



Willow Wood Community Primary School – R.E Policy

At Willow Wood Community Primary School, we follow the Sunderland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2021–2026, as agreed by Sunderland SACRE and Sunderland City Council. This syllabus emphasises an *enquiry-based* approach to learning about religions and worldviews, and includes *progression in knowledge*, *critical thinking*, and *personal reflection* across key stages. We regularly review R.E. provision in line with the agreed syllabus and will implement any future updates published by the local authority.

Our aim is to provide the children in our school with a rich, engaging and exciting R.E. curriculum. At Willow Wood Community Primary School, we recognise the role of Religious Education in achieving this aim as R.E both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in all aspects of school life. As children are introduced to different cultures of the world, they should develop their understanding and be encouraged to foster positive attitudes towards a variety of beliefs, values and traditions of individuals, communities, societies and cultures. Through R.E, we aim to encourage pupils to develop their own sense of identity and belonging which will enable them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. We therefore believe that the teaching of R.E, has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. Our curriculum is distinct and rigorous, and the sequencing of our planning is always clear and built on the children's prior knowledge. At Willow Wood, we also aim to ensure that children learn not only about religious festivals, but also non-religious celebrations too.

At Willow Wood Community Primary School we believe that Religious Education provides opportunities to promote:

Spiritual Development

Children develop the capacity to recognise and appreciate that there is more to life than the routine and every day which surrounds them. It gives them an opportunity to discover and appreciate the view-points of others and that not everyone holds the same thoughts and beliefs. For example:

- different cultures and religions may have different traditions, routines and ways of life
- there are defining moments in life
- getting to know ourselves and who we really are can be character forming, life-enhancing and affirming.

Moral Development

Children learn about the difference between right and wrong. For example:

- discuss moral issues and dilemmas
- understand why and how acting on principles, beliefs and values has consequences
- recognise justice, fairness and honesty and develop a consideration for the concern of others.

Social Development

Children learn to understand that getting on with others is important. For example:

- recognise roles, rights and responsibilities
- understand that working with others for the common good forms part of most religious faiths
- understand how to live as an individual in a community and in society at large, accepting each other, forming positive relationships and treating others as we would like to be treated ourselves.

Cultural Development

Children learn about tradition and identity. For example:

- develop insight into the culture to which we belong and that has shaped our lives
- appreciate cultural diversity through valuing richness and differences across cultures and religions
- appreciate we live in a multi-cultural, multi-ethnic, multi-faith society and country and that is something to be embraced and celebrated
- develop aesthetic appreciation, usually associated with arts, understanding what is great and good and fine, for example in music, architecture and literature.

Teaching of R.E is based on three elements (key focus) which are of equal importance and should be reflected in all planning and schemes of work.

Key focus 1: Making sense of belief

This is about what religion is and the impact it has for individuals and communities. It involves investigation of and enquiry into the nature of religion and belief through the following:

- identifying and making sense of core religious and non-religious beliefs and concepts
- understanding what these beliefs mean within their traditions
- recognising how and why sources of authority (such as texts) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways
- developing skills of interpretation.

- Key focus 2: Understanding the Impact

Examining how and why people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, within their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world.

Key focus 3: Making connections

This includes children joining everything they have learnt together and making connections between different religious, cultural and non-religious paths of life. This is also where pupils will connect what they have learnt to what they already know and use it to challenge their own thinking, making things personal to themselves. This is done using the following:

- evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the beliefs and practices studied
- allowing pupils to challenge ideas studied, and the ideas studied to challenge pupils' thinking;
- discerning possible connections between these and pupils' own lives and ways of understanding the world.

Teaching Time

Religious Education units are taught throughout the school year at the end of each term. There will be a themed R.E day at the end of each school year, where pupils complete their thematic unit tying their year's learning together. The R.E curriculum is organised in topics based on the Sunderland Agreed Syllabus Exemplar Planning. The attainment targets reflected in planning ensure that children reflect upon personal values, beliefs and attitudes and that age appropriate skills and knowledge in learning about and from religion are taught regularly across the whole school throughout the year, utilising a spiral curriculum which focuses on four main religions and revisits them regularly.

Religious Education in the Early Years Foundation Stage.

In the EYFS we plan from and assess against the Early years foundation stage (EYFS) statutory framework document. In the Early Years Foundation Stage children are given the opportunity to learn about religion and from religion beginning with familiar experiences and then gradually widening their experiences to take them into what is new and unfamiliar. Children's learning takes place by doing, listening, role play, engaging in music, art and experiencing through their senses. Through asking and answering questions, children begin to show an understanding of their own cultures and beliefs and develop a respect for their own cultures and those of other people. They begin to consider the consequences of their words and actions on themselves and others and are encouraged to explore and find out about the place they live in and the natural world around them.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

R.E. is statutory for all children, and we highly encourage participation. However, parents may withdraw their child from Religious Education provided they give written notification to the school. (Education Reform Act 1988 Section 2(1)(a). (Details to be found in the DFE Circular 1/94, paragraphs 44-49). Before giving written notification they must arrange to speak with the Headteacher (Lindsay Robertson).

Planning and teaching

The following concepts and topics are taught in each year group. Each topic is figure-headed using a key question, which informs the basis of the entire unit and which children should be able to answer by the end of the topic.

All staff follow a specific lesson design for RE to ensure consistency and equality in lessons.

