

## WHITCHURCH COMBINED SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY



### Introduction

At Whitchurch School RE is the opportunity to explore the beliefs, values and attitudes that guide us through life, through the exploration of the beliefs, values, practices and ways of life of the principal religions. RE is taught as looking at what we can learn about and from each religion. RE emphasises the emotions, a sense of mystery, a sense of wonder, questioning in depth and a whole view of life and personal commitments.

Religious Education is required to be included in the basic curriculum which we provide for all our registered pupils. RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus in all maintained schools. (However, if a parent asks that their child should be wholly or partly excused from Religious Education at our school, then we must comply.) The RE we teach must be based on the locally agreed syllabus (2022 - 2027), giving due prominence to Christianity, with Islam, Hinduism and Judaism also taught. Therefore, our policy is based on that document.

### Intent

The value of good RE in our school:

- how we behave affects other people and the world we live in so our behaviour is an important issue
- our behaviour is influenced by our attitudes
- our attitudes are influenced by our beliefs
- we all play a part in creating the world we live in
- what we believe, whether religious or not, contributes significantly to this. RE helps pupils and the school as a whole to reflect on the ways in which beliefs influence how people live their lives. However, we will not impose religious beliefs upon pupils, nor compromise their own beliefs, respect is for others and self is emphasised through all lessons.

Thus there are two main educational purposes to our RE teaching:

- firstly, to enable children to learn about religions which have influenced the lives of millions of people and have heavily influenced the development of different human cultures. This is learning about religion.
  - a. describe the key aspects of religions, especially the people, stories and traditions that influence the beliefs and values of others;
  - b. describe the variety of practices and ways of life in religions and understand how these stem from, and are closely connected with, beliefs and teachings;
  - c. identify and begin to describe the similarities and differences within and between religions;
  - d. investigate the significance of religion in the local, national and global communities;
  - e. consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, understand why they are important in religion and note links between them;
  - f. describe and begin to understand religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions;
  - g. use specialist vocabulary in communicating their knowledge and understanding;
  - h. use and interpret information about religions from a range of sources.
- secondly, and largely arising from the first purpose, to enable our pupils to learn more about themselves and their place in the world from their study of religion. This is learning from religion

- a. reflect on what it means to belong to a faith community, communicating their own and others' responses;
- b. respond to the challenges of commitment both in their own lives and within religious traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion is shown in a variety of ways;
- c. discuss their own and others' views of religious truth and belief, expressing their own ideas;
- d. reflect on ideas of right and wrong and their own and others' responses to them;
- e. reflect on sources of inspiration in their own and others' lives.

## **Aims**

The Agreed Syllabus has four aims for RE:

To understand the nature, role and influence of religion in the world by:

- developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other faiths in the world
- exploring similarities and differences between and within religions
- understanding what it means to belong to a religious community and the influence religious faith has on individuals and communities
- perceiving the way religious teaching and practice relate to ultimate questions
- reflecting on the benefits and challenges of living in a multi-faith and diverse society
- developing the ability to analyse and think critically about religious and other beliefs and practices and different interpretations of these

To pursue personal quest for meaning, purpose and value by:

- reflecting on personal and universal human experience and emotion
- raising and exploring the ultimate questions which arise from these
- exploring different religious and non-religious responses to these
- developing personal responses to ultimate questions in light of the above
- reflecting on their own and others' responses to ultimate questions

To formulate reasoned opinion/argument by:

- gaining the necessary knowledge and understanding to be able to give informed arguments
- developing the ability to see things from other peoples' perspective
- appreciating the influence of beliefs on attitudes and behaviour
- developing skills of reflection and questioning
- developing the ability to analyse strengths and weaknesses in arguments/stances

## **Implementation**

To develop understanding of and respect for different beliefs and lifestyles

Pupils should be able to:

- ☐ Develop feelings of awe and wonder, delight and mystery (love)
- ☐ Explore and reflect on the world around them and perceive their place in it (community)
- ☐ Develop positive and acceptable relationships (commitment)
- ☐ Reflect on religious responses to moral issues (compassion)

- ☐ Develop the confidence to express their own spirituality, their beliefs and ideas about religion and listen to others (courage)
- ☐ Begin to acquire and express a firm knowledge of the Bible and of the Christian faith
- ☐ Acquire some knowledge of world faiths

## **Teaching and Learning**

The children are taught as a group but some individual and co-operative work will take place. Planning will include differentiation in order to take account of varying abilities.

