



Religious Education Policy



Weston St Mary Church of England Primary School

Reviewed by:	Date:	Changes made:
AM	27.03.2023	Sections reorganised Monitoring section added
Pupils & Provision	02.03.2021	No amendments
Pupils & Provision	07.02.2019	Paragraph on withdrawal from RE added
SLT - AF	January 2020	Added Intent, Implementation & Impact Section

Schools serving their communities through excellence,
exploration and encouragement within the love of God

INTENT

At Weston St Mary, the aim of Religious Education is to help children to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain; to appreciate the way that religious beliefs shape life and our behaviour, develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues and enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Religious Education is taught throughout the school in such a way as to reflect the overall aims, values, and philosophy of the school. As a LAAT and Church School, Religious Education plays an important role, along with all other curriculum areas, particularly PSHE, in promoting the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of our children.

The Bishops of England and Wales said “Religious Education is about engaging with deepest questions of life and finding reasons for the hope which is within them.”

We want our pupils to be religiously literate and assess them through believing, thinking and living.

AIMS AND PURPOSES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In a world of confusion and shifting values, children need accurate information and a helpful environment in which they can explore and form their own values and develop skills to deal with life’s joys, sorrows and questions.

Religious Education provides opportunities for our pupils to:

- Develop their knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain;
- Explore issues within and between faiths to help them understand and respect different religions, beliefs, values and traditions (including ethical life stories), and understand the influence of these on individual, societies, communities and cultures;
- Consider questions of meaning and purpose in life;
- Learn about religious and ethical teaching, enabling them to make reasoned and informed judgements on religious and moral issues;
- Develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a multicultural society;
- Develop enquiry and response skills through the use of distinctive language, listening and empathy;
- Reflect on, analyse and evaluate their beliefs, values and practices and communicate their responses.

CONTEXT OF OUR ACADEMY

Within our Academies Trust we believe in a Christian ethos whilst welcoming all. We understand that as a Church Academy that we are in a unique position to develop a clearer understanding of the ways in which Christian Values can be reflected within the whole curriculum of the school. We not only encourage our pupils to strive for excellence in the core subjects, but to broaden their education, to embrace and develop the concepts of faith and spirituality, of hope and charity and to enable them to make more informed decisions later in life as broad-minded and knowledgeable world citizens.

We have close links with our Parish Church and diocese of Lincoln. Our school is inclusive and accepts children regardless of background or special need and our intake of pupils is representative

I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philipians 4:13

of all sections of the local community. We recognise that we are in a unique position to develop a clearer understanding and identification of ways in which Christian, British, moral and other faith values can motivate relationships between all members of our community.

We believe that the enduring and renewing values that underpin the Christian story may be considered to be even more relevant within our fast changing society. The concepts of respect and care are central to the way we live our lives in our School.

We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome diversity, and we are sensitive to the home background of each child. RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children nor to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another.

The communal life of our school, and the role of every teacher within it, continues to be highly significant. An atmosphere in which it is accepted that religion can be a genuine and important dimension of human life will foster the achievement of the more specific aim of a tolerant understanding of religious believers and institutions.

IMPLEMENTATION

It has been agreed that having taken into account the requirements and guidelines presented in the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus, the following religions have been selected for study:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Humanism

As Christianity is the predominant religion in the school's pupil population and in the community surrounding the school, Christianity is the chosen faith for Progressed Study.

There are no presumptions made as to the religious backgrounds and beliefs and values of the children and the staff. We value the religious background of all members of the school community and hope that this will encourage individuals to share their own experiences with others freely. All religions and their communities are treated with respect and sensitivity and we value the links, which are, and can be made between home, school, and a faith community. We acknowledge that each religion studied can contribute to the education of all our pupils.

