



Whitewater Church of England Primary School

Religious Education Policy

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Religious Education Policy

For the word of God is alive and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Our School Vision

Through our core Christian values of fellowship, creativity and courage, we aim for our children to feel love for themselves, for others and the world around them; to be brave, knowing that mistakes are expected, respected and part of learning; to understand they have the power to make a positive contribution to God's world.

Introduction

We believe that RE is a key part of realising our vision. RE gives the opportunity to learn, to reflect, to understand ourselves and others, to be challenged with the big questions of life, to become tolerant, to think critically, and to evaluate, as well as to learn about other faiths. It's a very special subject at Whitewater.

Whitewater follows guidance from the Hampshire County advisor for religious education and the Diocese education team, as well as the guidance provided by the locally agreed syllabus, Living Difference 1V. Further, the planning and delivery of Christianity within RE lessons is complemented with resources from the Church of England's Understanding Christianity publication, allowing for children to understand the big story of the Christian Bible and to explore life's big questions, considering the part the children can make to our world. The teaching of RE supports SMSC, British Values and the Prevent agenda.

The legal requirements of RE

We are a Church of England school. In line with the school's trust deeds, the terms of Union with the National Society state with regard to religious education that: *The Head teacher and the governing body will ensure that religious education is given at least five per cent of curriculum time and that such religious education is consistent with the faith and practice of the Church.*

The Education Act 1996 requires that; *religious education should be taught to all pupils other than those in nursery classes and except for those withdrawn at the wish of their parents. Teachers' rights are safeguarded, should they wish to withdraw from the teaching of religious education.*

We follow, under the advice provided by Winchester Diocese, the syllabus "Living Difference IV" which *reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain* (quoting from the syllabus and Education Act).

Regarding the law, Religious Education must not be designed to convert pupils, or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils, whether that of a secular agenda or of a particular religion.

The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) (now DfE) guidance, Religious education in English schools: Non-statutory guidance 2010, states that: *Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents in accordance with Schedule 19 to the Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998. The key document in determining the teaching of RE is the locally agreed syllabus within the LA concerned. ... Schools designated as having a religious character are free to make their own decisions in preparing their syllabuses.*



Our aims for RE and the contribution of RE

We believe RE makes a significant contribution to the development of our pupils, and strongly supports the aims and vision of Whitewater.

The Whitewater Theologian will...

- pose questions about the impact and effect religions have on their communities
- dig deep into the roots of religions and how they have evolved
- discuss their views in an informed and respectful way
- explore the world in the shoes of a range of faiths and cultures
- be reflective on their own ideas and beliefs.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as in PHSE and our Collective Worship programme, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses and appreciate that for some people's belief in a spiritual dimension is important. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions and enhance their social development by helping them to develop a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

Religious Education supports the promotion of the basic British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. The teaching of RE also contributes to the Prevent agenda by providing a safe space where pupils can discuss their own ideas and learn to understand other peoples' beliefs.

- **Developing viewpoints** A key aim of RE is to draw on pupils' own independent potentially small interpretive points of view and develop these to appreciate a wider and broader viewpoint.
- **Celebrating difference** As a small rural school, we know that our community is made up of staff, pupils, and families who originate from similar nationalities, cultures and faith groups. Being mindful of the Christian character of the school, we wish to celebrate diversity and offer a welcoming and inclusive environment for all our pupils, including new arrivals and those for whom English may be an additional language.
- **Developing values and principles** The purpose of Religious Education is to support pupils in developing their own coherent patterns of values and principles, and to support their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This entails encouragement of each pupil to interpret and respond to a variety of concepts, beliefs and practices within religions and to their own and others' cultural and life experiences. It is important that students progressively develop the capacities to interpret, evaluate and respond to differing values and beliefs. This can be achieved through extending their thinking and analytical skills and their creative, imaginative and emotional development.
- **Mutual understanding** A further purpose of RE is to foster mutual understanding between pupils of differing religious and cultural backgrounds. This promotes tolerance, a key British value.

Parental right of withdrawal from Religious Education lessons

Parents are informed in the school prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their pupils from parts of or all religious education. Parents who choose to withdraw their children from religious education lessons are requested to discuss the issue with the Head Teacher. Those children who are withdrawn from RE lessons will be fully supervised.

Planning the RE curriculum It is recommended that a minimum of 36 hours in Reception/KS1 and 45 hours in KS2 per school year should be devoted to religious education, and the programmes of study in Living Difference 1V have

been designed with these time recommendations in mind. In practical terms this is 6 hours for Reception/KS1 and 7.5 hours for KS2 per half-term. RE may be taught weekly or, in blocked units, either across a week or a day, according to the arrangements of each class timetable. Year groups one to six follow a two year programme of concepts at Whitewater.

