White Spire School

Religious Education Policy

Date: November 2025
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BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL

At White Spire School we adhere to the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2025) provided by Milton Keynes Local Authority. Religious Education is a fundamental part of our curriculum, fostering an understanding of diverse beliefs and promoting respect for all. We aim to equip our pupils with critical thinking skills and encourage them to explore moral and ethical issues.

Our RE curriculum is designed to cater to the diverse faith backgrounds of our pupils, including those who are non-religious. The curriculum encourages children to reflect on their own beliefs, values, and ethics while enabling an environment where they can communicate their insights and responses. Through thoughtful exploration of concepts surrounding right and wrong, pupils develop a deeper understanding of moral frameworks. We emphasise the importance of acknowledging and respecting the beliefs of others, thereby promoting inclusivity and facilitating respectful dialogue within our multicultural school community. We also explore and make links to the similarities between different faiths and communal and personal values and traditions.

VALUES AND AIMS

At White Spire School we believe that RE supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of our school life. Our caring ethos and the values which we place on the development of the whole child are explored spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually. Topics and themes are studied in suitable depth and we ensure there is progression within comparing, evaluating and making connections to their own and others' lives. This ensures that pupils leave school with clear levels of subject knowledge and understanding which can be applied to the wider world.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Planning and teaching of RE at White Spire focuses on learning about and from religion, non-religious worldviews and humanist approaches. We follow objectives outlined in the MK Syllabus (2025) to develop pupil's skills and understanding.

As a school, our teaching focuses on the following strands:

- ***Believing*** *includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs and teachings, sources, practices and forms of expression, and as such, requires accurate and respectful teaching of the core beliefs of each religion.*
- ***Belonging*** *is enquiry into, investigation of and reflection on the identity of a believer, the diversity within each faith tradition, the values and beliefs held in common in religious communities and the way those communities express themselves in the world.*
- ***Behaving*** *relates to investigation of and reflection on the way that adherents of religions put their beliefs into practice. It studies the links between religious belief and ethical actions and the impact of those beliefs on people's lives.*

- ***Reflecting, responding and making links*** *encourages and helps to develop skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religious belief, identity and behaviour. Through reflection, pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas.*

The teaching of RE seeks to impart knowledge and develop understanding of religious experiences, feelings and attitudes through exploration and inquiry.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

- Artefacts – opportunities for pupils to explore items which are special, sacred and used in religious worship to encourage respect and develop questioning.

- Role play – pupils explore stories and key events which enables them to develop knowledge, understanding and ask questions from their own encounters.

- Pupils experiences – we value the family backgrounds of our pupils and encourage them to share, reflect and make connections as part of their learning.
- Visits and visitors – we visit places of worship and invite visitors with different faiths to give our pupils real life experiences. We explore religious objects, symbols, places, events and stories.

- 'Big Questions' – as part of every lesson we draw on pupil's own ideas, beliefs and empathy through asking a reflection question. This ensures pupils make links and connections, explore similarities and differences and give respectful opinions.

- Humanist exploration – each term we focus on two non-religious worldviews and humanist approaches to understand the guiding principles underpinning the lives of those who do not belong to a faith group. We look at how and what humanists celebrate and their approaches to religious holidays. Additionally, we meaningfully and continually refer to our White Spire values and how they relate to various aspects of our RE curriculum.

We endeavour to ensure pupils will make substantial progress in the following areas:

- To acquire and deepen their knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Britain and the world.

- To enrich their understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

- To develop a respectful and positive attitude towards others, to honour their right to hold beliefs different from their own and enable them to live in an increasingly diverse society.

- To make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Britain.

- To enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:

    1. Increasing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to and inform them.

2. Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their understanding and experience.
3. Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The Agreed Syllabus sets out a structure for age related expectations and framework for assessment. Pupils can work progressively towards achieving the statements of attainment as outlined in the White Spire Assessment for RE.

The evidence of attainment is obtained from a variety of means such as discussions, individual and group activities, feedback, observations, performance and through asking and answering questions. At White Spire School, we value pupil's active involvement in their learning and assessment. Pupils are encourage to respond to verbal and written feedback through discussions and 'next steps'.

Teachers are responsible for the progress and attainment of the classes they teach. New pupils are baselined through summative and formative assessment in the autumn term to provide teachers with a base level of each pupil's RE knowledge and understanding. At the end of each term, teachers assess pupil's progress using the agreed RE progression document.

Members of staff undertake frequent moderation exercises to ensure that they are familiar with the assessment statements and what they mean in the context of pupil's work. Parents and carers are kept informed through parent consultations and reports.

TIME ALLOCATION

We plan for RE to be taught creatively with a focus on enquiry. Additionally, RE is planned in combination with other subjects including assemblies. We aim for following hours to be devoted to RE:

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 3: 45 hours per year

Key Stage 4: 40 hours per year

KS5/ Post 16: 40 hours per year

KS5 Year 14: 15 hours (Termly Allocated RE Days)

LONG AND SHORT TERM PLANNING

The RE curriculum we implement at White Spire School encompasses both long and short term planning, ensuring that the curriculum meets both the aims of the Agreed Syllabus and promotes progression. As the pupils move through the school, they engage with and learn about both Abrahamic and Dharmic religions and non-religious worldviews.

Termly curriculum overviews are developed by the RE Co-ordinator to provide teachers with clear lesson aims and suggested activities, facilitating effective and targeted instruction. The RE Coordinator is responsible for maintaining and reviewing these overviews on a regular basis, ensuring their relevance and adaptability. Our medium-term planning follows a two-year rotation cycle, accommodating mixed-age classes while ensuring complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus.

Individual lesson plans are generated by class teachers, tailored to the diverse needs of their pupils through differentiation and appropriate scaffolds. These plans must align with the agreed lesson aims established by the subject lead. Teachers are encouraged to devise relevant activities that allow students to explore and engage with the material meaningfully. Ongoing support is available from the RE Coordinator to ensure plans meet the educational needs of all pupils, while providing adequate challenge and support.

Our Post 16 provision is designed to prepare our young adults to learn about and understand a range of religions and worldviews as well as express and challenge views which may contradict human and British values.

CROSS CURRICULAR ISSUES

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. There are special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised, and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality. Children's skills in communication and literacy will be enhanced through problem-solving, decision-making and interpersonal skills.

COLLECTIVE WORSHIP AND PERSONAL REFLECTION

Our weekly character strength values offer our pupils a basis for personalised individual and whole school community reflection. Character strengths are shared with the pupils at the start of the week and celebration postcards are awarded to pupils who demonstrate this in our weekly assembly. Additionally, we refer to our character strengths throughout the school day, when appropriate, to ensure pupils have lots of opportunities to reflect.

PARENTS AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

At White Spire, we recognise that the primary religious educator is the parent. Where parents object in conscience to the religious education, they may withdraw their children from part or all of the RE curriculum. However, a pupil cannot be withdrawn from RE by a parent to support other areas of their learning. In addition, pupils over 18 years old may withdraw themselves from RE. It is hoped that through parents working closely with the school, they will feel comfortable with the content and coverage of our RE curriculum, and therefore, will not feel the need to withdraw their children from the subject.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The RE Co-ordinator and the Senior Management Team manage this area of the curriculum. There are staff meetings on RE, led by the subject leader, where areas for development are discussed. This policy is reviewed at that meeting to ensure it still represents the values and practices of the school.