We promote teaching in Religious Education that stresses open enquiry and first-hand experiences wherever possible for both staff and children. This enables us to work within Philosophy, Theology, Human/social sciences and with Understanding Christianity resources.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Wherever possible, pupils should be actively engaged in exploratory and experimental learning including opportunities to:

- observe religious artefacts, paintings, books, photos, pictures etc.
- gain first-hand knowledge through direct questioning;
- studying sacred texts and stories;
- visit places of worship in a planned and structured way;
- meet and talk to believers of various faiths in a planned and controlled situation

I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philipians 4:13

Learning should be geared to more than the accumulation of factual knowledge and personal experiences. Opportunities for analysis are especially important and must be given to enable the child to develop those insights and deeper perceptions that lead to understanding.

RE is equally concerned with understanding the feelings and attitudes of others. This requires both openness and sensitivity, and a degree of imagination in order to empathize with and see the world through the eyes of another person.

During RE in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils have the opportunity to know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews and gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews.

Children acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of:

- Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism;
- how these religions influence individuals, communities, society and the world around them

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

We embed Christian Values to ensure they permeate through our policies and every aspect of the children's learning and lives. Made in the image of God, they all deserve to be the best they can be regardless of background, faith and ability.

Children should be given opportunities to:

- Work with others, listening to each other's ideas, and treat others with respect;
- Consider their own experiences, attitudes and values, and those of other people;
- Develop respect for evidence and critically evaluate ideas that may or may not fit the evidence available;
- Identify puzzling questions and suggest answers;
- Develop their understanding of why certain things are held to be right or wrong;
- Relate to moral and religious issues.
- Explore and express personal values, feelings and choices;
- Experience stillness and periods of quietness, silence or being alone;
- Evaluate their experiences and discoveries;
- Express themselves through movement, dance, poetry, music or in other creative media;
- Develop appropriate behaviour and responses when dealing with what is special, important, precious or sacred to themselves and others.

EXPECTATIONS

By the end of the Foundation Stage, children will have had opportunities to:

- Find out and learn about the world they live in;
- Learn about the beliefs and cultures of others;
- Share in the celebration of different festivals;
- Hear stories from a variety of cultural and religious traditions.

By the end of Key Stage 1, most children will be able to:

- Recall and name different beliefs and practices, including festivals, worship, rituals and ways of life, in order to find out about the meanings behind them.
- Retell and suggest meanings to some religious and moral stories, exploring and discussing

I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philippians 4:13

- sacred writings and sources of wisdom and recognising the traditions from which they come.
- Recognise some different symbols and actions which express a community's way of life, appreciating some similarities between communities.
 - Ask and respond to questions about what individuals and communities do, and why, so that pupils can identify what difference belonging to a community might make.
 - Observe and recount different ways of expressing identity and belonging, responding sensitively for themselves.
 - Notice and respond sensitively to some similarities between different religions and worldviews.
 - Explore questions about belonging, meaning and truth so that they can express their own ideas and opinions in response using words, music, art or poetry.
 - Find out about and respond with ideas to examples of co-operation between people who are different.
 - Find out about questions of right and wrong and begin to express their ideas and opinions in response.

By the end of Key Stage 2, most children will be able to:

- Describe and make connections between different features of the religions and worldviews they study, discovering more about celebrations, worship, pilgrimages and the rituals which mark important points in life, in order to reflect on their significance.
- Describe and understand links between stories and other aspects of the communities they are investigating, responding thoughtfully to a range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings that arise from them in different communities.
- Explore and describe a range of beliefs, symbols and actions so that they can understand different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- Observe and understand varied examples of religions and worldviews so that they can explain, with reasons, their meanings and significance to individuals and communities.
- Understand the challenges of commitment to a community of faith or belief, suggesting why belonging to a community may be valuable, both in the diverse communities being studied and in their own lives.
- Observe and consider different dimensions of religion, so that they can explore and show understanding of similarities and differences within and between different religions and worldviews.
- Discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, applying ideas of their own in different forms including (e.g.) reasoning, music, art and poetry.
- Consider and apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the well-being of all, responding thoughtfully to ideas about community, values and respect.
- Discuss and apply their own and others' ideas about ethical questions, including ideas about what is right and wrong and what is just and fair, and express their own ideas clearly in response

FEATURES OF PROGRESSION

As they move through our School, children progress:

