

The Willows School Academy Trust



Religious Education POLICY

Reviewed: September 2025

Next Review Date: September 2026

Introduction

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils.

Religious Education is taught in our school because it makes:

"A major contribution to the education of children and young people. At its best, it is intellectually challenging and personally enriching. It helps young people develop beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. It fosters civilised debate and reasoned argument and helps pupils to understand the place of religion and belief in the modern world". (RE: realising the potential, Ofsted 2013).

This fits with our school ethos that The Willows School Academy Trust aims for all children to become confident independent learners, in a secure, caring and stimulating environment where staff and pupils learn together. Our aim is to bring learning alive for the children and to make the curriculum as relevant, exciting and as stimulating as we can make it. We aim to cater for all children's needs and recognise the fact that children learn best in different ways and at different rates. We value strengths that each child has and develop them, providing support and encouragement along the way. Whilst we are very proud of our academic achievements and expect high standards of work and behaviour from all of our children, we place equal importance on the development of social, spiritual and emotional skills. Furthermore, it is important to us that our children develop their moral compass of what is right and wrong and are understanding and respectful towards religions that may not be their own.

We use the Jigsaw RE programme as our scheme of work.

Jigsaw RE meets the requirements of the Hillingdon RE agreed syllabus and is aligned to the non-statutory guidance described above.

By following Jigsaw RE at The Willows School Academy Trust we intend that Religious Education will:

- adopt an enquiry- based approach as recommended by Ofsted, beginning with the children's own life experience before moving into learning about and from religion.
- provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, and issues of right and wrong, commitment and belonging. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses.
- enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to the wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.

- nurture children’s own spiritual development

Jigsaw RE Content

Jigsaw RE covers all areas of RE for the primary phase, Christianity plus one or two other religions are taught in each year group. The grid below shows specific enquiries for each year group.

	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Summer Term
EYFS	Christianity	Christianity	Christianity, Islam, Hinduism
Ages 4-5	What is Christmas?	What is Easter?	What can we learn from stories?
Year 1	Christianity	Christianity	Islam
Ages 5-6	What gifts might a Christian in my town have given Jesus if he had been born here rather than in Bethlehem?	Why was Jesus welcomed like a king or celebrity on Palm Sunday?	Who is God to Muslims?
Year 2	Christianity	Christianity	Islam
Ages 6-7	Why do Christians believe God gave Jesus to the world?	How important is it to Christians that Jesus came back to life after his crucifixion?	How important is the prophet Muhammad to Muslims?
Year 3	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam
Ages 7-8	Has Christmas lost its true meaning?	(5-7) Who is God to Sanatanis?	What is the best way for a Muslim to lead a good life?
Year 4	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam
Ages 8-9	What is the most significant part of the nativity story for Christians today?	What is the best way for a Sanatani to lead a good life?	Does praying at regular intervals help a Muslim in their everyday lives?
Year 5	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam
Ages 9-10	Is the Christmas story true?	What do some deities tell Sanatanis about God?	Does completing a pilgrimage make a person a better Muslim?
Year 6	Christianity	Hinduism	Islam
Ages 10-11	Do Christian celebrations and traditions help Christians understand who Jesus was and why he was born?	What is the best way for a Sanatani to show commitment to God?	What is the best way for a Muslim to show commitment to God?

How is RE organised in this school?

Jigsaw RE combines learning about religion, learning from religion and opportunities for questioning and spiritual development into one complete program. Teaching strategies are varied and are mindful of preferred learning styles and the need for differentiation. Each enquiry starts from the children’s own life experiences using these as a bridge into the investigation of the religion being studied.

Learning is assessed through continual Assessment for Learning (AfL) and children have the opportunity to express their own thoughts and beliefs and empathise with believers of that religion or belief position.

6 RE lessons are delivered every term and Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Humanism religious celebrations are marked through whole school assemblies.

Through established connections, classes visit places of worship across the year to share and expand their classroom learning.

Differentiation/SEND

Jigsaw RE is written as a universal core curriculum provision for all children. Inclusivity is part of its philosophy. Teachers will tailor each enquiry to meet the needs of the children in their classes. To support this differentiation, many enquiries suggest creative learning activities that allow children to choose the media with which they work and give them scope to work to their full potential. To further help teachers differentiate for children in KS1 and KS2, each enquiry has exemplars for those children working towards the learning objective, at the expected level for this age group and those working beyond the expected level of achievement.

