

Woodlands Schools



Religious Education Policy

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Religious Education (RE) Policy

Aims and Objectives

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Woodlands Schools we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions and those who have no religious beliefs, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of religious education are to help children:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and value systems found in Britain;
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgments about religious issues;
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.

The Legal Position of Religious Education

The school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the Head Teacher. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the Head Teacher. Our School RE curriculum is taught in accordance with the Essex Agreed Syllabus (Agreed and Published 2015). It makes contributions to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It also promotes education for citizenship. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

Teaching and Learning Style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking and an understanding of those who hold other views such as Humanists. We organize visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.

They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral working individually or in groups.

Foundation Stage

Nursery, Kindergarten and Reception follow the requirements of the EYFS framework, incorporating all areas of development matters and learning outcomes.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

Teaching Religious Education to Children with Special Educational Needs

At Woodlands School religious education is taught to all children, whatever their ability. Religious education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

Individual Education Plan (IEP) for children with special educational needs may be raised and include, as appropriate, specific targets relating to religious education. We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the

classroom, for example, a visit to a local church, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and Recording

We assess children's work in religious education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education units. There is a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books.

Monitoring and review

The RE co-ordinator is responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE co-ordinator discusses with the Head Teacher the strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement.

FBV

We always teach RE within the context of a respect for Fundamental British Values, always teaching about mutual respect, the rule of law, tolerance and diversity.