

Westcott Church of England School

Religious Education Policy

June 2023



This policy was adopted: June 2023

Date of next review: June 2026

Signed:

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "J Lewin", is written over a set of three horizontal lines.

J Lewin (Chair of Governors)

Our Vision

Let our light shine before others, so that they may see our good works and give glory to our Father who is in heaven (Matthew 5 v 16)



Introduction

Religious Education (RE) at Westcott Church of England School plays an important role in expressing the Christian vision of the school. RE reflects the ethos and values that are held and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and none. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

It provides our pupils with opportunities to study religions and relationships. The teaching of RE supports our school vision as children are enabled to better understand and respect the experiences, attitudes, beliefs and practices of other principal religions represented in this country. Pupils are encouraged to shine brightly developing a reflective approach to life. They are given opportunities to make connections to other areas of the curriculum, and are encouraged to use their knowledge to form reasoned judgements about religious issues.

The Legal Position

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex and relationship education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents (see paragraph below). The school, in accordance with its Trust Deed, provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. Following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the governors decided that religious education in our school should be based upon the Buckinghamshire Locally Agreed Syllabus while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate RE and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the school and look for evidence of progress and attainment. Religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects.

Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- To foster a spiritual development in R.E. by encouraging children to flourish within our Christian vision and values of love, respect and perseverance;
- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

- To formulate reasoned opinion and argument.
- To enter into meaningful dialogue with people of different beliefs and backgrounds, appreciating and celebrating diversity, recognising what we hold in common, and respecting a shared humanity that can be experienced, expressed, and responded to in diverse ways.

Curriculum and Time Allocation

The RE curriculum at Westcott CE School, follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Christianity is taught in every year group, with key concepts revisited on a spiral curriculum. At least 50% of the time is devoted to Christianity. Other religions are covered according to the syllabus; e.g. Judaism in Key Stage 1, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in Key Stage 2. The total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught in weekly dedicated lessons. The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship. In KS1 this will amount to approximately 36 hours per year; in KS2 this rises to 45 hours per year.

The Early Years Foundation Stage:

The Early Learning Goals promote children's social and moral development inherent in our R.E. planning. The Foundation Stage children are also involved in all major Christian celebrations undertaken by the school throughout the year. Learning in RE is structured through the Early years foundation stage framework. And Teachers consider the pupils' own background, experiences and questions when planning for RE learning and spiritual development.

- Myself & Other people
- How I live & how other people live
- Belonging
- Important things & important experiences
- Feelings & expressing our feelings
- Celebrations
- Religious stories and what they mean

Key Stage 1

An exploration of home life and how this influences the beliefs, attitudes and behaviours of children and others in relation to their sense of self, belonging and celebrating what is important in life.

Core Questions:

- How does our background influence who we are?
- How does belonging to a religion or group affect people's lives?
- How should we behave and treat others and the world?

Lower Key Stage 2

An exploration of what people believe to be important in life and why, and how this is expressed.

Core Questions:

- What is most important in life?
- How do different religions show what is most important to them?
- How does this affect their attitudes and behaviour towards themselves, other people, and the world around them?

Upper Key Stage 2

A reflective exploration of some of the big questions, beliefs, and concepts about life and what it means to be human, and how responses to these are expressed through ritual and ways of living.

Core Questions:

- What do people believe about life, the world, and the good life?
- Where do these beliefs, attitudes and ways of living come from?
- How are these expressed and lived out in the lives of individuals and communities?

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

RE is taught using an enquiry-based approach, that is challenging and robust. At Westcott CE School our approach is based around Big Questions and an investigative approach, using the Oxford Diocesan Scheme of Work.

Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils will encounter believers and visit places of worship. We regularly visit the church building and meet with representatives from St Mary's Church as part of the R.E. curriculum to develop the children's awareness of spirituality and to foster a greater understanding of Christianity and its place within the local community.

RE and inclusion:

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate to enable all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability or background. In all our classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. Scaffolded tasks are regularly used and the level of support provided, which may include teacher, LSA or peer support, is planned carefully to allow access to all pupils and allow them to achieve fully.

This RE policy should also be read in conjunction with our SEND and equal Opportunities policies (available on the website) and 'Valuing All God's Children' Church of England.

At Westcott CE School, we believe that RE is an exciting and thought-provoking subject and use a variety of teaching methods, providing all students with access to religious education and to ensure all students are able to make progress in their learning. A range of teaching and learning strategies which are effective for inclusive teaching of religious education include:

- visits to places of worship, museums, or art galleries
- representatives from religious traditions and the community as visitors to the class
- artefacts, big books, posters, videos, artwork
- art and craft to enable students to express their ideas
- use of drama, role play, music, gesture or dance
- music to create an atmosphere or for expression of ideas and emotions
- the use of stillness and periods of quiet reflection
- information and communication technology, such as chrome books, ipads, interactive whiteboards, websites, etc.

Assessment procedures will follow those of the Agreed Syllabus and be in accordance with other assessment and feedback procedures in the school. Students will engage in a variety of activities which will also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt. Records kept will include information about pupils' experiences and judgements about their attainment and progress, as well as being used to inform planning. At Westcott CE School we use the Oxford Diocese Board of Education (ODBE) assessment profile.

How SMSC is addressed through this subject

In RE lessons, as well as PHSE and our Collective Worship policy, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important. We encourage children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within society and their own experience. Religious education also strongly supports the school's vision by introducing pupils to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider world, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE subject leader and SLT will monitor teaching and learning in RE in accordance with school policy. The RE subject leader will observe teaching, conduct book and planning reviews and pupil interviews when appropriate to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors will ensure that adequate monitoring takes place and that the impact of such activity is assessed.

Resources

The RE subject leader will ensure that RE resources are kept up-to-date and that staff are informed when new resources are purchased or made available electronically. Resources will include source materials (eg Bibles, visitors, artefacts) where appropriate and be treated with respect by all staff.

Safeguarding Links:

Staff are encouraged to be mindful that discussions during RE lessons may produce pupil comments of a sensitive nature and know to follow procedures set down in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy if a child is felt at risk.

The Right of Withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school. Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to this effect and provide suitable activities for their children. The school will keep pupils safe but will not provide any work or reading material for pupils who have been withdrawn.

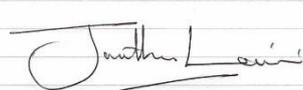
Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed regularly in line with schools' procedures and must be done within a 3-year period in line with the school's procedure.

Date: June 2023

Policy to be reviewed: June 2026

Signed:  (Headteacher)

Approved: 

(Chair of Governors)