1.Retrieval and Retention	Provide a starter that recaps the topic's key question and reviews prior learning and consolidates knowledge. Encourage the children to make connections between their knowledge of different religions and key concepts.
2.Purpose and Sequencing	Explain the subject you are teaching and the purpose of the lesson and how it fits into the topic, key question and wider curriculum. Explain which strands (make sense of belief/making connections/understanding the impact) will be important and why. Ensure that all children are explicitly aware of the aim of the lesson. All children should be aiming for the same objective.
3.High Expectations and Communication	Ensure you 'teach to the top' with high and ambitious expectations. Scaffolds must be provided to support learning. Ensure instructions are concise and communication is clear and that language is positive and encouraging. Questions need to be targeted and illicit well thought out responses. Make sure you allow thinking time in the way of talk partners, group discussions and silent reflection.
4.Knowledge and Deliberate Practice	Ensure you are explicit about the core knowledge you are teaching to the children and how this will be built on lesson by lesson. Ensure this is communicated to pupils during the lesson and links throughout the topic are explained and explored. Ensure you are offering and allowing pupils opportunities to practice the three skills of R.E consistently (making sense of belief/making connections/understanding the impact).
5.Modelling and Questioning	Ensure new material is presented in small steps and that you are explicitly modelling and showing pupils what 'success' looks like. Ensure probing questioning is used to aid critical thinking. Use explanation, timely intervention and live marking to address misconceptions at the point they are made and there is a drive for whole class understanding.
6.Literacy and Reading	Ensure that there is an explicit focus on improving and developing vocabulary and literacy by using a challenging reading extracts at the beginning of each lesson. Religious texts from holy books should be used where possible and appropriate. A variety of different reading strategies and questions should be used to allow all children to be culturally literate and to work on specific skills. Encourage and check for new / subject specific / technical vocabulary to be applied to all work, both spoken (class discussions, group work, talk partners, verbal answers) and written.
7. Metacognition and Self-Regulation	Ensure you are explicit in communicating and teaching effective learning strategies that children can adopt themselves in independent work and at home. Ensure that you are active in explaining 'thinking' to children. Ensure that when ready, scaffolding is gradually removed to allow children independence. Ensure lessons are inclusive for all.
8.Feedback and Review	Ensure feedback is clear and timely. It needs to be manageable, specific and targeted. Marking questions should encourage children to be reflective upon their own beliefs; applying what they have learnt in the lesson to themselves. Ensure formative assessment is acted upon and that you are constantly aiming to gain as much feedback as possible from children during the lesson. Ensure that a plenary reviews information from the lesson and link what children have learnt back to the key question of the topic. Plenary should also indicate next steps (whether that is moving on or consolidation / reviewing of work). Identify children who may require further support in the next lesson to deepen their understanding.

Topics taught include:

EYFS termly objectives (not-statutory):

- F1 Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?
- F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians?
- F3 Why is Easter special for Christians?
- F4 Being special: where do we belong?
- F5 Which places are special and why?
- F6 Which stories are special and why?

Year One units:

- * Autumn – What does it mean to belong to a faith community? / What do Christians believe God is like?
- * Spring – Who is Jewish and how do they live?
- * Summer – Who do Christians say made the world? / How should we care for the world and others and why does it matter?

Year Two units:

- * Autumn – What is the good news Christians believe Jesus brings? / Why does Christmas matter to Christians?
- * Spring – Why does Easter matter to Christians? / What makes some places sacred to believers?
- * Summer – Who is a Muslim and how do they live?

Year Three units:

- * Autumn – What do Christians learn from the Creation story/What is it like for someone to follow God?
- * Spring – How do festivals and worship show that matters to a Muslim? / How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people?
- * Summer – What kind of world did Jesus want? / How and why do people try and make the world a better place?

Year Four units:

- * Autumn – What is the trinity and why is it important for Christians / What do Hindus believe God is like?
- * Spring – What does it mean to be a Hindu in Britain today? / Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'good Friday'?
- * Summer – For Christians, when Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost? / How and why do people mark the significant events of life?

Year Five units:

- * Autumn – What does it mean if Christians believe God is holy and loving? / What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?
- * Spring – Why do Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah? / Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?
- * Summer – What would Jesus do? / What matters most to Humanists and Christians?

Year Six units:

- * Autumn – Creation and science: conflicting or complementary? / Why do some people believe in God and some people not?
- * Spring – Why do Hindus want to be good? / What do Christians believe Jesus did to 'save' people?

- * Summer – For Christians, what kind of king is Jesus? / How does faith help when life gets hard?

RE and Safeguarding

Religious Education at Willow Wood is delivered in line with our school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy. All staff at Willow Wood Community Primary School are aware of their duty to respond to any safeguarding concerns that may arise during R.E. lessons, particularly where sensitive or personal issues are discussed. Further, across our school in R.E., we aim to create a safe, respectful environment where pupils can *express views* and explore *sensitive issues*. 'Ground rules' are established to ensure discussions remain appropriate and supportive. If any safeguarding concerns arise, staff will act in accordance with the school's Safeguarding and Child Protection Policy and current statutory guidance, including Keeping Children Safe in Education (2025). At Willow Wood Community Primary School, we firmly believe that teaching about religion and worldviews supports pupils' *spiritual, moral, social and cultural* development and promotes fundamental British values, while ensuring that pupils are protected from extremism and radicalisation in line with the Prevent duty.

Monitoring and review

The monitoring of the standards of children's work and of the quality of teaching in R.E is the responsibility of the R.E subject leader. The work of the subject leader also involves supporting colleagues in the teaching of R.E, being informed about current developments in the subject and providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The R.E subject leader gives the headteacher a termly report in which she evaluates the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement from monitoring tasks completed over the term. The R.E subject leader has specially-allocated, regular subject leader time in order to review evidence of the children's work, disperse student and staff questionnaires and undertake learning walks during R.E teaching across the school. The R.E subject leader also closely monitor changes in both local and National R.E Curriculum and syllabuses and has the duty of updating the policies and curriculum at Willow Wood, as well as informing all staff involved in teaching and learning of these changes.

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