

Whittington Church of England Religious Education Policy



To love, to learn, to flourish - together

School Vision

Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last.' John 15:16

We are inspired by Jesus to learn with joy and flourish in love, faith and wisdom. Together, we live and grow well, valuing and respecting our differences and sharing our God given gifts. We aspire to be courageous and responsible, caring for our world and one another today for a better tomorrow.

Policy adopted: September 2024

Policy review: September 2025

Introduction

This policy has been written in the light of the Church of England's Vision for Education (Autumn 2016), Valuing all God's Children (2021) and through reflection on the 2023 SIAMS Framework for schools.

Legal Position of Religious Education in School

Religious Education (RE) is unique in the curriculum as it is neither a core or foundation subject. The 1988 Education Act states 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all pupils'.

Whittington CE Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School and therefore follows the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020 – 2025.

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement (February 2019) outlines the aims and expectations for RE in Church of England schools and guides this school's approach to RE.

It begins by stating: 'Religious Education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It will help to educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together'. Quoting from the Church of England's Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, it continues: 'Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person'.

Religious Education and the school's Christian Vision

The School's Vision:

Jesus said, 'I chose you and appointed you to bear much fruit, fruit that will last.'

John 15:16

We are inspired by Jesus to learn with joy and flourish in love, faith and wisdom. Together, we live and grow well, valuing and respecting our differences and sharing our God given gifts. We aspire to be courageous and responsible, caring for our world and one another today – for a better tomorrow.

Our school vision is integral to everything we do at WCEPS. We want our children to develop a love for themselves, others and for their learning so that they can develop empathy, faith and wisdom and be confident to follow their dreams and aspirations.

Religious Education at Whittington encourages everyone to be reflective about their own beliefs, to show respect for themselves and one another and develop an understanding of their feelings and what is important to themselves and other so that we can all live well together. Our vision inspires us to share and celebrate our gifts and talents and use them wisely to take care of God's creation and one another. We believe this is of the highest importance when teaching RE to enable pupils to explore their differences with tolerance and mutual respect.

Our RE curriculum specifically contributes to our distinctively Christian character and provides children with the opportunity to explore our Christian values of love, hope, courage, responsibility, respect, wisdom to enable them to flourish as citizens in our global community.

Religious Education Intent

The intent of Religious Education at WCEPS is as follows:

- Pupils will enquire into and explore questions arising from the study of religion and beliefs, so as to promote their personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and support their own search for identity and significance.
- Pupils will gain a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religious traditions and beliefs represented in local, national and global contexts.
- Pupils will develop their understanding how beliefs influence people in their behaviour, practices and outlook and develop a positive attitude towards people who hold different religious beliefs to their own.
- Pupils will develop their confidence to help them tackle challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality and issues of right and wrong.
- Pupils will understand, interpret and evaluate texts and develop religious literacy to articulate their own responses whilst respecting the right of others to differ.

The Principal Aim

The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.

This has been written into a child friendly version:

Religious Education explores what people believe and what difference this means to how they live. We gain knowledge and understanding to help us answer questions about faith and to think about our own beliefs.

School Approach to Religious Education

In-line with all church schools, this school has duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views.

This syllabus is designed to support schools in developing and delivering excellence in RE. It responds to national calls for deepening pupils' knowledge about religions and for developing their 'religious literacy'. It does this by studying one religion at a time ('systematic' units), and then including 'thematic' units, which build on learning by comparing the religions, beliefs and practices studied.

The teaching and learning approach has three core elements:

- Making Sense of Beliefs
- Making Connections
- Understanding the Impact

These are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, underpinning the aims of RE. Teaching and learning in the classroom will encompass all three elements, allowing for overlap between elements as suits the religion, concept and question being explored.

A wide range of imaginative teaching methods and pupil groupings ensure effective RE sessions. We appreciate the positive impact that local faith communities can have on pupils' experience in RE. Therefore, this school encourages actual and virtual visits to places of worship and welcomes visitors from different faith communities. We recognise it is vitally important that teachers demonstrate respectful attitudes towards all faiths, modelling the attitudes and responses we would expect from our pupils.

As identified in the Statement of Entitlement, teaching and learning in RE in this school will provide:

- a challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework
- an assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts
- a curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide
- a pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place
- the opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.

RE that makes a positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

Organisation & Time Allocation

In accordance with the structure of Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus we have agreed that, as a minimum:

- in the Foundation Stage pupils will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it. They will be introduced to a range of faith traditions and will be taught RE for 36 hours over the year
- at Key Stage 1 pupils study Christianity and Judaism or Islam - RE will be taught for at least for 36 hours over the year
- at Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and also consider non-religious worldviews - RE will be taught for at least for 45 hours over the year.

Assessment / Recording & Reporting

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025 sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the expected end of Key Stage learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus.

Pupil's achievements will be assessed by class teachers after each 'Big question', or unit, is taught. The children will be assessed against the learning outcomes from both the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus and the Understanding Christianity resource. Class teachers record whether children are working below, at or above expectation and this informs planning and is shared with the RE Leader to highlight support or CPD needs.

School reports are sent home in the Summer term of each year and teachers comment on whether children are working below, at or above expectation.

Responsibilities for RE in School

The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the legal framework for RE is carried out and that the teaching of RE fits within the school's distinctively Christian vision. At WCEPS some of the responsibilities for RE may be delegated to other members of staff.

The Subject Leader is responsible for:

- ensuring personal subject knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by participating in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for RE and share good practice
- attending RE clusters / hub meetings
- providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as Understanding Christianity
- supporting and clarifying approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary
- monitoring the teaching and learning of RE through regular lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, analysis of data and pupil voice and being able to discuss impact and standards, all in conjunction with the Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team
- contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process, including, but not limited to IQ6.

The Headteacher and Governors must ensure:

- RE has a high profile within the curriculum
- that the legal framework for RE is upheld within the school
- that all pupils make progress in achieving the learning outcomes of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have effective and regular opportunities for CPD
- teachers newly-appointed to church schools are provided with support offered by the diocese to enable them to become effective teachers of RE
- that clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils make good progress

- appropriate support is in place to ensure the effective provision of RE.

The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

At WCEPS we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship.

Where parents make a request to withdraw their child(ren) from the teaching of RE, the school will, as a matter of courtesy, ensure that the parents are aware of the following:

- the learning objectives covered in RE so that parents can make an informed decision
- what supervision arrangements will be in place for child(ren).

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of RE at our school.

Review

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review and will be reviewed and ratified by the governing body every years. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- a change in Agreed Syllabus
- a change in legal position framework for RE

Approval / review by Governing Body:

Headteacher signed:

Date:

Chair of Governors signed:

Date:

Date of next review: