



## **Subject – Religious Education:**

School Vision and motto:

*'Making Learning an Adventure'*

At Holywell Village First School we have high aspirations for our children to become well-rounded and responsible future citizens. They are happy, independent and have positive self-esteem. Our children have a thirst for learning. They are curious about the world around them and are confident to 'have a go'. They are reflective learners who persevere and demonstrate good communication and social skills. They are thoughtful, caring and kind.

*'We want our children to be the best they can be.'*

## **Religious Education Curriculum Intent**

*Why do we teach RE?*

At Holywell Village First School we strive to make pupils' learning in RE exciting, engaging, challenging and rewarding to ensure children have a well rounded understanding of the world, religions and views beyond their life at Holywell.

The purpose of religious education

These purpose statements are taken from A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in England (REC 2013).

The Northumberland Agreed Syllabus 2022 asserts the importance and value of religious education (RE) for all pupils, with on-going benefits for an open, articulate and understanding society.

The following purpose statements underpin the syllabus, which is constructed to support pupils and teachers in fulfilling them:

- Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.
- In RE pupils learn about religions and beliefs in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.
- Pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response and to agree or disagree respectfully.

- Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and beliefs, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.
- RE should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and beliefs.
- Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

The purpose of RE is captured in the principal aim, which is intended to be a shorthand version for day-to-day use. It should be considered as a doorway into the wider purpose articulated above.

### **Principal aim**

***The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.***

### **Legal requirements: what does the legislation in England say?**

RE is for all pupils:

- Every pupil has an entitlement to religious education (RE).
- RE is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum' and must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, including those in the sixth form, unless withdrawn by their parents (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over).
- This requirement does not apply for children below compulsory school age (although there are many examples of good practice of RE in nursery classes).
- The 'basic' school curriculum includes the national curriculum, RE and relationships and sex education.

### **RE is determined locally, not nationally:**

- A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority.
- Local authority maintained schools without a religious character must follow the locally agreed syllabus.
- Voluntary aided schools with a religious character should provide RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school, unless parents request the locally agreed syllabus.

- Foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character should follow the locally agreed syllabus, unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed or religious designation of the school.

### **RE is plural:**

- The RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE, or by an academy or free school 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.

- According to case law, the agreed syllabus has a duty 'to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner' and 'must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief'. Note that the term 'religion' encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs. As education policy changes, the legal requirement for RE for all registered pupils remains unchanged. RE is an entitlement for all pupils, unless they have been withdrawn by their parents from some or all of the RE curriculum.

### **Right of withdrawal**

This was first granted when RE was actually religious instruction and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE is very different now – open, broad, exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. However, parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE lessons or any part of the RE curriculum and the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Where the pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parents want the pupil to receive. These arrangements will be made by the parents; the school is not expected to make these arrangements. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or by another school in the locality. If neither approach is practicable, the pupil may receive external RE teaching as long as the withdrawal does not have a significant impact on the pupil's attendance. Schools should have a policy setting out their approach to provision and withdrawal. However, it is good practice to talk to parents to ensure that they understand the aims and value of RE before honouring this right. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. More guidance on withdrawal can be found in Religious education in English schools: non-statutory guidance 2010, available online at [www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/religious-education-guidance-in-english-schools-non-statutory-guidance-2010)

## **Our curriculum is unique to HVFS**

The threefold aim of RE elaborates the principal aim.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

### **1. make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:**

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation

### **2. understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:**

- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning

### **3. make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:**

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
- challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response
- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

We believe that RE lessons should be fully inclusive of every child and reduce inequalities so that everyone can achieve and be successful in RE.

Our intent is to fulfil the requirements of the RE principal aim but also :

- Ensure that children's learning is built upon from EYFS to Year 4 through a carefully planned curriculum that excites and encourages children to reflect upon their prior learning whilst further developing their skills and knowledge within RE. (CHALLENGE, CONFIDENCE, CITIZENSHIP)
- Ensure children are taught the different types of knowledge to become confident to:
  1. Make sense of their beliefs
  2. Understand the impact
  3. Make connections (CONFIDENCE)
- Ensure children gain an understanding of significant religious and non-religious beliefs. (CONFIDENCE, CHALLENGE)
- Ensure children have the opportunity to make connections by asking and answering questions. (CHALLENGE)
- Ensure children have opportunities looking at continuity and change to understand how the world has developed around us. (CITIZENSHIP)

## **Implementation**

*How do we teach RE?*

We follow the Northumberland agreed syllabus.