Lessons, include:

- ☐ exploring and observing the environment
- ☐ visiting speakers
- ☐ drama and role play
- ☐ celebration of festivals
- ☐ discussion
- ☐ valuing family backgrounds
- ☐ visiting places of worship
- ☐ personal experiences
- ☐ art work and artefacts
- ☐ hearing religious stories and stories about the natural world
- ☐ dance and music

## **Resources**

A wide variety of RE resources are currently available in school. These include sets of , artefacts text books, story books, pictures, photos,. These resources are available to all staff and are stored in the resources area. Pupils' books and photocopiable materials are displayed on the lower book shelf in the staffroom while other resources are stored in labelled topic boxes. Children's reference books are kept in the library and are catalogued.

## **Assessment in RE**

There are aspects of RE, such as personal development and personal beliefs and attitudes, that cannot and should not be assessed in themselves. However engagement and knowledge can be assessed.

Assessment is a statutory requirement of the Agreed Syllabus. Schools are required to report pupil attainment and progress to parents annually in all subjects including RE, in line with the assessment policy.

## **Cross Curricular Opportunities**

RE contributes significantly to literacy, especially speaking and listening, key skills and thinking skills. We also recognise that there will be cross curricular links with PSHE and Citizenship and that these three curriculum areas may often overlap. There will be other opportunities for across curricular links with art, music, role play and PE. At Whitchurch Religious Education will also play an important role, along with all other curriculum areas, in promoting the Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development (SMSC) of our children.

## **Impact**

We believe that attitudes such as respect, care and concern should, of course, be promoted through all areas of school life. However, there are some attitudes which are fundamental to RE in that they are prerequisites for entering fully into the study of religions and learning from that experience. The following is included:

Self-awareness in Religious Education includes pupils:

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth

- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people
- developing an increasingly coherent self-concept in relation to ideas and beliefs around what it means to be a person

Respect for all in Religious Education includes pupils:

- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others' views are different from their own
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others

Open-mindedness in Religious Education includes pupils:

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions
- being willing to go beyond surface impressions
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith

Appreciation and wonder in Religious Education includes pupils:

- developing their imagination and curiosity
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- developing their capacity to respond to questions

## SEN/Inclusion

The Buckingham Agreed syllabus is RE entitlement of all pupils in maintained schools. Therefore when planning RE we will:

- set suitable learning challenges for pupils of all abilities, especially those with special educational needs;
- respond to pupils' diverse learning styles; (visual oral, kinaesthetic)
- eliminate potential barriers to learning for individuals and groups of pupils
- it is expected that teachers of pupils with Special Needs will differentiate work and adapt resources in order to meet the needs of the children. This includes setting challenges for the most able pupils.

## Withdrawal

It is recognised that parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education either in its entirety or in part. If a parent chooses to withdraw a child from RE then arrangements will be made for that child to be withdrawn during these lessons by the class teacher in consultation with the Head teacher.

