

Religious Education Curriculum

The whole purpose of religion is to facilitate love and compassion, patience, tolerance, humility, and forgiveness.
Dalai Lama

Religious Education contributes to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils. We recognise and value the contribution that Religious Education provides in ensuring that all pupils have a rich and broad curriculum.

We actively promote the positive impact that Religious Education can have on all pupils, particularly as the United Kingdom becomes ever more diverse and multi-cultural.

The Religious Education curriculum sets out to teach pupils about the six primary religions of the world, with Christianity as the principal religion of the United Kingdom. To reflect this, and meet our statutory obligations for Religious Education, Christianity forms the largest part of the curriculum offer, with further additional curriculum time given to Islam and Judaism.

Through the curriculum, we reinforce the links between the three religions and draw on some of their shared history. As a Trust whose schools extend across different authorities, we have recognised the importance of a consistent, progressive approach to the teaching of RE. To support this, we have adopted the *Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus* and designed the curriculum to ensure that pupils meet the progressive end of phase outcomes.

The curriculum has been specifically designed to ensure that all pupils not only learn about religions, but also identify what we can learn from their teachings. Pupils are taught about how religion and peoples' beliefs help shape the way they live their lives.

We recognise the importance of pupils developing an understanding of faith and why it is so important to millions of people around the world.





Early Years Foundation Stage

Religious Education begins with our Early Years Foundation Stage Curriculum, where pupils explore and celebrate a wide variety of festivals and celebrations throughout the year. They also develop an understanding that not everyone within the United Kingdom, or the world, follow the same faith.

The curriculum is specifically designed to ensure that all pupils develop an enthusiasm and love for Religious Education, whilst fostering an understanding of the need for tolerance and acceptance of others, no matter their faith.

Key Stage One

In Key Stage 1, pupils are taught about the core beliefs and place of worship for Christianity. They will learn about principal celebrations for the faith and why they are so important to Christians.

Pupils begin to learn about symbolism and why certain symbols represent aspects of different faiths, considering how followers may feel when coming into contact with these symbols. In Year 1, pupils will begin to learn about the core beliefs and practices for Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

In Year 2, pupils further deepen their understanding of Islam by studying principal celebrations, in-particular Ramadan and Eid. They also begin to explore the celebrations of Judaism, with attention given to Hannukah and the influence of these celebrations on daily lives for Jews. Pupils are also introduced to another of the six principal religions, Buddhism. They are taught about the core beliefs and practices of this religion.

Lower Key Stage Two

When moving into lower Key Stage 2, pupils begin to expand and deepen their understanding of Christianity by studying aspects such as the Holy Trinity, Holy Week, Pentecost, the stations of the cross and Epiphany.

The curriculum encourages pupils to draw conclusions about what parables and teachings want followers to understand and believe. Questions are used carefully to encourage this exploration, for example, what kind of world would Jesus want? Pupils are encouraged to think deeply by drawing out links between different religions, considering similarities and differences between the ways in which followers practise their belief.

They consider what holy books tell us about God. Pupils learn more about the sixth principal religion, Buddhism and explore the core beliefs and practices.

They are also taught about the teachings of Buddha and the role of the Dalai Lama, not only historically, but in the world today. They consider questions like, what can we learn from the Dalai Lama's teachings? What kind of person is he and how might we know?

Pupils build on prior knowledge in Judaism, carrying out an in-depth study of a synagogue and exploring the importance of Passover. When studying Passover, they explore the concept of freedom and slavery.

Pupils identify how Hindu's worship God and they explore the Trimurti. Knowledge and understanding of Islam is furthered by exploring the importance of prayer and how Muslims worship and show devotion to God. They learn about the five pillars and what they represent for Muslims.

Upper Key Stage Two

As pupils move into Years 5 and 6, the curriculum begins to draw more heavily on understanding and making of links between religions. It also places a greater emphasis on learning from religion by using stories and teachings from the holy books pupils have learnt about in previous years.

Pupils are exposed to key questions that help them to explore and draw conclusions about the world's principal religions. When studying Christianity, pupils learn about why Jesus is viewed as a Messiah for Christians, the teachings of gospels, the choices about how to live that Christians make, the Kingdom of God and its place in the religion and how and why sources of authority are used in different ways.

When looking at the sources of authority, pupils build a more developed understanding of the different denominations that exist within Christianity. Pupils consider why Buddhists try to be good, considering the teaching of the Dharma, paying particular attention to the 4 noble truths and 8 fold path. They learn about Nirvana and the role of Karma in a Buddhist's journey.

Pupils further this understanding by exploring the same question but in relation to Sikhism, considering life after death teachings and Hinduism, considering the importance of Atman, Karma, Samsara and Moksha.

Pilgrimages and their importance to many followers are studied in both Islam and Judaism, considering how this plays a role in displaying devotion.

In Year 5, pupils carry out a study of non-religions, considering peoples' belief in scientific explanations for life, death and being. Pupils consider whether the religious teaching of creation and the scientific explanations for this are complimentary or contradictory.

Christmas, Easter and Place of Worship Visits

Christmas and Easter feature in the curriculum in each year group. To ensure that pupils develop a sound and deep understanding of these key celebrations, a progressive ladder of learning is in place. This ensures that every academic year, pupils understanding of the celebrations deepens.

For Christmas, this means beginning with the nativity in Years 1 and 2, moving to Epiphany and Advent in lower Key Stage 2 and finally religious literacy, ie. what do the Gospels say and what does Christmas look like around the world?

The final unit in Year 6, ensures pupils understand that for many Christians, particularly those who follow different denominations of Christianity, both here in the United Kingdom and around the world, Christmas can and is celebrated in many different ways.

When studying Easter, pupils begin in Years 1 and 2, learning about the story of Easter, in particular the crucifixion and resurrection. Particular attention is paid to the importance placed on celebrating new life and sacrifice. Pupils explore the symbols of Easter and what they represent.

When moving into lower Key Stage 2, pupils deepen this knowledge and understanding by exploring Holy Week and the Stations of the Cross. In Years 5 and 6, pupils think deeply about moral values, carefully studying the actions of Judas.

Their learning around Easter concludes in Year 6. Pupils develop further religious literacy, considering the Roman views of Jesus and why particular views may be held.

It is our intention that all pupils visit a place of worship from each of the six principal religions that are studied within the curriculum. Where a physical visit is not practicable, we use other means to expose pupils to all of the places of worship, this might be through digital visits or visiting speakers.

Visits and the incorporation of visiting speakers into the curriculum, are an important part of bringing the curriculum to life and supporting pupils understanding of tolerance and empathy.

Throughout the curriculum, there are many opportunities to draw on cross curricular links. In particular, there is a focus on developing a strong understanding of British Values through Religious Education e.g. tolerance and acceptance and Personal, Social, Health and Emotional Education.

Pupils are supported to develop confidence and a strong sense of self, while understanding that others may have different views, opinions and beliefs that should be respected.

The Religious Education curriculum reinforces the place that faith and belief has in peoples' lives and how this contributes to spirituality.