

WHITEHILLS PRIMARY SCHOOL

"...putting children first..."



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Date reviewed: October 2021

Reviewed by: A Safdar

Ratified by Governors: October 2021

Religious Education Policy

This policy has been adopted by the governors in consultation with the RE Subject Leader and teaching staff.

Context

- The context of RE at **Whitehills Primary School** is that of a large urban primary school, serving children in the age range 4 to 11
- We work to the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus (SACRE)
- We recognise the variety of religious and non - religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome the diversity and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. We are glad to have the active support of members of local faith communities in RE and in general.
- We recognise the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas.

We feel that it is important that the children are not only introduced to the faiths of those within their school community but also to those faiths represented in the wider community.

An introduction to the key beliefs, practices and impact of faith will hopefully lead to understanding, sensitivity and respect for fellow humankind.

Religious Education helps this by welcoming visitors from other cultures and beliefs to talk to the pupils and by pupils experiencing visits to diverse places of worship themselves. Pupils also have the opportunity to experience the celebration of different cultures and festivals other than their own, within RE and other areas of the curriculum and Collective Worship.

National and Legal Framework

RE at **Whitehills Primary School** will be provided in line with the legal requirements. These are that:

- the basic curriculum will include provision for Religious Education for all pupils on the school roll;
- the content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain;
- the RE which is provided shall be in accordance with the locally Agreed Syllabus for Northamptonshire

Curriculum Intent

Whitehills School follow 'The Agreed Syllabus for RE in Northamptonshire.'

It is our intent for the Religious Education curriculum to engage, inspire and promote diversity to equip our children with the knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions; explore different religious beliefs; values and traditions. We want our children to develop a deeper understanding of the varied religious traditions, beliefs and practices that are followed in our multi-cultural society. We want our children to know how religious education enables pupils to combat prejudice; enhance modes of communication and prepares them for adult life; employment and life-long learning in modern Britain as well as in the wider world.

The RE curriculum aims to offer a multitude of opportunities to communicate with others in a variety of ways such as: class discussions and debates, paired and teacher talk and

development of RE vocabulary. High levels of engagement by children is also paramount through communication. Teachers will be well equipped with the knowledge to teach the religion/culture/tradition to their class and offer opportunities to ask thought-provoking questions. News and current affairs may play a key part in providing a hook for the children. Relevant texts will also be used to enhance the experience for all children.

Each year group will visit a place of worship, as well as having a visitor from the local religious community into the school during the academic year. This will help promote both engagement, diversity and a feeling of belonging in the community.

Right of Withdrawal

In keeping with the law, parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education provided they give written notification to the school. The school will ensure that suitable supervision is provided. Please refer to the Subject Leader or Head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals.

We note that teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching RE if they wish to do so but must give notice of their intention in writing to the Governing Body.

RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children or staff, or to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another.

We hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the open Religious Education being taught at our school and we encourage the participation of all.

Other School Policies

Equal Opportunities

In keeping with the aims of the school policy for equal opportunities, the teaching of RE endeavours to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to educational opportunities regardless of their religious beliefs, gender, race, ability, social background or physical capacity. Care is taken in RE to avoid the reinforcement of negative or stereotypical images and RE aims to celebrate and appreciate cultural diversity through a variety of materials, tasks and experiences, in order to reflect the cultural diversities of our society.

Computing policy

IT contributes towards the objectives of RE by the use of:

- Interactive whiteboards;
- Internet;
- CDs/Video and other multimedia;
- Digital photography;
- Power-point presentations etc.

PSHE, Citizenship and Community Cohesion

Religious Education looks at moral codes and values that underpin people's behaviour. It promotes values and attitudes that develop respect and sensitivity for others and enables discussion of a range of views, opinions and beliefs which help to prepare children to become valuable citizens in a culturally diverse society. British values are also taught within RE lessons where relevant as well in the PSHE curriculum.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education plays a key role in pupils, "Spiritual and moral development, and makes a distinctive contribution to their social and cultural development." This is outlined in detail in the Agreed Syllabus.

Literacy

RE embeds skills of literacy in a variety of ways. For example, speaking and listening skills, drama conventions, reading different texts and writing in different genres.

Collective Worship

Religious Education is different in nature to both Worship and Assembly. The aims and objectives of RE are different and distinct from those of Collective Worship. RE is about developing skills, knowledge and understanding in order to make decisions about the important questions. Worship is about being given the opportunity to participate in an experience which can lead to a heightened sense of spiritual awareness. Assembly can emphasise the more ritual and ceremonial aspects of worship and can be used as a springboard from which to launch a project or inspire a larger number of children at one time.

Religious Education cannot be taught wholly through assemblies. The assembly context does not give the opportunity for the exercise of many skills; for example, research, which is a part of Religious Education for which a classroom context is essential.

Assembly, Worship and Religious Education are distinctive activities which help the school deliver a broad and balanced curriculum.

Time Allocation

RE is part of the curriculum and all schools are required to teach RE to all pupils on the school roll, except where parents exercise their right of withdrawal. The QCDA recommended and exemplified a minimum of 36 hours per year for RE at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two, a recommendation endorsed by the Northamptonshire Agreed Syllabus. The time allocated at **Whitehills Primary School** will be 36 hours per year at Key Stage One and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two. RE will form part of the planning in the EYFS; the time allocation expected is equivalent to 30 hours of direct teacher input over YR. RE curriculum time does not include assembly or Collective Worship, even where the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work. However, visits to religious places of worship and activities from visitors with a religious context can be included.