At Holywell we use the principal aim throughout our planning to ensure that all teaching and learning contributes to enabling pupils to achieve this aim.

This syllabus is designed to support schools in developing and delivering excellence in RE. It responds to national calls for deepening pupils' knowledge about religions and for developing their 'religious literacy'. It does this by studying one religion at a time ('systematic' units), and then including 'thematic' units, which build on learning by comparing the religions, beliefs and practices studied.

In order to support teachers in exploring the selected beliefs, this syllabus sets out an underlying teaching and learning approach, whereby pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to handle questions of religion and belief.

The teaching and learning approach has three core elements, which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, underpinning the aims of RE outlined on p.8. Teaching and learning in the classroom will encompass all three elements, allowing for overlap between elements as suits the religion, concept and question being explored.

These elements set the context for open exploration of religion and belief. They offer a structure through which pupils can encounter diverse religious traditions alongside non-religious worldviews – which reflect the backgrounds of many pupils in our schools. The elements present a broad and flexible strategy that allows for different traditions to be treated with integrity. These elements offer a route through each unit while also allowing for a range

of questions reflecting different approaches, for example, from religious studies, philosophy, sociology, ethics and theology.

## **EYFS**

The Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) describes the phase of a child's education from birth to the end of the Reception year at the age of 5. Religious education is statutory for all pupils registered on the school roll. The statutory requirement for religious education does not extend to nursery classes in maintained schools. RE forms a valuable part of the educational experience of children throughout the key stage. In the EYFS curriculum learning does not fit into boxes: play-based and child-centred approaches will encourage the learning to follow where the child's interest and curiosity leads.

At Holywell we offer a variety of experiences to develop the children's understanding of the world through a play based approach.

The agreed syllabus for RE sets out experiences, opportunities and appropriate topics for children in the Foundation Stage. The suggestions made for the EYFS RE are good learning in themselves. These also connect to the EYFS seven areas of learning.

Planned teaching experiences will support children's learning and development needs, as identified through holistic assessment. Good Early Years teaching stems from children's own experience. We will find ways to draw on the wealth of religious or spiritual experiences that some families may bring with them.

The EYFS statutory framework also outlines an expectation that practitioners reflect on the different ways in which children learn and the characteristics of effective learning:

- Playing and exploring – children investigate and experience things, and 'have a go'.
- Active learning – children concentrate and keep on trying if they encounter difficulties, and enjoy achievements.
- Creating and thinking critically – children have and develop their own ideas, make links between ideas, and develop strategies for doing things.

### **What do children gain from RE in this age group?**

RE sits very firmly within the areas of personal, social and emotional development and understanding the world. This framework enables children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. They will do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Children will have the opportunity to develop their emerging moral and cultural awareness.

Children in EYFS will encounter religious and non-religious worldviews through special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. They will listen to and talk about stories. Children will be introduced to subject-specific words and use all their senses to explore beliefs, practices and forms of expression. They ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of, and wonder at, the world in which they live.

## KS1

### What do pupils gain from RE at this key stage?

Pupils should develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should use basic subject-specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

### End of key stage outcomes

RE should enable pupils to:

- identify the core beliefs and concepts studied and give a simple description of what they mean
- give examples of how stories show what people believe (e.g. the meaning behind a festival)
- give clear, simple accounts of what stories and other texts mean to believers
- give examples of how people use stories, texts and teachings to guide their beliefs and actions
- give examples of ways in which believers put their beliefs into action
- think, talk and ask questions about whether the ideas they have been studying have something to say to them
- give a good reason for the views they have and the connections they make

These general outcomes are related to specific content within the unit outlines on pp.43-52.

