

Religious Education Policy

Policy Updated: September 2016
Future Review: September 2019



Nurture ~ Believe ~ Discover ~ Achieve

OUR CHRISTIAN VISION

Our vision for Woodstock CE Primary School reflects a passionate commitment to learning and recognition of the uniqueness of individual learners. Guided by our Christian values, it is driven by our desire to offer the best possible education for our pupils in partnership with parents, the Church and the local community.

Woodstock CE Primary School will be a centre for learning where adults and children:

Nurture and prioritise wellbeing and development.

Believe in themselves and in each other.

Discover their own strengths and become successful lifelong learners.

Achieve more than they ever thought possible.

OUR CHRISTIAN ETHOS

Recognising our historic foundation, we will preserve and develop our religious character in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in partnership with the Churches at parish and diocesan level.

Woodstock CE Primary School strives to be an inclusive community where children grow, learn and achieve together. Within a nurturing, supportive and safe environment, mental health and wellbeing is at the heart of everything we do and recognised as the responsibility of all. Children's natural curiosity is fostered through a creative curriculum that excites and challenges and enables them to be successful learners. Supported by a culture of equality and aspiration we aim to remove disadvantage so that every child can thrive.

We are committed to providing an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice. We encourage an understanding of the meaning and significance of faith, and promote Christian values through the experience we offer to all our pupils.

"For I know the plans I have for you", declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29, v11

Introduction

Religious education is central to the purpose of Woodstock CE Primary School because, as a church school, we see that the Christian faith informs all aspects of our life together and commits us to a search for truth.

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. Religious education is taught in such a way that it inspires pupils to explore, develop and affirm their own faith and values and have respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others. It is not the practice of this school to preach to or seek to convert children. Values education permeates the religious education curriculum at Woodstock CE Primary School.

Our Core Values

At Woodstock CE Primary School our core values are:-

FRIENDSHIP

We value friendship as fundamental to the development and fulfilment of ourselves and others, and the good of the community.

'Therefore encourage one another and build one another up, just as you are doing.' 1 Thessalonians 5:11

RESPECT

Develop self-respect, and respect for others. Promote inclusion, and appreciate and value the diversity of people's circumstances and backgrounds.

'So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you.' Matthew 7:12

RESPONSIBILITY

Take responsibility for the way we lead our lives; how we use our talents, rights and opportunities.

'Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them.' Romans 12:6-8

PERSEVERANCE

Maintain a 'can do' attitude and aspire to achieve goals.

'I press on towards the goal to win the prize for which God has called me.' Philippians 3:13-14

KINDNESS

Show care and concern, and exercise goodwill toward others.

'Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.' Ephesians 4:32

Aims

At this school, religious education supports and strengthens the Christian 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 beliefs and practices so that they understand the importance of the Bible, the role of the church and recognise that for Christians their faith provides a way of interpreting life and its meaning.

- Develop knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of some of the other principal religions in Britain.
- 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.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Explore concepts of love, 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 from Foundation Stage (Reception) to Year 6.

We follow the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus 2015 – 2020. 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 Woodstock CE Primary School, 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, but as religious education is central to the life and identity of Woodstock CE Primary School, we would ask parents to discuss with the head teacher any reasons they might have for doing this.

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 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 a programme in which Christianity will clearly predominate. In addition to Christianity, Judaism will be explored in Key Stage 1. In addition to Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism will be explored in Key Stage 2. They will explore these in relation to a number of key questions in each key stage:

Key Stage One:

- 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?

Key Stage Two:

- 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.

In addition, to the units of work followed within the RE scheme of work, whole school themes and curriculum focus weeks are planned using religious education as a starting point.

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 mainly through year group topics and activities are carried out in small groups, pairs and individually according to the task, age and ability of the pupils.

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, 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 level descriptions. 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 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. They are appropriately challenging as indicated by the level descriptions.

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.

Higher Attaining Pupils

Children who have been identified as Higher Attaining or Gifted and Talented are given opportunities to extend their learning through problem solving, investigation and open-ended activities. We create possibilities for them to work independently and with others to develop higher order thinking skills.

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 by 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; ensuring that successes and next steps are given to pupils. These next steps should be focused on the RE learning intention and pupils must be given the opportunity to act on these.

At the end of each unit of work, teachers record progress against key milestones. These are used by the teacher to identify where concepts need to be revisited.

Summative Assessment

Teachers track pupil progress in religious education against the progression statements three times a year. 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. Over the course of the year:

- 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 by means of regular training.
- The RE subject leader will ensure that staff receive adequate training in the teaching and assessment of RE.
- The RE subject leader will regularly 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.

In addition, during the year staff and phase meetings will be used to share work in RE to ensure progression in skills are seen across the key stages and high standards are maintained.

The subject leader will provide a short report to the Headteacher on an annual basis and use their evaluations to inform actions within their development plan.

The impact of Religious Education is reported to the Governing Body annually.

Policy Review

This Policy was reviewed during the Autumn Term 2016.

Future Review Date: Autumn 2019