Class teacher's responsibilities

- To teach RE for around 6 hours (Reception/KS1) and 7.5 hours (KS2) each half-term
- To adapt medium term planning so that it is suitable for each class
- To provide oral or written feedback on the success of each concept for the RE leader
- To record pupils progress each half-term on the grid formats provided by the RE leader.

Subject Leader's Responsibilities

- Oversee & organise the long term RE planning
- To monitor RE teaching and learning
- Provide sufficient provision of suitable resources
- To facilitate any training as necessary
- To update and disseminate latest developments in RE to all staff
- To organise assessment opportunities and track progression of all children across the school
- To moderate the judgements made about pupils' attainment and provide an overview of attainment in RE throughout the school.

Assessment, recording & reporting arrangements for RE

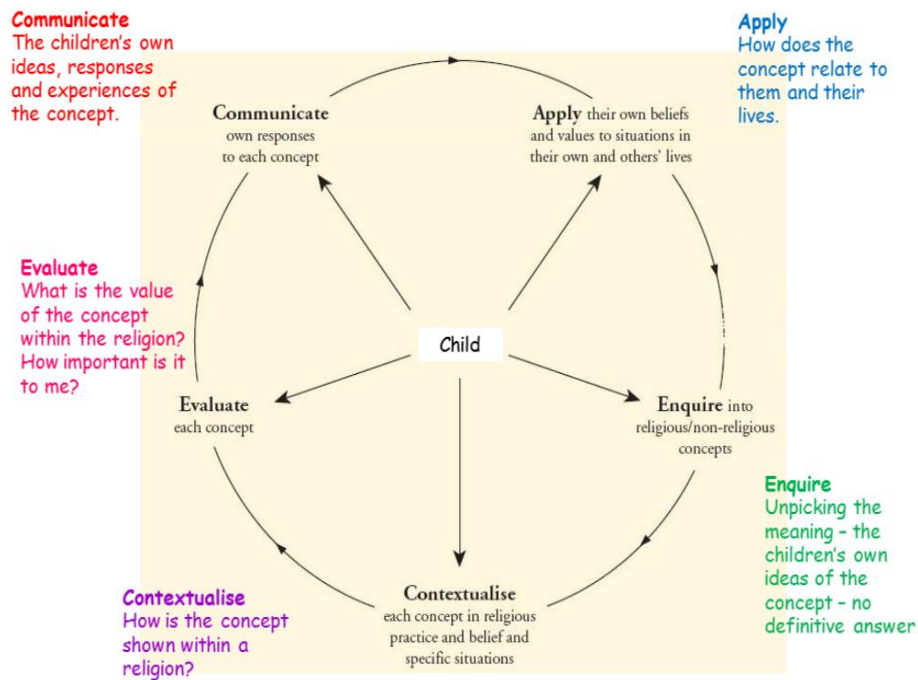
Living Difference IV seeks to *introduce children and young people to what a religious way of existing in the world may offer in leading one's life, individually and collectively*. This requires teachers to encourage *children and young people to first be attentive to their own experience of particular words and concepts, before studying how those living with a religious as well as a non-religious orientation on life, experience this*.

Living Difference IV provides end of year expectations which will be used to assess each child's progress. These directly relate to the Cycle of Enquiry and will show a child's ability to *express creatively, recognise, simply describe, describe, recognise and describe, accurately describe, respond, explain and discern*.

The RE leader is responsible for organising what will be assessed and how this assessment will be recorded. The RE leader will facilitate training on how to assess and record progress in RE. Each term the RE leader will monitor the recording of assessment in RE and annually will consider the implications following this assessment to monitor pupil progress in all areas of the cycle.

Teaching and Learning strategies used in RE

In addition to the teaching and learning policy it should be noted that unlike many other subjects, RE is philosophical enquiry based upon the learners own perceptions and understandings of each concept which should remain fluid and develop as the learners' progress through the cycle of learning (see diagram below for the learning cycle). The Living Difference IV syllabus is used to guide concept driven learning, encouraging children to begin from their own personal points of view and having opportunities to then hear about other people's points of view and how other religions would view these ideas. Throughout the cycle, learners will be interrogating the concept to develop their understanding of what it means which should grow and develop as the cycle is followed round. The Living Difference IV syllabus now includes four key *Golden Threads (community, belonging, special and love)* to ensure greater consistency between key stages.