Scheme of Work

Whitehills follows the SACRE scheme of work (2018-23). This highlights key units for each year group to cover across the academic year. This is supplemented with visits, as well as visitors into school. These are arranged in liaison with the RE Co-ordinator.

Teaching

OFSTED reports suggest that the range of teaching and learning strategies in use in RE is often too narrow, in the over-use of stories and a limited range of drawing and written tasks. Our policy is to ensure that a variety of methods ensures that Religious Education is accessible by all pupils. The variety enables pupils to develop a broad repertoire. The teaching and learning styles used promote a range of skills such as thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and research. Examples of active learning strategies and activities which we use are:

- Dramatic conventions;
- Group work;

- Individual reflection;
- Use of music and art;
- Artefact handling;
- Multi - sensory approaches;
- Visits and visitors;
- Use of ICT;
- Use of photos, posters, DVDs.

Resources

A range of resources are in place for each topic area within Religious Education. These are all individually boxed according to religion and a list of contents for each resource box is displayed on the front of each box and a master copy to be given to each teacher to put into their RE files. Resources are stored within each year group.

The school has invested in new books, religious artefacts, videos/DVDs, picture packs and posters, and staff may need to familiarise themselves with the new materials. The librarians have a dedicated area in the library, which offers many stories from different traditions. Teachers may choose to use these in RE. Staff are invited to suggest gaps in the resources for future spending.

Special Educational Needs

RE contributes towards the policy by ensuring that pupils with learning difficulties are able to:

- Develop their self-confidence and awareness;
- Understand the world they live in as individuals and as members of groups;
- Bring their own experiences and understanding of life into the classroom;
- Develop positive attitudes towards others, respecting their beliefs and experience;
- Reflect on and consider their own values and those of others;
- Deal with issues that form the basis for personal choices and behaviour.

Access to RE for pupils with learning difficulties can be improved by:

- Using sensory materials and resources through sight, touch, sound, taste or smell, for example, music, tactile artefacts, plants in a sensory garden;
- Giving pupils first hand experiences, for example, visitors to schools, visits to religious buildings, involvement in festivals;
- Organising a range of activities to give personal experiences, for example, dance, drama, visits to a range of environments;
- Helping pupils to understand and appreciate their world and its diversity;
- Using a range of resources, for example, interactive/sensory stimuli, information and communication technology (ICT), to increase pupils' knowledge of religions and the elements in them;
- Using specialist aids and equipment;
- Providing support from adults or other pupils when necessary, while allowing pupils the space, time and freedom to develop skills for themselves;
- Adapting tasks or environments and providing alternative activities where necessary, for example, tactile story books, puppets, role-play, music making, presenting work as a painting instead of writing.
- Being aware of the pace at which pupils work and of the physical and mental effort required.
- Balancing consistency and challenge, according to individual needs.

From setting high expectations we aspire for some of our children to:

- Show high levels of insight into and discernment beyond, the obvious and ordinary;

- Make sense of and draw meaning from religious symbols, metaphors, texts and practices;
- Are sensitive to, or aware of, the mysteries of life and have a feeling for how these are explored and expressed;
- Understand, apply and transfer ideas and concepts across topics in Religious Education and into other religious and cultural contexts.

It is important that the full range and scope of Religious Education activities and learning experiences give pupils access to high levels of attainment and should be appropriately challenged by:

- Using a variety of challenging questioning strategies to explore religious phenomena;
- Setting extension tasks to encourage greater depth of understanding;
- Using authentic materials from a faith;
- Focusing on interpretation of symbol, metaphor, text and story and the ways in which these stimulate reflection on meaning and discernment;
- Challenging and developing use of spoken and written religious language with both sacred texts and general literature;
- Teaching pupils correct terminology and language needed to handle sophisticated religious, spiritual, ethical and philosophical questions ideas and materials;
- Using questions and tasks from later key stages to stimulate responses through argument, analysis and prediction;
- Encouraging pupils to make connections between their work in RE and other subjects.

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Assessment, Recording and Reporting

In line with the requirements of the Agreed Syllabus for RE, we use the expectations guide that is linked to the Symphony Assessments to help make judgements about pupil progress and attainment. Pupils work in RE is assessed by making informal judgements both by staff and the pupils themselves during lessons and at the end of a unit of work using the target sheets.

An annual report for RE informs parents of their child's progress and attainment, as required by law. We will make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's attainment in RE in this report, based on regular monitoring of work with regard to the attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us.

A folder is available on the common drive that gives that expectations for each compulsory unit of work together with the target sheets for highlighting and dating. Staff are asked to complete these sheets and collate all the work relating to the topic in a plastic wallet which is to be kept in their R.E. folders. Towards the end of the academic year these target sheets will be used to provide an overall account of the achievement each child has made and the Symphony Sheets will be completed and passed to the subject leader.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next 2 years and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that the policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to return a copy of the medium-term plan for RE, or plan of the theme with RE highlighted, to the coordinator each term. The coordinator's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We maintain a "self- evaluation" of our RE work in readiness for inspection.

Self-evaluation, RE and Inspection

The Subject Leader will maintain an active awareness of the strengths and areas to develop, in line with OFSTED guidance about self - evaluation and review. This will be monitored through reviews of the work undertaken, pupil interviews and lesson observations.

Transition to Secondary Education

We use the final term in Year 6 to review learning in RE. We provide the schools our pupils move on to with a simple statement of the religions and topics they have been studying as part of their transition information.

Named RE Subject Leader: *Mrs A Safdar*

Headteacher: *Mrs N James*

Link Governor: *Mr H Hughes*