



'Let your light shine' – Matthew 5:16

Religious Education Policy

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Signed	Stephanie Roome	Head Teacher
Signed	Chris Peart	COG

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person (Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019). This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the Head teacher.

Introduction

At Whitley Memorial School, pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We teach according to the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle Agreed Syllabus. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the Understanding Christianity resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Links with our school vision, core values and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

Aims and objectives

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all pupils:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

As a church school, Core Values are central in approach to the teaching and learning in RE. Our Core Values are: *Resilience, Respect, Love, Forgiveness, Perseverance and Kindness.*

Curriculum for Religious Education

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. As a VA school, we follow the scheme of work provided by the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.
- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy* and reflects the key concepts of Belief, Impact, Connections.

**Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.*

- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of our core values
- provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.
- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs and our Core Values.



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- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the ablest and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

Scheme of Work

A detailed scheme of work (Diocese of Durham and Newcastle) is available for teachers and other interested people alongside this policy. An overview can be seen in Appendix 1 and on our school website. It has been written according to the Durham and Newcastle Agreed Syllabus.

- EYFS- Me, Others and the World Around Me, Jesus, Special places, times and objects
- KS1 Christianity, Islam and Judaism
- Lower KS2 Christianity, Hinduism and Sikhism
- Upper KS2 Christianity, Judaism and Islam

Curriculum balance and time

Parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be approximately at least 50% of RE curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1 and 2.

It is recommended that RE is taught for a *minimum* of 36 hours per year at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two. (this reflects 5% see above)

The time allocated for teaching RE at Whitley Memorial School is:

- EYFS planned within the EYFS Framework
- KS1 40 hours
- KS2 50 hours

RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship will not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

Teaching and learning

We recognise the importance of teaching RE in a creative, knowledge-rich, broad and balanced way. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews (Religious Literacy).

RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging and those of others.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging enquiry questions.
- Reading and critically analysing religious and non-religious texts.
- Interpreting information from different quality sources.
- Researching information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
- Engaging in pair and group work.
- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Experiencing visits and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning and use of the Peace Garden.
- Taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. Questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.



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RE and Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development (SMSC)

While the entire curriculum contributes to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development, it is widely acknowledged that religious education (RE) plays a unique role in this area, as reflected in the Agreed Syllabus. RE fosters spiritual development by encouraging pupils to explore and respond to questions about life's meaning and purpose, as well as to reflect on the nature of values in human society. It supports moral development by prompting pupils to examine and respond to moral issues through the lens of religious and ethical teachings, helping them make informed and responsible judgments on religious and moral matters. RE also promotes social development by enhancing pupils' sense of identity and belonging, and by preparing them to be responsible citizens in a diverse and increasingly complex society.

Cross-curricular links

Cross curricular work is encouraged, in line with the whole school policy on teaching and learning. RE plays a crucial role in nurturing pupils' spiritual development, alongside their general educational skills such as literacy, empathy and the expression of personal beliefs. RE significantly contributes to students' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) growth and deepens their understanding of our core values. It connects with a variety of subjects, including English, art, drama, history, geography, computing, and music, while seamlessly embedding personal development throughout. This integrated approach ensures that personal development, including spiritual development, is at the heart of RE. Addressing and enriching pupils' spiritual insights and growth in all aspects of their education, including personal, social, and emotional learning and citizenship is the core of everything we do at Whitley.

Visits and visitors

We are able to visit places of worship in our region, where faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in the teaching of RE. We aim to use this valuable resource for all classes and all children will be visiting at least one place of worship during the academic year. Children will have the opportunity to make visits or have visitors during their time at our school. We maintain a strong connection with St. Cuthbert's Church in Bedlington, with regular visits for various occasions such as Harvest, Christmas, Easter and the Year 6 leaver's service.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Role of the RE subject leader

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.



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How we support learners with SEND in RE

At our school, we offer religious education to all students, regardless of their abilities. RE presents a valuable chance for children with SEND to shine. We encourage every learner to speak confidently about their own beliefs and perspectives, as well as those of others. Our approach to religious education ensures that all pupils have opportunities to advance by setting appropriate learning challenges and addressing each child's unique needs. We help students progress and succeed in RE by providing resources that support their understanding and assist children with SEND in engaging meaningfully with various faiths. We tailor our teaching to meet each child's needs, with effective differentiation evident in our planning and resources.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in our scheme of work, Understanding Christianity.
- Be directly related to the expectations and age-related outcomes of the Diocese of Durham and Newcastle (See scheme of work)
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy for RE.
- Include pupil self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.
- Involve whole staff moderation of work across our school

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next 3 years, and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. The RE subject leader is tasked with overseeing the quality of children's work and teaching standards in religious education. This role includes supporting colleagues with teaching RE, staying updated on current developments in the subject and providing strategic leadership and direction for RE within the school. The subject leader presents an annual action plan to the Headteacher, which assesses the subject's strengths and areas for improvement. Additionally, a designated Governor is responsible for monitoring our foundation as a Church of England school, including RE teaching and learning. The subject leader meets with this Governor as part of the school's self-review process. The subject leader is allocated specific time each academic year to review samples of student work, analyse assessments, and observe classroom teaching to ensure effective delivery of RE.

Staff training and CPD

All staff have access to RE CPD in line with the subject leader's identified areas for development. This is either 'in house' or through diocesan support. The RE subject leader also attends local network meetings to ensure the teaching of RE meets the expectations of the diocese. In addition to this, this enables the RE subject leader to share, support and mentor staff within school.

RE and Race Equality

Faith communities in and around Northumberland and Newcastle can serve as valuable resources for schools and teachers when approached with sensitivity and responsibility. Schools can arrange visits to places of worship and community centres and faith members can contribute to classroom learning. Beyond sharing their religious beliefs and practices, these individuals can provide insights into the broader cultural context in which their faith is situated. This approach allows religious education to naturally integrate with multicultural and multiracial awareness.

Resources

We use a wide range of quality resources, to support our RE teaching, that we continue to develop. Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the SACRE / Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate. We shall upkeep our membership of the Diocese's North East Religious Resource Centre and use it appropriately. A regular audit of resources takes place by the RE subject leader in order to update our collection.



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Legal Requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over).

(DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28) The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the importance placed on RE as a core subject in a church school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff.

Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. We ask that and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE must be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

In the event of a child being withdrawn from RE, alternative arrangements will be made, ensuring that the child is supervised and cared for.



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Appendix 1

Nursery:

Some ideas for religious education in the nursery can include:

- creative play, make-believe, role play, dance and drama
- dressing up and acting out scenes from stories, celebrations or festivals
- making and eating festival food
- talking and listening to each other; hearing and discussing stories of all kinds, including religious and secular stories with themes such as goodness, difference, the inner world of thoughts and feelings, and imagination
- exploring authentic religious artefacts, including those designed for small children such as 'soft toy' artefacts or story books
- seeing pictures, books and videos of places of worship and meeting believers in class
- listening to religious music
- starting to introduce religious vocabulary
- work on nature, growing and life cycles or harvest
- seizing opportunities spontaneously or linking with topical, local events such as celebrations, festivals, the birth of a new baby, weddings or the death of a pet
- starting to talk about the different ways in which people believe and behave, and encouraging children to ask questions

Core Value	Resilience	Respect	Love	Forgiveness	Perseverance	Kindness
Year Group	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1	Summer 2
EYFS	F1 Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?	F2 Why do so many Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?	F4 Being special: where do we belong?	F3 Why do some Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?	F5 Which places are special and why?	F6 Which stories are special and why?
1	1.1 What do Christians believe God is like?	1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians?	1.6 Who is Muslim and how do they live?	1.6 Who is Muslim and how do they live?	1.4 What is the 'good news' Christians believe Jesus brings?	1.8 Who am I? What does it mean to belong to a faith community?
2	1.7 Who is Jewish and how do they live?	1.7 Who is Jewish and how do they live?	1.2 Who do Christians say made the world?	1.5 Why does Easter matter to Christians?	1.9 What makes some places sacred to believers?	1.10 How should we care for the world and for others, and why does it matter?
3	2.1 What do Christians learn from the Creation story?	2.4 What kind of world did Jesus want?	2.7 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today?	2.7 What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today?	2.6 For Christians, what was the impact of Pentecost?	2.11 How and why do people try to make the world a better place?
4	2.8 What does it mean to be a Sikh in Britain today?	2.8 What does it mean to be a Sikh in Britain today?	2.3 What is the Trinity and why is it important for Christians?	2.5 Why do Christians call the day Jesus died, 'Good Friday'?	2.2 What is it like for someone to follow God?	2.9 What are the deeper meanings of festivals?
5	2.3 For Christians, how can following God bring freedom and justice?	2.4 Why do Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah?	2.11 What does it mean for a Jewish person to follow God?	2.6 What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' human beings?	2.11 What does it mean for a Jewish person to follow God?	2.13 Why do some people believe in God and some people not?
6	2.10 What does it mean for Muslims to follow God?	2.10 What does it mean for Muslims to follow God?	2.2 Creation and Science: Conflicting or complementary?	2.7 What difference does the Resurrection make for Christians?	2.8 What kind of King is Jesus?	2.12 What matters most to Humanists and Christians?