

Widford Lodge

PREPARATORY SCHOOL



R.E. Policy Document

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Religious Education at Widford Lodge

The teaching of Religious Education should open the eyes of our children to a world of different cultures and faiths. Through exploration of religions and beliefs lies the opportunity to encourage our children towards appropriate moral and social behaviour and tolerance. Teachers are strongly encouraged not to share their own particular religious beliefs and pupils will not be encouraged by teachers or others to support a particular religious or political viewpoint; a balanced and factual approach is taken with the opportunity for open discussions and expressions of views by pupils in a respectful and safe environment. All school staff support the school's promotion of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty and mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.

Aims and Objectives

Religious Education at Widford Lodge offers opportunities for children to:

- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- investigate sympathetically world religions, developing their knowledge and understanding;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and develop a personal response to a variety of questions and situations;
- explore issues within and between faiths (including ethical life stories) and understand the influence of these on individuals, societies, communities and cultures;
- mature in respect of their own beliefs, values and attitudes;
- consider identity, meaning and purpose in life and foster the need to care for our environment;
- develop their sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a diverse society;
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling pupils to acquire an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for other people and cultures;
- understand that the freedom to choose and hold other faiths and beliefs is protected in law;
- accept that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and respected
- to consider others' belief structures, views and feelings through the study of religious cultures;
- begin to form or solidify a personal belief structure and be able to express this;
- understand that different religions and cultures have different expectations and standards to what we may be used to;
- understand that personal religious values can be nuanced and cannot necessarily be ascribed to one specific religion.

Content

It is important that all children engage in both implicit and explicit dimensions of Religious Education. Teachers will use *the child's own experience* as a starting point to a topic. Children acquire and apply their knowledge and understanding of Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism and Humanism during their time at Widford Lodge and how these religions influence individuals, communities, society and the world. Children's knowledge of different cultures and religions will be built on a deep understanding of specific religious values, forms of

worship and religious expression. This will allow children to not only be able to retain facts about each religion, but to be able to begin considering *why* followers of each religion act in the way they do.

Early Years

In the Early Years Foundation stage, Religious Education is taught as part of Personal, Social and Emotional development and Knowledge and Understanding of the World. The children develop understanding of the importance of manners, friendship and kindness. They listen and respond to stories with clear moral or ethical messages as well as those from other cultures. In Early Years, the main concept is that of different religions having different festivals and celebrations all around the world and that not everyone celebrates the same events.

Key Stage 1

In Key Stage 1, Religious Education is about developing the children's knowledge, skills and understanding relating to specific religions, cultures, areas/methods of worship and beliefs. Children will also be referred to prominent public figures or children within the school community as examples of members of that religion.

Key Stage 2

In Key Stage 2, Religious Education is about the further development of children's knowledge, skills and understanding relating to the areas of community and worship, sacred books and writings and specific festivals. Children will be tasked with considering how established religious beliefs match up against their own and will be able to debate what they deem is relevant to their personal belief system. Children will also be exposed to prominent philosophers and their theories – understanding how this shapes our modern understanding of the world.

Language and Communication

Children will:

- develop language skills through talking about their work and presenting their own ideas using sustained and systematic writing of different kinds;
- use vocabulary related to a topic and communicate information through drawings, writing and technology;
- read fiction and non-fiction, and extract information from sources such as reference books and the internet.
- be able to argue and debate with their peers from a variety of viewpoints about their own personal beliefs and how they compare to traditional religious ones.

Values and Attitudes

Children will:

- work with others, listen to each other's ideas, and treat them with respect;
- have opportunities to consider their own attitudes and values, and those of other people;
- develop respect for evidence and critically evaluate ideas which may or may not fit the evidence available;
- develop a respect for all people and the world around them and be encouraged to evaluate their own and others' impact on it.

- develop the ability to reason and debate respectfully with peers, holding different viewpoints.

Inclusion and SEND

All children at Widford Lodge have access to Religious Education teaching and learning irrespective of their learning needs. We work together in order to make R.E. accessible to pupils of all abilities. To achieve this we focus on motivation, oral as well as written responses, group work and the use of different sources of evidence. All tasks should be scaffolded according to the needs of the children in the class and shown in medium term plans, with appropriate opportunities for challenge and critical thinking. All pupils participate in Religious Education regardless of age, disability, gender reassignment, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity. A diverse range of public figures have also been chosen in line with studied religions in each year group.

Expectations

By the end of Key Stage 1, most children will be able to:

- work considerately with others in a group, understanding what is involved in caring, sharing and helping
- express their ideas and feelings in a greater variety of ways and with more precision
- recall the main points of various religious stories
- respond sensitively to the experiences, feelings and values of others
- be able to project themselves into imaginary situations and think about what it would be like to be in other people's shoes
- reflect upon things which have happened to them
- recall and recount some of the major features of the festivals of Easter, Diwali and Christmas
- identify some religious beliefs, teachings and practices
- talk about some issues of right and wrong
- provide an example from the public eye of someone who follows each studied religion
- be able to begin to express their own personal belief system, contextualised by what they have been learning.