Questions are a key part of learning. Within each cycle of learning, the following questions may be asked or thought about:

Communicate

What is your idea of...?
 What's your experience of...?
 Who has the same experience as you?
 What do you think about ...?
 Was there anything you saw in THE RELIGIOUS CONTEXT that has made you think differently?

Apply

How does ... affect your life?
 What difference does ... make to you?
 Does anyone agree?
 Does anyone disagree?
 Is this concept the same for everyone?
 Would it be the same for...?
 Will you always think that?

Evaluate

What would the religion be like without the concept?
 What is the value of the concept within the religion?
 How important is the concept to me?

Enquire

What do you think it means?
 ... could you tell me more?
 ... any other ideas?
 ... anything to add?
 Why do you think that?
 Does anyone agree/disagree? Why?
 Has anyone been surprised by anyone's ideas?
 Has anyone changed their minds?

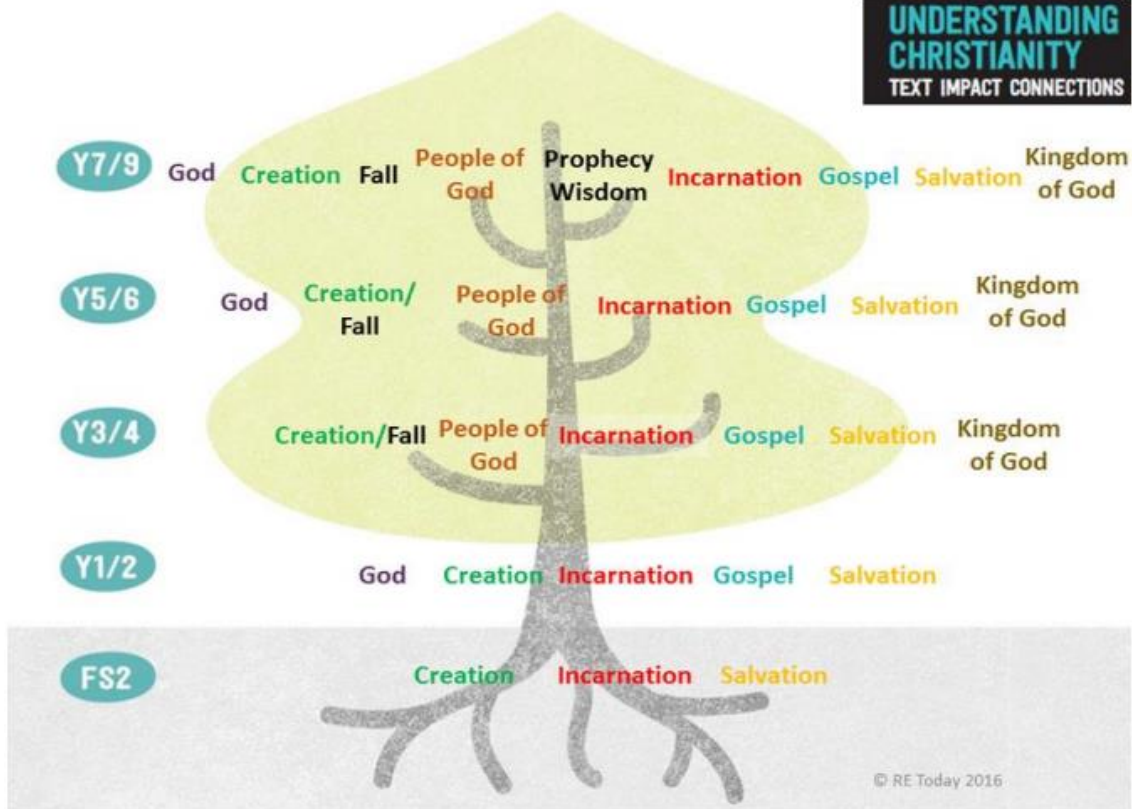
Contextualise

How is the concept shown within a religion?
 Would everyone from that religion agree?
 The children are looking at the concept not the whole religion

Don't ask your reliable children to start with - try asking the children who might give you more off the wall answers!

Understanding Christianity

This is a substantial resource to support our teaching of Christianity in RE. The key purpose of UC is to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. As a church school, we aim to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice. The resource fully supports and dovetails in with Living Difference 1V. An outline of Understanding Christianity programme of study is shown below.



Governors' Role

Governors will ensure that the policy is adopted throughout the school. They will meet with the RE team to discuss implementation and progress in RE. In addition to this, Governors will work alongside the RE leader to seek the views of pupils and monitor the provision of RE to ensure it aligns with this policy.

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