

Whitby Heath Primary School



Religious Education Policy

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Head teacher	Mr S Wright 
Chair of Governors	Mr N Lacey

Religious Education Intent

In our curriculum at Whitby Heath Primary School, we strive to encourage children to have an interest in others' differences, as well as teaching them to respect this; to become kind and caring members of society.

Our curriculum intends to ensure that all children, including those with SEND, can develop their Religious Education (RE) skills. This is achieved through Quality First Teaching, allowing children to understand and learn about different world views, whilst simultaneously developing and expanding their vocabulary. Furthermore, we are equipping children with the skills to be respectful, tolerant and understanding members of society and an understanding of the British Values that we all need to possess.

The Fundamental British Values were published by the government to ensure that young people are prepared for life in modern Britain. The British Values are democracy, rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect¹. RE makes a key contribution with fostering the key values to ensure that we all can live harmoniously in modern Britain.

As a result, children will gain a greater understanding of RE in society and our community, from their starting points.

Implementation

Religious Education is identified as a foundation subject in the National Curriculum. Therefore, we fulfil this by following the Cheshire West and Chester non-statutory unit of work, whereby we can ensure that a progressive RE curriculum is delivered across the whole school.

Our RE curriculum is enquiry based where each half term has a key question focus. From this, each lesson has an enquiry question that the children will be investigating. As they progress in their lessons, the children can reflect on how their new knowledge has allowed them to answer the overarching half-termly question. From this, lessons are designed in small 'chunk sized' steps, to avoid children's working memory being overwhelmed. We understand that new knowledge can be fragile, therefore we used spaced retrieval practices, planned at the beginning of every lesson, to aid retention of the knowledge into the long-term memory. We also strive to make cross-curricular links across the subject, to ensure that children have detailed schemata.

RE is taught weekly throughout the academic year, from Years 1-6. This exposure to different faiths and worldviews allows our children to become respectful of other views and beliefs, fostering children's British Values. In EYFS, Religious Education is taught within 'Understanding the World', where teachers plan from the children's interests and based on significant religious festivals and celebrations. Teachers use the CWAC advised scheme and make adaptations to this, to ensure that all children can access the subject matter and make progress in the subject.

1. Knowledge

The RE curriculum, helps children with their development of substantive knowledge, disciplinary knowledge and personal knowledge coined as the 'Pillars of Progression'², which helps children learn more and remember more.

Substantive knowledge is knowledge about expressing beliefs, artefacts and rituals relating to religious and non-religious traditions³. This also draws from the children's prior knowledge, whilst teaching new knowledge to help children develop their schemata.

Disciplinary knowledge or ways of knowing involves children understanding how the substantive knowledge arose, how to interpret and evaluate the claims made and the differences between conceptions and misconceptions⁴.

Personal knowledge involves the children's growing knowledge of how pupils' own and personal beliefs relate to those of differing faiths. Pupils will build this knowledge through reflection of their own views and how they differ or are similar to religious and non-religious believers.

Our whole school approach of spaced retrieval, further aids this by allowing children to draw on their knowledge over spaced periods of time. This is achieved at the beginning of every RE lesson.

Teachers assess children's prior knowledge using high quality questioning, allowing teachers to assess any potential gaps in their learning and adjust planning to accommodate this.

When knowledge is secure and successful links have been made from their prior learning to their current knowledge, children are given the opportunity to apply this knowledge into different situations. This aids the development of children's critical thinking skills. This could be an activity where children are debating or considering advantages and disadvantages.

2. **Skills**

Our curriculum is planned to ensure children have exposure with practising their RE skills and developing their personal knowledge.

Whitby Heath has a progressive set of RE skills that children will develop during their time at school. For example, in EYFS, children should learn that they can identify with different groups, which is embedded in Year 1, where they recognise which groups they are a part of - such as a football team or a dance class. Our RE curriculum allows children to recognise that they are individuals and have differing beliefs, leading to the ability to analyse this in Year 6.

We understand that developing children's personal knowledge, by allowing them to self-reflect, is vital for their own personal development of their beliefs. Therefore, a question document has been created to aid teachers with using high quality questioning to foster self-reflection.

3. **Attitudes and Values**

At Whitby Heath, we praise children on the effort and determination that they show linking to our Whole School Values, encouraging them to try their best and never give up, even though the task could be tricky. This approach to learning helps develop the children's

growth mindset and provides them with a 'can do' attitude towards RE. Despite trying to develop the children's growth mindset, we are conscious that tasks must be achievable, although challenging the children to complete it. Therefore, class teachers adapt the tasks to ensure that children have appropriate challenge, but that children can still achieve it.

