

Woodbridge Junior School



Religious Education Policy

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Curriculum Intent:

Religious Education (RE) curriculum explores the big questions about life, in order to find out what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can make sense of religion and world views, reflecting their own ideas and ways of living.

Related Legislation:

Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors.

The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Derbyshire and Derby City SACRE Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025 and it meets all the requirements set out in that document.

The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions, and must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief.

Over-arching concepts:

There are 3 over-arching concepts explored throughout the Key-stage 2 RE curriculum, each area will be revisited frequently throughout the Key Stage:

These are:

- Believing – religious beliefs, teachings; questions about meaning, purpose and truth.
- Expressing – religious and spiritual forms of expressions; questions about identity and diversity.
- Living – religious practices and ways of living; questions about values and commitments.

These concepts are taught through the study of four main religious groups: Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people, though ideas and beliefs from other religious and non-religious groups may be taught if deemed appropriate to the topic.

Aims of RE:

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils progressively develop the following skills, to further their understanding in RE:

1. *To 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. *To 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.

3. *To gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can:*
 - find out about and investigate 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 in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

Objectives of RE:

- To study the festivals and ceremonies, traditions and rituals that mark the stages of life;
- To link basic religious concepts to practices of everyday living and to examine the roles of family life in religion;
- To appreciate the similarities and differences between religions and to enrich their understanding of religious vocabulary;
- To respond imaginatively to religious ideas and consider the different ways in which individuals may come to a personal faith and commitment;
- To study the beliefs, instructions and organisations of particular faiths and also to understand that people without a religious faith still hold beliefs that they may choose to live by;
- To be sensitive to the feelings, beliefs and actions of others and to explore the ideas that caring should come before personal interests;
- To help children explore the awe, wonder and joy of life in all its forms, particularly new life and growth;
- To help children with experiences of encountering change such as death, suffering, inequality and conflict;
- To examine ideas of right and wrong and to discover the importance of silence and reflection;
- To distinguish between religious and other forms of understanding, for example, scientific, humanist, historical;
- To reflect on their own experiences and to develop a sense of religious understanding;
- To appreciate the value of their own personal faith/beliefs and have confidence to be able to discuss them with others.

Curriculum planning in religious education:

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases long-term based around the Agreed Syllabus, medium-term on each year groups plans and short-term weekly/daily planning.

Individual lesson plans for each unit/topic have been prepared for teachers by the Subject Leader and list the specific learning objectives for that lesson. Each class has a copy of all the units for their year group. All plans are available to staff on the shared network for ease of access and modification.

Teaching and learning:

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals or events such as Diwali, Lent and Eid etc. to develop their religious thinking.

We recognise that in all classes, children have a wide range of differing abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child.

We achieve this by:

- Setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- Setting tasks of increasing difficulty, some children not completing all tasks;
- Sometimes grouping children by ability in the room (depending on the task), and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- Providing resources of different complexity, depending on the ability of the child;
- Using classroom assistants to support children individually or in groups where possible.

RE is taught through a variety of methods, including:

- Role play and drama;
- Story telling;
- Discussion and debate;
- Reflection;
- Use of visitors;
- Use of themed days/weeks;
- Use of local community;
- Films and videos.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development:

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

Children explore issues of religious faith and values and by doing so they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives. We promote mutual tolerance between members of different communities, building towards mutual respect and the celebration of diversity.

Inclusion and Equal Opportunities:

At Woodbridge Junior School, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. All children are provided with equal access to the RE curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background. RE forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our RE teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs, whatever their ability.

When pupils are working above or below the expected outcome within RE, differentiated activities including considering the classroom organisation, teaching materials and teaching style is considered so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to each child's needs.

Withdrawal from RE lessons/trips:

Parents have the legal right to withdraw pupils from RE but this must be discussed with the class teacher, RE Coordinator and Head teacher. A class teacher cannot make the decision to allow a child/parent to withdraw from RE lessons. If the parent chooses to go ahead and withdraw their child from RE this must be given to the school in writing by the parent.

Staff should refer to the Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus 2020-2025 for information about speaking to parents and withdrawing pupils from RE and the issues surrounding this, including the negative implications, must be highlighted to the parent (for example, missing lessons that may link to other subject areas, for example, Literacy lessons, which may have an impact on the pupil's progress and learning), as well as issues of discrimination. The withdrawal of a child from RE lessons should be the last resort as RE is an important part of learning and understanding about the world and community.

Assessment and recording:

We carry out a pre-unit assessment before each unit of work to assess what teaching the children require, then we carry out a post-learning assessment to see if the children have met the aims of the unit.

We carry out on-going formative assessments children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons and marking the work (following the school's marking policy) after the lesson against the WALT sticker. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary, following the school's marking policy. Assessment outcomes are recorded by the teacher on the unit assessment sheet and returned to the Subject Leader.

Roles and responsibilities

i) The Governing body:

The governing board will approve the RE policy, and hold the head teacher to account for its implementation.

ii) The Head Teacher:

The head teacher is responsible for ensuring that RE is taught consistently across the school.

iii) Staff:

Staff are responsible for:

- Delivering RE in a sensitive way
- Modelling positive attitudes to RE
- Monitoring progress
- Responding to the needs of individual pupils
- The RE Subject Leader is Marina Cresswell.

iv) Pupils:

Pupils are expected to engage fully in RE and, when discussing issues related to RE, treat others with tolerance, respect and sensitivity.

Resources:

Staff use the Derbyshire and Derby City Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025 to plan RE lessons, the approved scheme of Derbyshire County Council. The school has a range of books and resources dealing with a wide selection of RE topics, as well as making use of the wide variety of resources online.

Monitoring and review:

The RE Subject Leader (Marina Cresswell-Dobb) is responsible for monitoring the standards of children's work and the quality of teaching. This person supports colleagues in the teaching of RE, by giving them information about current developments in the subject. Strengths and weaknesses in the subject and areas for further improvement are discussed with the head teacher and colleagues and feedback is given to the governor responsible for RE. At Woodbridge we strive to be flexible with the curriculum and address certain topics or issues as they arise so the curriculum plan is reviewed regularly.

Policy Review:

This policy will be reviewed by Marina Cresswell-Dobb (RE Subject Leader) every two years. At every review, the policy will be approved by the governing body and the head teacher, and will be shared with all school staff.

Reviewed: November 2024

Reviewed by Governors:

Signed:

Date:

Next review date: November 2026