## KS2

### What do pupils gain from RE at this key stage?

Pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject-specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

RE should enable pupils to:

- identify and describe the core beliefs and concepts studied
- make clear links between texts/sources of authority and the key concepts studied
- offer suggestions about what texts/sources of authority can mean and give examples of what these sources mean to believers
- make simple links between stories, teachings and concepts studied and how people live, individually and in communities
- describe how people show their beliefs in how they worship and in the way they live

- identify some differences in how people put their beliefs into action
- make links between some of the beliefs and practices studied and life in the world today, expressing some ideas of their own clearly
- raise important questions and suggest answers about how far the beliefs and practices studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live
- give good reasons for the views they have and the connections they make

These general outcomes are related to specific content within the unit outlines on pp.61-72.

## Vocabulary

RE is a vocabulary-rich subject. In each medium-term plan, teachers plan vocabulary development carefully so that pupils benefit from repeated encounters with words. This ensures that pupils have the language needed to explore religious and non-religious concepts and interpretation. Each year key vocabulary is built upon to ensure learning is sequential and challenging.

## Our RE lessons have the following structure:

Teachers should have the principal aim of RE at the forefront of their minds as they plan their RE.

***The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living.***

### Step 1: **Review Prior Knowledge**

Unit/key question

- Select a unit/key question.
- Make sure that you can explain where this unit/question fits into key stage planning e.g. how it builds on previous learning in RE; what other subject areas it links to, if appropriate.

Step 2:

Use learning outcomes

- Use the learning outcomes from column 1 of the unit, as appropriate to the age and ability of your pupils.
- Being clear about these outcomes will help you to decide what and how to teach.

### Step 3: **Teaching New Knowledge**

Select specific content

- Look at the suggested content for your unit, from column 2 in the unit outlines.
- Select the best content (from here, or additional information from elsewhere) to help you to teach in an engaging way so that pupils achieve the learning outcomes.

### Step 4: **Summarising Taught Knowledge**

Assessment: write specific pupil outcomes

- Turn the learning outcomes into pupil-friendly 'I can', 'You can' or 'Can you ...?' statements.
- Make the learning outcomes specific to the content you are teaching, to help you know just what it is that you want pupils to know, be able to understand and do as a result of their learning.
- These 'I can'/'You can'/'Can you ...?' statements will help you to integrate assessment for learning within your teaching, so that there is no need to do a separate end of unit assessment.

Step 5:

Develop teaching and learning activities

- Develop active learning opportunities, using some engaging stimuli, to enable pupils to achieve the outcomes.
- Be clear about the knowledge you want them to gain, integrating it into their wider understanding in RE and life. Be clear about the skills you want pupils to develop.
- Make sure that the teaching and learning activities allow pupils to process the knowledge and understanding, thinking hard and practising these skills as well as showing their understanding.
- Consider ways of recording how pupils show their understanding e.g. photographs, learning journey wall or class book, group work, annotated planning, scrapbook, etc.

### **RE opportunities beyond the agreed syllabus:**

At Holywell Village First School – Cultural capital

- Developing exciting cross-curricular links and using the Literature Works approach to immerse the children in their learning.
- First-hand learning experiences and visits to local religious and non-religious sites when appropriate.
- Using artefacts/resources to develop the children's curiosity and engagement in the subject'.
- Inviting parents/carers/religious/non-religious members into school to share their beliefs.
- Working alongside SACRE/RE network team to support staff CPD and enhance the curriculum.

### **Impact**

At Holywell Village First School we aim for our children to become well-rounded and successful citizens. We use the agreed syllabus to support children to 'make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs', 'understand the impact of religious and non-religious beliefs', 'make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied'. Our schools core values Citizenship, Confidence and Challenge are woven into the RE curriculum; promoting a desire to embrace challenging activities, including opportunities to undertake high-quality research across a range of RE unit questions. Pupils

will support, evaluate and challenge their own and others' views and work towards achieving the principal aim of RE.

Progress is assessed after each unit to determine whether children demonstrate emerging, expected or exceeding skills and data is collected by the RE coordinator for analysis in the form of a 'Best Fit Grid'.

Lesson observations are conducted by the RE subject leader using a peer mentoring approach. The Best Fit learning grids are collected termly so children's achievement and coverage may be monitored.

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RE Subject leader

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