At Whitby Heath, we want children to have the resilience and self-esteem to take risks in their RE learning and challenge themselves further.

4. **Developing a love of RE**

At Whitby Heath, we want our children to develop a love of RE which will encourage them to pursue the subject further in life. As well as this, our RE curriculum allows for children to celebrate differences and become respectful, kind and accepting members of society. We want children to be curious and be fascinated with the diversities that the world has. Equally, we want children to be aware of factors that could affect the peaceful way in which we live and damaging opinions that can impact people belonging to different groups of religious and non-religious communities.

As part of developing children's Cultural Capital, we encourage teachers to plan for children to learn outside of the classroom and enrich children's first-hand experience of RE. Therefore, teachers are encouraged to take children on trips to different places of worship, to allow children to experience religion and non-religious beliefs first-hand, as well as meeting people belonging to these groups.

5. **Assessment**

Children are given the opportunity to reflect on their prior learning using the KWL (What I know, would like to know and what I have learnt). By undertaking this, teachers can incorporate children's interests into RE lessons and can address any misconceptions that may arise. To ensure that all learners can access the curriculum including those with SEND, tasks are differentiated to suit the diverse needs of all. This can be through discussion, drawing images to express their understanding or writing reflections to provide an insight into what was learnt or any thoughts that they have.

Upon completion of each enquiry question (half termly) children complete an assessment activity, whether this is an Assessment Knowledge Organiser, or an alternative assessment activity. Alongside this and the professional judgement of their teachers, teachers will make a judgment of whether children are working at the expected standard or exceeding this.

Throughout the RE curriculum opportunities presented allow children to use a selection of different resources to investigate the many world views, such as investigating artefacts, books, videos, websites and people belonging to these communities. As well as this, educational visits are strongly encouraged to ensure that children are given the immersive opportunity to experience places of worship.

SEND and Inclusion

At Whitby Heath, it is known that we have high expectations of our children in themselves and their learning. However, we acknowledge that some children need additional support, to help them retain and access the learning. Therefore, tasks are suitably adapted and scaffolded to help them overcome any barriers to learning, to still make progress. Teachers use their knowledge of their children, to make these adaptations, that are catered to the child's specific needs. Equally, we want all children to be independent RE learners, so changes are made so children can thrive and enjoy their RE learning, so the sky is the limit for them.

As cited in our SEND policy, we use a wave process when supporting children's needs. Quality First Teaching is the key to inclusive teaching to ensure all children can access the curriculum. Examples of this can be:

- Breaking learning up into more manageable chunks
- Planning for error and any misconceptions
- Using manipulatives or images
- Modelling, such as using the 'I do, We do, You do' model
- Scaffolding

During Wave 2, extra measures are put in place to ensure that children can access the curriculum. This can include:

- Additional support in class from teacher, providing a differentiated curriculum
- In class support for groups of pupils from Additional Teacher or Teaching Assistant
- Planned, purposeful periods of withdrawal to work with a TA using a support programme
- Additional in class activities/ resources as required
- Increased use of technology e.g. Microsoft Word
- Peer support/buddy systems
- Differentiated homework and support advice for parents/carers

Some children have strategies that are individual to them, that have been discussed with the class teacher, parents, SENCo and other professionals, to further help them access the curriculum and ensure that knowledge is transferred into their long-term memory.

British Values

Religious Education makes a key contribution with supporting schools in their duty to promote 'British Values', to ensure pupils are equipped with the key skills to live harmoniously in modern Britain.

Democracy

Religious Education at Whitby Heath aims to promote democracy in the classroom, by encouraging children to have respect for democracy, as well as gaining an understanding that we all have the right for our voices to be heard. In addition, this allows children to gain confidence with sharing their opinions and beliefs in class discussions, when undertaking discussion-based activities. Children have the opportunity to discuss inequalities, as well as discuss thoughts for and against during lessons involving debate.

Rule of law

Our curriculum allows children to explore how policy making, laws and acts allow and protect people in living their lives freely and without judgement of others, regardless of what they believe. Through our whole school values, children are always encouraged to be kind and listen to others, as these help keep us safe and happy.

Individual Liberty

RE allows children to have freedom in expressing themselves in front of others, as well as equipping them with a sensitivity and respect of others' beliefs and practices. Furthermore, discussions in class allow children to critically examine and reflect on certain moral issues and standpoints, through debate.