From	To:
Using everyday language	More fluent, precise and competent use of religious vocabulary, language and terminology
Personal knowledge of a few areas of RE	A deeper understanding of the meaning of stories, symbols, events and practices and the links between the wider areas of RE
Unstructured exploration	More systematic investigation of questions
Identifying what is of value and concern to themselves and others	Increased levels in skills of asking and responding to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitment enabling children to suggest answers to moral and religious questions

ASSESSMENT

Knowing about and understanding religions and worldviews	Expressing and communicating ideas related to religions and worldviews	Gaining and deploying the skills for studying religions and worldviews
Recall, name and talk about materials in RE	Observe, notice and recognise materials in RE	Notice and find out about religions and worldviews
Retell stories, suggesting meanings for sources of wisdom, festivals, worship	Ask questions and give opinions about religions, beliefs and ideas	Collect, use and respond to ideas in RE
Describe religions and worldviews, connecting ideas	Give thoughtful responses using different forms of expression in RE	Consider and discuss questions, ideas and points of view

Understand ideas and practices, linking different viewpoints	Express and apply ideas thoughtfully in RE	Apply ideas about religions and worldviews thoughtfully
Explain the impact of and connections between ideas, practices, viewpoints	Explain diverse ideas and viewpoints clearly in various forms	Investigate and explain why religions and worldviews matter
Appreciate and appraise different understandings of religion and worldviews	Express insights into questions, giving coherent accounts of beliefs and ideas	Enquire into and interpret ideas, sources and arguments

I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philippians 4:13

In RE, as in other areas of the curriculum, assessment is an essential part of learning. The School chooses to work with the School Lincolnshire Syllabus.

Any assessment undertaken should be:

- recognised as useful strategy for helping both pupils and teachers develop their work in RE;
- planned as an integral part of the work in RE;
- relevant to the aspects studied;
- appropriate in terms of pupils' expertise, experience and stage of development;
- informative in terms of the feedback it can provide for pupils, teachers and parents;
- based on the broad range of assessment skills which teachers use in the normal course of their teaching

Teachers meet in Phases to assess and level work using the eight step pyramid assessment structure to make informal assessments at the end of each topic.

Our School recognises that Religious Education is not the same as Collective Worship, which has its own place within our School.

MONITORING

Monitoring of the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in R.E. is the responsibility of the R.E. Subject Leader and SLT. The work of the Subject Leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of R.E, being informed about the current developments in the subject, and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The Subject Leader meets regularly with the Head OF School. Information is used to highlight areas of development for individual year groups.

WITHDRAWAL FROM R.E

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from RE lessons and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We acknowledge that parents/guardians/teachers do not need to provide a reason why they wish to withdraw from the subject. Should a parent/guardian wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons or a teacher wish to refuse to teach RE, we require that written notice be sent to the school governors.

Should a parent/guardian request that their child be withdrawn from RE, we will endeavour to communicate clearly the place of RE within a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that they are in possession of all the necessary information before confirming their decision. However, we will not attempt to persuade them to alter their decision. If a pupil is withdrawn from RE lessons, the school is required to provide supervision, *but should not incur any additional cost in so doing and is not obliged to provide alternative work.*

Any queries regarding withdrawal from RE should be directed to the RE Subject Leader in the first instance, and thereafter to the Head of School.

IMPACT

We strive to ensure the children at Weston St Mary Church of England Primary enjoy learning lots about other religions and why people choose, or choose not to follow a religion. Through their R.E. learning, the children are able to make links between their own lives and those of others in their

I can do all things through him who strengthens me ~ Philippians 4:13

community and in the wider world. R.E. acts as a hub, therefore, between social aspects of learning, science and geography.

Through R.E. our children are developing an understanding of other people's cultures and ways of life, which they are then able to communicate to the wider community.

R.E. offers our children the means by which to understand how other people choose to live and to understand why they choose to live in that way. As such, R.E. is invaluable in an ever changing and shrinking world.

Links: Lincolnshire Syllabus
Understanding Christianity

Review Date: March 25