



The Whiteoak Academies Religious Education Policy

'Together we can do great things.' Mother Teresa.

'R.E. is like an iceberg. As you unpack ideas, you come to understand deeper meaning.'

Year 9 pupil. (in Mary Myatt, 2018 p294)

At the Whiteoak Academies we believe that Religious Education (RE) provokes challenging questions about the 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. Therefore, we strive in our curriculum to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of principal religions and their traditions, and other world views that offer answers to these challenging questions. In recognition of this and fulfilling the requirements of the National Curriculum our teaching of RE has its base upon the Somerset agreed syllabus for RE, "Awareness, Mystery and Value 2011."

RATIONALE

We believe that our R.E. curriculum has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.

- It encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity, belonging, respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.
- It promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice, become rational and insightful.
- It enables them to flourish individually within their communities as citizens in a diverse society and global community.
- It develops an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.
- It develops an awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences
- It develops their own understanding of how religious teachings can relate to these questions
- It develops positive attitudes towards other people, respecting their right to hold beliefs different from their own.

PURPOSES

Our aim is to:

- provide opportunities for children to develop their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other world religions.
- enable children to develop an awareness of what it might mean to be committed to a religious tradition.
- encourage children to recognise and appreciate the cultural differences and diversity in Britain today.
- allow children to develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences.
- help children to be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental experiences of life.
- to enable children to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study of RE.
- to develop a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold different beliefs from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions.
- to help children to develop a sense of awe and wonder at the world around them and that there may be more to life than outward appearances might suggest.
- to provide information and so develop knowledge about central elements to religions – e.g. rituals, ceremonies, festivals and moral values.

GUIDELINES

- Religious Education is a statutory requirement for all children, having equal standing with the National Curriculum subjects.
- As a Community school, RE teaching at The Whiteoak Academies makes neither assumptions about, nor preconditions for, the personal commitment of children or teachers.
- The procedure for the statutory right of parents to withdraw children from RE lessons, and for teachers to withdraw from RE teaching, is laid out in the 1998 Education Reform Act. In this circumstance we would seek to understand, discuss and confirm reasons for this request and final confirmation of the request is required in writing. Teachers will ensure that any child who is withdrawn from RE will occupy this time in private study.
- RE is taught as separate topics, which reflect the contents and requirements of the 2011 revised North Somerset Agreed Syllabus "Awareness, Mystery and Value." There are separate schemes of work for Easter and Christmas, based on teaching materials from the Diocese of Bath and Wells. These provide continuity of content and progression through the schools.
- At KS1, children will study Christianity, Judaism and Sikhism. At KS2, children will study Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam, with some reference to other faiths such as Buddhism, Sikhism and Humanism.
- RE may be taught in "blocks" of study ie, 2x days or a week's concentrated theme input.
- RE teaching uses artefacts from faith communities to promote children's understanding, always handling these with care and respect. Visitors from faith communities are invited into school to broaden children's experiences.
- Staff take opportunities to foster attitudes of awe and wonder in all subject areas.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring of RE is done in a variety of ways:

- Children will be assessed as working below, expected or with depth. This will be recorded on an assessment proforma and given to the RE co-ordinator with examples of work.
- Lesson observations/learning walks
- Pupil conferencing/staff discussions
- Work sampling

At the end of each year, a report is produced for Governors on standards in RE and areas for development. An action plan is also submitted to the Governing Body. Governors undertake monitoring of RE.

Conclusion

RE provides children with opportunities to explore aspects of their own experience and to develop an understanding of how religion seeks to answer questions of meaning and purpose in life. A structured and progressive RE programme gives children a framework in which to develop the attitudes, concepts and skills they need in order to answer these questions for themselves.

***This policy was adopted by the Local Governing Board: 14th July 2021
Review due July 2024***