Assessment

Teachers are eager to ensure children are making progress with their learning throughout RE and use AFL to continually assess their children. Jigsaw RE has an optional built-in assessment. This task is the formal opportunity for teacher assessment of the children's knowledge of that religion, depth of critical thinking, and ability to answer the enquiry question. This stand-alone evidence can be used in conjunction with other evidence such as records of discussions and annotations from other lessons within the enquiry to assist the teacher in assessing whether a child is working at the expected level or towards or beyond it.

Children are assessed over three aspects of learning:

- a personal resonance with or reflection on the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question based on the learning intention of each lesson.
- knowledge and understanding of the material/religion being studied to answer the enquiry question.
- evaluation/critical thinking in relation to the enquiry question

These are tracked throughout the planning stage so that teachers can utilise the appropriate evidence accordingly. In line with non-statutory guidance issued by the RE Council in 2013 (cited on page 1) descriptors of these aspects utilise age-related expectations of working towards, working at the expected attainment and working beyond.

Recording and tracking progress

To support the teacher in tracking each child's progress throughout the year, there is an overview sheet for each enquiry on which to record the progress of the whole class. In addition to this, the children's progress is evidenced through their RE books and monitored by the subject coordinator throughout the year. As part of this monitoring, the subject coordinator meets with children to discuss their learning and obtain pupil voice.

Monitoring and evaluation

The RE coordinator monitors delivery of the programme through observation and discussion with teaching staff, as well as discussions with children and scrutiny of their written work to ensure consistent and coherent curriculum provision. Evaluation of the programme's effectiveness is conducted on the basis of:

- Pupil and teacher evaluation of the content and learning processes
- Staff meetings to review and share experience
- Monitoring of assessment to ensure progression throughout the school.

External contributors

RE gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights. The British Values agenda is intrinsic to Jigsaw RE and a map of coverage is available on request.

External contributors from the community, e.g. local clergy, local members/speakers from other religions etc. make a valuable contribution to the RE programme as do visits to places of worship. Their input is carefully planned and monitored to fit into and complement the programme.

Teachers are always present during these sessions and remain responsible for the effective delivery of the RE programme. All visitors are subject to safeguarding procedures in line with the school's Child Protection Policy.

The Learning Environment

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. To enable this, it is important that respect for each other's views and beliefs and those of the believers of that religion is encouraged at all times and that any artefacts are handled with respect and care.

Teaching Sensitive and Controversial Issues

Sensitive and controversial issues are certain to arise in learning from real-life experience and discussing personal beliefs.

Topics are presented using a variety of views and beliefs so that pupils are able to form their own, informed opinions but also respect that others have the right to different opinions. Teachers should never feel obliged to discuss their own beliefs unless they feel comfortable doing so and can ensure that this will not influence or restrict the children's own expression.

Involving parents and carers

The school believes that it is important to have the support of parents, carers and the wider community for the RE programme. Parents and carers are given the opportunity to find out about and discuss RE through:

- Response to RE comments on reports
- Curriculum newsletters
- Displays
- RE policy on the school website

Withdrawal from RE lessons

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of the Religious Education. Those parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited in to meet the RE curriculum lead and Headteacher who will explore any concerns and discuss any impact that withdrawal may have on the child. The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs. Parents will be made aware of the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum through the class curriculum maps on the school website and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish. The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents. The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

As a school it is **our duty to inform Hillingdon Standing Advisory Council of RE (SACRE)** regarding the numbers of children being withdrawn.

Links to other policies and curriculum areas

We recognise the clear link between RE and the following policies and staff are aware of the need to refer to these policies when appropriate.

- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SMSC Policy
- British Values
- Prevent Strategy – Jigsaw RE supports the Prevent Strategy by promoting respect, tolerance and critical thinking about different faiths and worldviews.

Training and support for staff

All staff benefit from training in order to enhance their RE delivery skills. Opportunities are provided for staff to identify individual training needs on a yearly basis and relevant support is provided.

In addition to this, support for teaching and understanding RE issues is incorporated in our staff meetings, INSET programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies.

Dissemination

This policy is available on our school website where it can be accessed by the community. Training is regularly delivered to staff on the policy content. Copies are available from the school office on request from parents/carers.

Signed: K Wallace (RE curriculum lead)

Date: September 2025

Signed: M Shaw (Head Teacher)

Date: September 2025