Mutual Respect

In conjunction with our school ethos through the implementation of our whole school values, our RE curriculum allows children to gain respect of others' opinions and beliefs. Furthermore, children at Whitby Heath flourish to become sensitive and proactive in being respectful and understanding of those with differing faiths, worldviews and opinions.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development

All pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum promoting the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life⁵. Our approach to RE at Whitby Heath strives to fulfil this.

Spiritual development:

Children are given the opportunity to reflect on their own beliefs and those of others, who have different faiths, values and feelings. Thus, children will engage with the world and others around them with joy and enjoyment, by learning about what others believe to gain the skills to integrate well with others who have differing faiths. Through the RE curriculum, we foster children's creativity and imagination by allowing children to draw their interpretation or write sentences to show this.

Moral development:

Children can experience the difference between right and wrong by considering their actions, through the means of debate, which will inform the way children act and behave in the future. Furthermore, this will equip children with an understanding of the consequences of their behaviour. Through listening to differing opinions, children will be able to appreciate the views of others, even though they might differ from their own views.

Social development:

In RE lessons, children will be fostering their British Values, which have a positive impact on the children as part of society in the future. This is achieved through working and socialising with people who have differing views to them, allowing them to possess the ability to work cooperatively, as well as respectfully with others.

Cultural development:

Due to having exposure to different religions and worldviews, children should be able to appreciate a range of cultures in the school setting and wider afield. By exploring these different faiths and world views, children will develop tolerance and an ability to appreciate different beliefs in a local, global and national setting. Thus, fostering a respect for all people, regardless of their beliefs and faith.

Higher attainers

Opportunities to extend higher attainers in their RE learning has been planned for in the curriculum, as well as by class teachers. Due to having high expectations of all learners in our school, teachers always plan additional challenges for children to complete. This usually is an extra push for children, which can often be a question, designed to encourage children to think deeply and apply what has been learnt.

CPD for staff

CPD is planned for staff throughout the year and opportunities for RE CPD are mapped out by the SLT team, in line with the whole school development plan. The subject lead also sources credible, evidence informed CPD that they wish to go on. The strategic subject lead also lends their experience to aid the subject lead with making decisions impacting the subject, as well as monitoring of the subject. Furthermore, CPD through the means of staff meetings allows for teachers to join to share what is working well, as well as introducing new pedagogy backed with evidence that has been proven to improve pupil outcomes and therefore learning. Staff are encouraged to complete their own research to well equip themselves with the subject matter, to ensure that high quality lessons are delivered. The subject lead will help teachers if they require any further support.

Monitoring of RE

All monitoring undertaken is purposeful, with the aim of improving and developing the RE curriculum across the school. This is undertaken with the Strategic Subject lead, with a clear focus that will be explored.

Transition to KS3

At Whitby Heath, we work closely with feeder secondary schools in the local area, to ease the children into their transition into secondary school. Our RE curriculum is designed by CWAC in a way that ensures that children have a sound foundational knowledge of

different religious and non-religious worldviews, that will stand them in good stead when they explore these in further detail.

Impact

At Whitby Heath, we aim high to ensure that we create a supportive and collaborative environment for RE learning through our curriculum being investigative and enquiry-based. This means that activities completed are more engaging to the children because they can link it to their substantive knowledge and shaping their personal knowledge. This emphasis placed on investigative learning opportunities, helps children gain a coherent knowledge of understanding of each religious and non-religious worldview covered throughout the school. As well as this, the spaced retrieval approach that we have in school, and in RE, ensures that the knowledge children gain is integrated into their schemas, and transferred into their long-term memory, as a result children learn more and remember more.

Our RE curriculum is high quality and is planned to demonstrate progression in terms of the religious and non-religious worldview, skills that will be developed and vocabulary that the children will learn.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Assessing children's understanding of the topic, including linked vocabulary after the unit, as well as during retrieval practice at the start of every lesson
- Summative assessment of pupil discussions about their learning.
- Images and videos of the children's practical learning.
- Conducting pupil voice with the pupils about their learning
- Deep dives- where books are used as a discussion point and there is the opportunity for a dialogue between teachers to understand their class's work
- Annual reporting of standards across the curriculum within the Headteachers report to the Governors.

Legal Legislation

RE is not taught in a way to propagate religion in general or a particular religion, nor convert. It is taught in a manner to promote children's British Values, as well as their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC) by respecting those of other faiths and their beliefs.

In line with DfE guidance, parents/carers can withdraw their children for all or part of the lessons if they wish to do so. This can be due to their religion in which they are a part of. In some cases, children can be withdrawn from lessons, due to possessing conflicting beliefs of their own. This will be agreed with parents and the class teacher, as well as alternative plans made for this child/ren. Any parents wishing to discuss this aspect further must contact the Headteacher.