

# The Willows School Academy Trust



## Religious Education Policy

Reviewed: **September 2026**

Next Review: **September 2027**

## **1. School Context and Purpose**

Religious Education (RE) forms part of the basic curriculum and is a statutory entitlement for pupils. As an academy, The Willows School Academy Trust provides RE in accordance with the requirements of its funding agreement and relevant education legislation.

The school has adopted the Hillingdon Locally Agreed Syllabus as the basis for its RE curriculum and uses Jigsaw RE as its principal scheme of work, supplemented and adapted where necessary.

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 stimulating as we can make it. We aim to cater for all children's needs and recognise that children learn best in different ways and at different rates. We value the 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.

## **2. Statutory and Curriculum Framework**

The Willows School Academy Trust provides RE in accordance with its funding agreement and relevant education legislation.

The school has adopted the Hillingdon Locally Agreed Syllabus as the basis for its RE curriculum.

Jigsaw RE is mapped to the current Hillingdon Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education and is adapted where necessary to meet the needs of pupils at The Willows School Academy Trust.

## **3. Curriculum Intent**

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

- adopt an enquiry-based approach, 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 help 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 wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- nurture children's own spiritual development.

#### **4. Curriculum Delivery: Jigsaw RE**

We use the Jigsaw RE programme as our scheme of work. Jigsaw RE covers all areas of RE for the primary phase. Christianity plus one or two other religions are taught in each year group.

Jigsaw RE combines developing knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews, alongside opportunities for pupils to reflect, question, interpret, compare and evaluate ideas.

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.

Six RE lessons are delivered every term. Christianity, Hinduism and Islam are explored through RE and whole-school assemblies, alongside Humanism as a non-religious worldview.

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

## 5. Jigsaw RE Content

The curriculum overview below shows the specific enquiries for each year group.

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

## 6. Inclusion, SEND and Curriculum Adaptation

Jigsaw RE is ambitious for all pupils while being appropriately adapted to pupils' cognitive, communication, social, emotional, sensory and regulatory needs.

Adaptation may include explicit vocabulary teaching, visual supports, repetition and retrieval, concrete examples, reduced language demands, practical experiences, structured discussion and alternative methods of recording understanding.

## 7. Assessment

Assessment in RE is an ongoing process which enables teachers to identify pupils' progress, understanding and next steps.

Formative assessment takes place throughout each RE unit through questioning, discussion, observation and pupils' recorded work. Teachers use this ongoing assessment to identify what pupils know and understand, address misconceptions and adapt subsequent teaching, activities and support to meet pupils' developing needs.

Children are assessed across three aspects of learning:

- Analyse deeper meanings in religious stories and teachings.
- Consider reasons for religious beliefs and how they influence behaviour.
- Explore ethical ideas and reflect on their own views thoughtfully.
- Use theological and philosophical language (e.g., omnibenevolent, revelation, morality).

At the end of each unit, a summative assessment is made. Teachers use the formative assessment evidence gathered throughout the unit, alongside pupils' end-of-unit understanding, to make an overall judgement of each pupil's attainment.

Attainment is recorded using the school's age-related assessment descriptors: Below | Just At | Securely At.

This information is used to monitor progress over time and to inform future teaching and curriculum adaptation.

## **8. Recording and Tracking Progress**

Formative assessment evidence is gathered throughout each RE unit through pupils' work, questioning, discussion and observation. This evidence informs the end-of-unit summative assessment.

At the end of each unit, teachers record each pupil's summative assessment on the whole-class assessment overview using the school's age-related descriptors of Below, Just At and Securely At.

Assessment information is used to track pupils' attainment and progress in RE throughout the year.

## **9. Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RE Subject Lead monitors the quality and effectiveness of RE across the school to ensure that the curriculum is consistently delivered, appropriately adapted and enables pupils to make progress over time.

Monitoring and evaluation includes:

- Lesson observations and learning walks to evaluate the quality and consistency of curriculum delivery.
- Book scrutiny to review curriculum coverage, pupils' learning and evidence of progression.
- Pupil voice to explore pupils' knowledge, understanding, experiences and attitudes towards RE.
- Staff voice and professional discussion to identify strengths, areas for development and any additional support or training required.
- Review of assessment information to identify patterns in attainment and progress and ensure that expectations are appropriate for pupils across the school.
- Planning and curriculum review to ensure that the intended curriculum is being delivered, appropriately adapted and remains aligned with the Hillingdon Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Findings from monitoring are used by the RE Subject Lead to identify strengths and areas for development, inform subject action planning, support staff and improve the quality of RE provision across the school.

## **10. 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, for example local clergy and local members or speakers from other religions, 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 and external contributors are subject to the school's safeguarding procedures and are appropriately supervised in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy. Teachers remain present and retain responsibility for the lesson at all times.

### **11. The Learning Environment and Sensitive Issues**

Establishing a safe, open and positive learning environment based on trusting relationships between all members of the class, adults and children alike, is vital. Respect for each other's views and beliefs, and those of believers of the religion being studied, is encouraged at all times. Artefacts are handled with respect and care.

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, while respecting 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.

### **12. Safeguarding and Confidentiality**

RE contributes to the school's wider safeguarding and preventative education approach by providing opportunities for pupils to explore beliefs, values, identity, respect, prejudice and the rights of others within a safe and supportive environment.

RE lessons and discussions may lead to pupils raising concerns or making disclosures. Staff must respond in accordance with the school's Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy, report any safeguarding concern to the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) or deputy without delay and make an accurate record in accordance with school procedures. Staff must never promise confidentiality to a pupil.

Teachers are mindful that discussions relating to religion, belief, identity, family experiences, discrimination, extremism or other sensitive issues may be particularly significant for individual pupils. Content and discussion are therefore handled sensitively and adapted where necessary, while maintaining appropriate safeguarding expectations.

### **13. Partnership with 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:

- responses to RE comments on reports;
- curriculum newsletters;
- displays;
- the RE policy on the school website.

#### **14. Withdrawal from RE Lessons**

Parents/carers have the right to withdraw their children from all or part of Religious Education.

Parents/carers wishing to exercise this right are invited 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, that it is relevant to all pupils and that it 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 will be given the opportunity to discuss this if they wish. The school may also review such a request each year in discussion with parents.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether withdrawal is from the whole 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. Where RE is integrated within the curriculum, the school will discuss arrangements with parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can best be 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, we have a duty to inform Hillingdon Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) regarding the numbers of children being withdrawn.

#### **15. Links to Other Policies and Curriculum Areas**

We recognise the clear link between RE and the following policies and curriculum areas, and staff are aware of the need to refer to these 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.

## **16. Staff Training and Support**

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 into staff meetings and the INSET programme, drawing on staff expertise and/or a range of external agencies.

## **17. Policy Dissemination and Review**

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.

The policy is reviewed annually.

|                                     | <b>Signed RE Curriculum Lead</b> | <b>Signed Headteacher</b> |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Date of review: September 2026      | Mr. K Tsantirakis-Wallace        | Mr. Malcolm Shaw          |
| Date of next review: September 2027 |                                  |                           |