

White Spire School



Religious Education Policy

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BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

At White Spire School, we understand that Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject, but must be taught to all pupils as part of the Basic Curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined, we follow an Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2010 provided by Milton Keynes Local Authority. We have used this as the basis of our planning and delivery of RE.

Families who send their children to White Spire School are *from a range of faith backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc. some children are from practising Christian families, in addition, there are children who are from religions other than Christianity and some from non-religious backgrounds.* RE is concerned with “learning about religion” and “learning from religion” and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. The faith background of both the staff and child’s family is respected at all times.

VALUES AND AIMS

At White Spire School we believe that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life, and our caring ethos and the values which we place on the development of the whole child; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum. We ensure that topics are studied in suitable depth and that therefore not too many topics are introduced in a term, a year or a key stage. This ensures that pupil’s learning is not fragmented and pupils leave school with high levels of subject knowledge and understanding.

RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. These include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, each of which is represented in Milton Keynes.
2. develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, including the local community;
3. develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about

religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions;

4. enhance their own **spiritual, moral, social and cultural** development by:
 - a. developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life arising from human experiences, and how religious beliefs and practices can relate to them;
 - b. responding to the fundamental questions of life in the light of their experience and with reference to religious beliefs and practices;
 - c. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
 - d. expressing their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
5. Recognise the right of people to hold different beliefs within an ethnically and socially diverse society.

OBJECTIVES

Learning

Religious Education 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 challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses. White Spire community believes Religious Education should encourage all participants to reflect on their own beliefs and values and to acknowledge that others hold beliefs different from their own.

Religious Education has two closely related aspects:

Learning about Religion (AT 1) and Learning from Religion (AT 2)

These two attainment targets with their associated statements set out the broad objectives in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills for the RE curriculum. RE is at its most effective when these two attainment targets are closely related in the learning experience.

AT1 Learning about Religion

- identify, name, describe and give an account, in order to build a coherent picture of each religion;
- explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism;
- explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions.

AT2 Learning from Religion

- respond to religious and moral issues in an informed and considered manner;
- reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience;
- identify and respond to the question of meaning within religion.

Teaching

RE teaching contributes to pupils' knowledge and understanding and provides opportunities for reflection on six key areas:

- **Beliefs and teachings** - e.g. stories, religious leaders, books, God/gods, self-sacrifice, truth, life after death;
- **Religious practices and lifestyles** - e.g. people, festivals, pilgrimages, places, events, artefacts, lifestyle choices, actions, effects on individuals;
- **Ways of expressing meaning** - e.g. sacred texts, art, music, literature, symbolism, poetry, dance, drama, prayer, forms of religious and spiritual expression, silence/stillness;
- **Human identity, personality and experience** - e.g. belonging, preferences, relationships within family and community, influences on own lives, inspirational people;
- **Questions of meaning and purpose** - e.g. amazement, sadness, disappointment, joy, awe, in connection with the natural world and life's journey, making sense, ultimate questions of life raised by life experiences;
- **Values and commitments** - e.g. values, ethics, principles, rules, morality.

The teaching of RE seeks both to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through a variety of teaching and learning approaches. Providing a balance between these two key attainment targets underpins the teaching of RE at our school.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

1. visits and visitors; enabling children to see at first hand religious people, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
2. role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
3. artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in

religious worship, encouraging respect and questioning whilst deepening knowledge

4. parents; by valuing the family backgrounds of the children and making them part of the school community

The teaching of RE involves some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired or individual activities. A range of teaching styles are used including enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, artefacts, visits and faith visitors, pupils are actively engaged in learning.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined in the White Spire Assessment for RE.

Through activities for example, discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against the statements of attainment in line with other areas of the curriculum. At White Spire school we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment. Members of staff have undertaken moderation exercises to ensure that we are familiar with the assessment statements and what they mean in the context of a pupil's work.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and the RE report is written with reference to the records made or pieces of work retained.

TIME ALLOCATION

In line with the requirements of the Milton Keynes Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2010, we plan for RE to be delivered creatively and flexibly over terms and the subject might be planned in combination with other subjects, this agreed syllabus has been based on the expectation that the following hours be devoted to RE:

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 3: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 4: 40 hours per year

Post 16: 5.45 hours per year

PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and RE is covered at each key stage the school follows the Milton Keynes Scheme of Work for RE which builds-in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. This scheme shows how we have planned that pupils have learned about and from "the six principal religions through the key stages. We have used a combination of teaching RE through the creative curriculum, RE days and as a separate

subject, depending on the material which has to be covered. Our termly curriculum overview plans give details of each unit of work for each term. The RE Subject Leader keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have some mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus and all gaps are filled.

Short term planning of individual lessons is a matter for the class teacher. The RE Subject Leader is available to help with this and keeps a range of teacher's resources as a guide. When planning each unit of work the teacher will identify which parts of the programme of study are to be the focuses, the learning objectives for the unit, the learning tasks planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of the pupils.

CROSS CURRICULAR ISSUES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

Children's skills in communication and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills will be developed.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The RE subject leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders.

There are staff meetings on RE, led by the subject leader; where areas for development are discussed. This policy is reviewed at that meeting to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school.