

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 (2017) provided by Milton Keynes Local Authority. We use 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, and in addition, there are children who are from non-religious backgrounds. 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, and these beliefs should be respected.

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. We ensure that topics are studied in suitable depth and 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.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Planning and teaching of religious education at White Spire focuses on learning about and from religion through following objectives as outlined in the MK Syllabus (2017): believing, belonging, behaving, responding and making links.

- **Believing** includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs and teachings, sources, practices and forms of expression, and as such, requires accurate and respectful teaching of the core beliefs of each religion.
- **Belonging** is enquiry into, investigation of and reflection on the identity of a believer, the diversity within each faith tradition, the values and beliefs held in common in religious communities and the way those communities express themselves in the world.
- **Behaving** relates to investigation of and reflection on the way that adherents of religions put their beliefs into practice. It studies the links between religious belief and ethical actions and the impact of those beliefs on people's lives.
- **Reflecting, responding and making links** encourages and helps to develop skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religious belief, identity and behaviour. Through reflection, pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas.

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.

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

Our school aims to learn about and from religion through an integrated approach: believing in a faith and its texts and teachings, belonging to a faith and to other believers; and behaving in a way that is required by the texts and teachings of each faith.

It is hoped that the pupils will make substantial progress in the following areas:

- acquiring and deepening their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Britain and the world
- enriching their understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- growing a respectful and positive attitude towards other people, honouring their right to hold beliefs different from their own and enabling them in living in a society of increasingly diverse religious character
- making reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Britain
- enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:
 1. increasing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to and inform them
 2. responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their understanding and experience
 3. reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for age related expectations and framework for assessment. Pupils can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined in the White Spire Assessment for RE. The evidence of attainment is obtained from a variety of means such as discussion, group activities, feedback, observing, displaying work, asking and answering questions. At White Spire School, we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment and provide regular opportunities for reflecting on feedback. Members of staff undertake regular moderation exercises to ensure that they are familiar with the assessment statements and what they mean in the context of a pupil's work. Parents and carers are kept informed through parent consultations and reports.

TIME ALLOCATION

We plan for RE to be delivered creatively, flexibly with a focus on enquiry over terms and the subject might be planned in combination with other subjects as well as assemblies and reflections. We aim for following hours to be devoted to RE:

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 3: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 4: 40 hours per year

KS5/ Post 16: 15 hours (Termly Allocated RE Days)

LONG AND SHORT TERM PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and RE is covered at each key stage, the coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts are spread throughout the school. This 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.

Our Post 16 provision is designed to prepare our young adults to know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews as well as express and challenge views which may contradict human and British values.

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 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 through problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

Our weekly character strength values offer the pupils a basis for personalised individual and whole school community reflection.

PARENTS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At White Spire, we recognise that the primary religious educator is the parent. Where parents object in conscience to the religious education, they may withdraw their children from part or all of the RE curriculum. However, a pupil cannot be withdrawn from RE by a parent to support other areas of their learning. In addition, pupils over 18 may withdraw themselves from RE. However, it is hoped that parents through working closely with the school will feel comfortable with the nature and areas of learning in RE, and as a consequence, will not feel the need to withdraw their children from the subject.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The RE subject leader and the senior management Team manage this area of the curriculum. 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 practices of the school.