By the end of Key Stage 2, most children will be able to:

- describe the key beliefs and teachings of the religions studied, connecting them accurately with other features and making some comparisons between religions
- show understanding of what belonging to a religion involves
- show how religious beliefs, ideas and feelings can be expressed in a variety of forms, giving meaning for some symbols, stories and language, using technical terminology
- recall key practices from a variety of religions
- reflect on their own beliefs and explain why they believe what they do
- express their viewpoint
- be tolerant towards other viewpoints and religious beliefs
- understand links that RE has with other subjects, and the large role it has played in History and in current affairs

- provide an example from the public eye of someone who follows each studied religion and give examples as to how that public figure expresses their beliefs
- respectfully challenge what is taught about different religions and cultures and weigh this up against their own beliefs
- express their own beliefs and, to an extent, be able to reason and argue for these beliefs.

Some children may:

- Ask questions about the religious stories/concepts shared, puzzling aspects of life and moral and religious issues and suggest answers from their own and other's experience, making reference to the teaching of religions and showing understanding of why certain things are held to be right or wrong in various cultures.

Features of Progression

Progression in Religious Education can be characterised by:

- Acquiring wider and more detailed knowledge of religious beliefs and practices;
- Deepening understanding of the meaning of stories, symbols and events and practices;
- More fluent and competent use of religious language and terminology;
- Increased skills in asking and responding to questions of identity, meaning, purpose, values and commitment.
- An increased ability to ask interesting questions and reflect upon their own spirituality.
- An increased ability to express their own beliefs and provide reasoning for them.

Planning for Religious Education

The Whole School Planning Overview details the study units that will be studied within each year group and in which term they will be studied.

Curriculum booklet: each Unit of Study is detailed.

Medium term plans/Topic overviews: These show learning questions, differentiation tasks, critical thinking extension tasks, activities planned and assessment opportunities. Teachers indicate which activities will be taught each week throughout a half term. All medium term plans reflect the Saffron Walden scheme of work from Year 1 to Year 6.

Assessment

Formative assessment is carried out by the teacher through observations, discussions and by setting the children appropriate, meaningful tasks. Such assessment should be used to inform future planning. Progress tasks completed termly provide a snapshot as to how children have recalled key information and provide opportunities for them to express their own views.

Resources

Lesson resources are generally taken from the Saffron Walden scheme, supplemented by the physical religious artifacts and objects we have in our resource shed.

Links with other areas of the curriculum

English

Links include:

- listening and communication skills
- reading skills
- writing skills
- responding to stories
- some understanding of extracts from religious texts
- drama and role-play
- debating skills

Mathematics

Links include:

- recognition of numbers (including important dates and timelines).

Computing

Links include:

- Word processing
- finding relevant topic-related internet sites
- use of I.C.T. for graphical/data presentation.

Music

Links include:

- religious and culture-based music
- singing religious songs (including hymns and carols).

History

Links include:

- making timelines
- How religion has developed through various historical time periods and significant historical events.

Geography

Links include:

- finding locations around the world using maps
- considering distance and scale.

P.H.S.E.E

Links include:

- learning about religious and moral beliefs and values that underpin individual choices and behaviour, social policies and practices
- looking at voluntary and charitable activities that help make up a healthy society
- increasing social and political awareness
- promoting positive values and attitudes needed for citizenship in a democratic society by encouraging pupils' respect and understanding of different beliefs and practices

- developing an understanding that people have different beliefs and showing tolerance and respect towards these
- learning about a variety of public figures who hold separate religious beliefs and be able to explain how they may express their beliefs/worship.
- understanding the importance of developing your own belief system and understanding of the world.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development in R.E.

Spiritual Development

In RE, we encourage spiritual development through providing opportunities for students to reflect upon their own beliefs and learning about key religions. Saying the Lord's Prayer in assembly on Fridays provides a benchmark for the Christian ethos of the school. New topics in Year 6, such as creating their own religion, provide children with the opportunity to consider this area further. Children will also develop an understanding that there are a variety of religious and political beliefs and they are encouraged to listen to a wide range of views before coming to their own informed opinions as to their own. Children participate in mindfulness activities as part of our Jigsaw PSHEE scheme.

Moral Development

Moral questions are present in the topics that we study in RE at Widford Lodge and are detailed in medium term plans (but not as a separate element of planning). Pupils learn about shared and differing moral values, while debating moral dilemmas about right and wrong, good and bad, and so on. Pupils discuss issues such as people's responsibility towards the world and future generations and they have the opportunity to make a personal response to right and wrong and to consider other people's responses to moral issues. This can be seen across the curriculum, such as in Year 2 or Year 3 topics where children are asked "Why did God create these things?" "How did he feel afterwards?" "How do you feel about these parts of the world?" Children are also encouraged, through the teaching of the curriculum, to be tolerant to other views and to listen a variety of viewpoints, while coming to their own conclusions.

Social Development

Pupils explore similarities and differences in religions and cultures through which they should begin to link religion to personal action in everyday life. This is reflected in their relationships with others in the classroom and their ability to work together co-operatively. Through the study of different religions, children are made aware of the similarities and differences they may have with other pupils in their class. Children will be exposed to a wide range of cultures and beliefs, allowing them to have a wider perspective of the world around them and to be more understanding and empathetic of others.

Cultural Development

Pupils learn about other religions, giving them an opportunity to see what it means to belong, to develop confidence in themselves and be able to respond positively to similarities and differences in our multi-faith and changing society. They are given the opportunity to understand and

appreciate the wide range of cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others.

Prominent People

We have included some examples of people who are within the public eye and part of the religion being studied, so that pupils become accustomed to learning about a religion alongside the life of this successful person and how their religious beliefs affect their life and choices. Children in KS2 will now begin to provide examples of how these public figures express/show their beliefs.