## RE Curriculum Content for EYFS

The units to be covered as specified in the Agreed syllabus are below: (they fit within the ELG's (Communication and language, literacy, understanding the world, and expressive arts and design))

Pupils will reflect on

- Their own sense of who they are and their uniqueness as a person in a family, community, and world.
- What they believe, what they think is important and how these influence their day-to-day living

|          |              |
|----------|--------------|
| . Myself | Other people |
|----------|--------------|

|                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                           |                                                                                                              |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| . How I live<br>. Belonging<br>. Important experiences<br>Important people and faith leaders<br>. Expressing our feelings<br>. Religious stories and what they mean | How other people live<br>Important things<br>Feelings<br>Celebrations<br>Exploring belief | .What is a harvest festival?<br>. Christmas<br>. Easter<br>. Chinese New Year<br>. Who was Noah?<br>. Sukkot |
|                                                                                                                                                                     |                                                                                           |                                                                                                              |

### Key Stage 1

Throughout key stage 1, pupils explore Christianity and Judaism. They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children and their families. Pupils 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.

In addition to the units found in the Long Term plan subject overview, it will also be relevant to the children to learn about and show respect for special occasions in the yearly calendar e.g. Mothering Sunday, Shrove Tuesday, lent, Saints' Days, Harvest Festival.

Pupils should also have had opportunities to enhance their own spiritual and moral development by:

- talking about things that matter to them
- listening to what others have to say
- talking about some of the puzzling questions in life
- exploring the sense of belonging to a community
- exploring the difference between right and wrong
- expressing themselves creatively in art, drama, dance, etc
- discussing feelings e.g. happy/sad/angry
- exploring times of quiet to reflect on a story or other experience
- talking about things being fair/unfair
- responding to the wonder and beauty of the natural world.

These ideas will be covered with in the units of work.

### Key Stage 2

Throughout key stage 2, pupils will learn about Christianity and at least two of the other principal religions Hinduism and Islam, recognising the impact of religion and belief locally, nationally and globally. They will make connections between differing aspects of religion and consider the different forms of religious expression. They will consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They will learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They will 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 will extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They will recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and valuing what is good and true. They will communicate their ideas, recognising other people's viewpoints. They will consider their own beliefs and values and those of others in the light of their learning in religious education. At Key Stage 2, pupils should study Christianity plus Hinduism and Islam and aspects of all three religions should where possible, be incorporated in all topics.

Pupils should also have had opportunities to enhance their own spiritual and moral development by:

- discussing matters of personal concern arising from their personal beliefs and commitments
- showing care and consideration in listening to and talking about the beliefs of others
- exploring questions of the meaning and mystery of life
- developing an understanding of what it means to belong to a community
- discussing the differences between right and wrong and the nature of individual responsibility
- expressing ideas and innermost thoughts in art/music/drama. etc
- discussing feeling and emotions
- exploring times of stillness in order to reflect quietly on what has been studied
- developing ideas of fairness.

### **Equal Opportunities**

Each child is entitled to access all aspects of the Religious Education curriculum (see School's equal opportunities policy)

### **Health and Safety**

General principles of safety are sufficient in most RE lessons. However, special points to note are:

Teachers should be aware of possible emotional responses from pupils arising from dealing with topics such as family life (if a child's parents are recently divorced), death (if they have recently experienced bereavement), etc. Every reasonable effort should be made to identify children who might be unduly affected by topics of this nature. Making them aware in advance of the content of the lesson - and letting them know they need only make a level of contribution with which they feel comfortable - often helps.

- Visits to new places of worship should be preceded by a preliminary visit. Refer to County policy for educational visits for further information. Complete a- risk assessment.
- The input from visiting speakers, etc, should be carefully negotiated in advance, as not all speakers are fully aware of the learning needs of young children. These visits should be supervised by the class teacher.

### **Monitoring, Review and Development**

The school's RE Co Ordinator has responsibility for the monitoring and review of this area of the curriculum.

Key responsibilities are:

- monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in RE
- supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE
- keeping informed about current developments in the subject
- providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school
- updating and developing resources within a delegated budget
- reviewing the school RE policy and scheme of work annually.

RE Co-ordinator  
Mrs Bareham

Reviewed Sept 2026  
New SACRE curriculum currently due for release 2027