, for example, *Is everybody special? Who should you follow?* Activities, tasks and experiences are planned which engage both learning about and from religion. They are appropriately challenging as indicated by the nominal 'level of difficulty' descriptions (1-3). Pupils are given opportunities to reflect upon (personal) and evaluate (impersonal) the key question from the syllabus.

Key Stage 2 At Key Stage 2, children develop their knowledge about Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism, through questions, for example, *Does God communicate with man? Do clothes express beliefs? Enquire, explore, evaluate and reflect on these questions.* Activities, tasks and experiences are planned which engage both learning about and from religion.

Special Needs and Equal Opportunities

All children have access to religious education at a level that is appropriate to their individual needs. Teachers plan differentiated learning experiences in all curriculum subjects to ensure all children get a broad and balanced education.

Visitors and Visits

Artefacts are integral to good religious education teaching and we include as many opportunities as we can to involve children in practical RE research and enquiry. Visits to places of worship are encouraged in all classes and visitors are invited into the school to enrich learning. All visits must meet the requirements as set out in the Safeguarding and Health and Safety policies and full risk assessments carried out prior to the visit.

Resources

All artefacts to support the teaching of religious education are stored centrally, with many books about the world's key religions available in the school library.

Assessment

Formative Assessment

Assessment of a pupil's work and progress is ongoing by the class teacher and informs future planning. Marking of work in religious education should follow the school's Marking Policy.

At the end of each unit of work, teachers can record progress against key targets.

Summative Assessment

Following the schools' assessment policy, teachers decide whether pupils are developing, securing or embedding in relations to the attainment targets.

Progress in RE forms part of pupils' annual report to parents

Monitoring

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards and the quality of teaching in RE.

- The RE subject leader will moderate pupils' work against the age-related expectations and analyse attainment and progress data.
- The RE subject leader will ensure that his/her subject knowledge and expertise are kept up to date.
- The RE subject leader will ensure that staff receive adequate training in the teaching and assessment of RE.
- The RE subject leader will monitor the quality of RE teaching across the school by monitoring planning, books, observing lessons and holding discussion groups with pupils.
- The RE subject leader will liaise with the governor who holds responsibility for RE and they will report regularly to the governing body on progress and attainment in RE.
- The RE subject leader and Headteacher will ensure that the principles set out in Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus for RE are implemented.

Policy Review

This Policy was reviewed during the Summer Term 2021

Review Date: Autumn 2023