

RE at Woodstock CE Primary School



Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) is not part of the National Curriculum but must be taught in schools by law. We are a Church of England Controlled School and hold a strong commitment to teaching the principles of Christianity. Religion and beliefs inform our values and are reflected in what we say and how we behave. At Woodstock CE Primary School, RE is an integral part of the curriculum in developing an individual's knowledge and understanding of the religions and beliefs which form part of contemporary society. Our Religious Education curriculum provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, of other principal religions, other religious traditions and worldviews that offer answers to questions such as these. RE also contributes to our pupils' personal development and wellbeing, and to community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society.

Our framework for RE makes important contributions to other parts of the school curriculum such as PSHE, humanities, education for sustainable development and others. It offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development, deepening the understanding of the significance of religion in the lives of others – individually, communally, and cross-culturally. RE is provided in accordance with the Oxfordshire Diocese Agreed Syllabus and draws from the most recent practice and educational thinking. Our curriculum is based around the Oxfordshire Diocese scheme of work and is supplemented with the Understanding Christianity resources which are intended to support teachers in teaching about Christianity in Religious Education. *Understanding Christianity's* approach to teaching about Christianity builds up pupils' encounters with biblical concepts through texts, placing them within the wider Bible story. Through RE we aim to enable children to understand the nature of religions and beliefs which have influenced the lives of millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures. We also aim to enable pupils to learn more about themselves and their place in the world from their increasingly academic and creative exploration of religions and beliefs. RE is taught through an enquiry-based approach and provides opportunities for all pupils to explore questions, experiences and concepts related to identity and what it means to be human, whilst at the same time developing a good knowledge and understanding of the principal faiths in Britain. The syllabus promotes an inclusive and educational approach to RE, which is of increasing importance to help people understand modern society and critical issues in the world, as well as promoting understanding and respect. It enables teachers to develop key skills, attitudes, and dispositions in their pupils, such as critical thinking, empathy, and conceptual creativity, which will equip them better to be able to grapple with the questions that life throws at us.

Delivery of RE is usually taught as a weekly lesson, however it can also be through larger blocks of time when it is felt this would be more effective. There is also some cross-curricular coverage of RE including teaching through other subjects, whole school events, assemblies, and collective worship.

CURRICULUM FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In accordance with the law, we provide religious education for all pupils from Reception to Year 6.

We 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 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.

AIMS

At Woodstock CE Primary 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 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'.

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.

SUBJECT CONTENT

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 and Understanding Christianity.

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 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.

THE ROLE & RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE RE LEAD

The role of the subject leader is crucial in developing RE teaching, learning and resources across the school so as best to support teachers, motivate pupils, monitor progress, and achieve consistently high standards.

Strategic Direction and Development of RE

- To develop and implement policies and practices which reflect the school's commitment to high achievement through effective teaching and learning.
- To have an enthusiasm for the subject which motivates and supports other staff and encourages a shared understanding of the contribution the subject can make to all aspects of pupils' lives.
- To use relevant school, local and national data to inform targets for development and further improvement for individuals and groups of pupils.

- To monitor progress and evaluate the effects on teaching and learning by working alongside colleagues, analysing work and outcomes.

Monitoring Teaching and Learning

- To use your own class as an example of high-quality teaching and learning in the subject.
- To ensure continuity and progression in the subject by supporting colleagues in choosing the appropriate sequence of teaching and teaching methods and set clear learning objectives through an agreed scheme of work, developed in line with the school development/improvement plan.
- To establish clear targets for achievement in the subject and evaluate progress using appropriate assessments and records and regular yearly analysis of this data.
- To evaluate the teaching of the subject by the monitoring of teachers' plans and through work analysis, identify effective practice and areas for improvement, and take appropriate action to improve further the quality of teaching.
- To develop effective links with the local community including parents and churches
- To ensure that teachers are aware of the implications of equality of opportunity which the subject raises.

Leading and Supporting Staff

- To enable all teachers to achieve expertise in planning for and teaching the subject through example, support and by leading or providing high-quality professional development opportunities.
- To ensure that the head teacher, SMT and governors are well informed about policies, plans, priorities, and targets for the subject and that these are properly incorporated into the school development/improvement plan.

Effective Deployment of Resources

- To support the headteacher by maintaining efficient and effective management and organisation of learning resources, by developing or identifying new resources including ICT applications to the subject.
- To be aware of and respond appropriately to any health and safety issues raised by materials, practice or accommodation related to the subject.
- To support the headteacher by maintaining efficient and effective management of the expenditure for the subject.
- To help colleagues to create a stimulating learning environment for the teaching and learning of the subject.
- To take on any additional responsibilities which might from time to time be reasonably determined.

TEACHING & LEARNING OF RE AT WOODSTOCK CE PRIMARY SCHOOL

Learning will focus on pupils' own experiences and self-concept, universal human experiences and concepts as well as religious experiences and concepts. Central to our approach to learning is the process of building conceptual bridges between the pupils' own lives and the religious content that they explore. Whether the pupil comes from a particular faith background or none, religious education should always engage all pupils in meaningful learning that they can apply to their own lives.

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.

In each key stage we give children the opportunity to visit places of worship. We encourage visitors to come into the school to help children learn about faith. We recognise and value the importance of religious texts and artefacts as an important way of stimulating interest and discussion.

The Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus is the RE entitlement of all pupils and therefore supports the principles of inclusion as set out in the National Curriculum:

- setting suitable learning challenges
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs
- overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

CURRICULUM PLANNING

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

We teach RE in the EYFS as an integral part of the curriculum. RE makes a significant contribution to developing a child's Personal, Social and Emotional development, and Understanding the World especially.

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.*

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND INCLUSION

We teach RE to all children, whatever their ability, in accordance with the school curriculum policy of providing a broad and balanced education to all children. Teachers provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. It is expected that teachers of pupils with special educational needs will modify the RE provision according to their own situation, meeting the needs of the children in the most appropriate way. This also includes meeting the needs and challenges of the most able pupils.

As the subject matter of RE sometimes raises sensitive issues, it is important that teachers are aware of, and are sensitive to, the background and personal circumstances of their pupils.

SPIRITUAL, MORAL, SOCIAL & CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

The SMSC development of a child is a whole-school, community-wide responsibility. We believe that through our teaching of RE we can inspire pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. It is widely recognised that the RE curriculum can make a huge contribution to this. Religious Education equips pupils with the ability to understand their place in a culturally diverse society and gives them opportunities to experience such diversity within the school community and beyond. RE is a subject rich in opportunities for SMSC development, resulting in children who understand their own beliefs and have a strong respect and appreciation for the beliefs of others. RE is also a strong contributor to the British Values agenda.

ASSESSMENT & RECORDING

Teachers assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as they observe them during lessons. On completion of a piece of work, the teacher marks the work and comments as necessary. At the end of the year, the teacher makes a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the skills they have developed in-line with the End of phase outcomes for RE and these are reported to parents as part of the child's annual school report. We use this as the basis for assessing the progress of the child and we pass this information on to the next teacher at the end of the year.

MONITORING & REVIEW

Individual teachers are responsible for the standard of children's work and for the quality of their teaching in RE. The RE subject leader monitors children's work, wall displays, planning and carries out pupil interviews. The work of the RE subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, being informed about current developments in the subject.