

Intent, Implementation and Impact

Religious Education (RE)

Intent

At West Byfleet Junior School we follow the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for RE.

Through their understanding of Christianity and other principle religions and non-religions; children can appreciate the way that religion shapes lives, values and individual identities.

With opportunities to enquire and reflect throughout the curriculum, children are encouraged to ask questions about the world and reflect upon their own beliefs and values.

Implementation

RE is taught using the Surrey Agreed Syllabus and augmented to achieve the aims of the school. At West Byfleet Junior School we use multi-faith studies and celebration units to ensure that the story of all religions are taught in every year group, every year. This allows us to increase our provision for principle religions outside of Christianity.

Religious Worldviews

As part of the RE school curriculum in England, using our Surrey Agreed Syllabus, religious worldviews are through what our students study - what religion is and what its worldviews are. This focus continues on how the aspects of the six religions; the impact of each religion and worldviews on individuals, communities and societies. We also look at the diversity of religious in society; the concepts, language and ways of knowing that help us organise and make sense of our knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews; the human quest for meaning, so our students are prepared for life in a diverse world and have space to recognise, reflect on and take responsibility for the development of their own personal worldview.

Christianity

Children will explore the covenants of the Bible as an underpinning narrative to understand its message to Christians. Children will begin exploring covenants through stories such as Noah, in year 3 which is explored in further detail in Year 4 alongside the Mosaic covenant.

In Year 4 children build a greater understanding of what a covenant is, before additional old-testament covenants are learned in Year 5. Year 5 sequence these covenants into an underpinning narrative to understand the significance of the new covenant to Christians. In Year 6 the New Covenant is explored in detail alongside the concepts of prophecies and the incarnation theory of Jesus.

The concept of incarnation and the "New Adam" is built across the school. Year 3 begins with understanding the concept of sin and the creation story. Year 3 and 4 explore stories of Jesus that will be used in Year 6 to compare and contrast the story of Jesus with the story of Adam. Concepts such as sin and redemption are explored in Year 5 to provide a foundation to understanding this complex theory in Year 6.

Children begin using scripture in Year 3; children are taught to find passages using bible references. In Year 4 children begin to compare and contrast gospel accounts which is explored in further depth in Year 5, understanding why these differences occur. Finally in Year 6, pupils explore motivations and historical context behind the four Gospels that impacted the style and content of their accounts.

Judaism

Judaism is explored in every year group through the use of celebration units where key celebrations such as Rosh Hashanah and Hanukah are explored in every year group, every year.

In Year 4 pupils learn about the values many Jewish people hold (such as family values and rituals) through the study of important times for Jewish people (e.g. Shabbat, specific festivals and celebrations such as weddings).

In Year 5 pupils study the differences within the Jewish communities. Jewish Synagogue communities are explored alongside different sects and how Judaism is practised in different geographical locations.

Islam:

Islam is explored in every year group during Eid for two to three weeks.

Further to this, in Year 3 children explore worship as a means to understand Islamic values, including Qur'an stories, prayer and celebration. Children have the opportunity to explore case studies to see daily lives of Muslim children.

In Year 5 children explore what helps Muslims live a good life through Eid, the five pillars and the prophet Mohammad. Year 5 explore how celebrations such as Eid, look different in England and Saudi Arabia.

Hinduism:

Hinduism is explored in every year group through the use of celebration units, including Diwali. In Year 6, pupils learn about the concept of Dharma, some key deities and avatars, and how Brahman is present in all things.

Buddhism:

Buddhism is explored in every year group using multi-faith studies. Pupils in Year 6 understand concepts of Karma and enlightenment, the cycle of samsara and the relevance of meditation on this journey.

Sikhism:

Sikhism is explored in every year group using multi-faith studies. Year 3 learn the duties of Sikhs and that equality is important to them and is expressed in langar and Sikh community.

Non-Religious Worldviews

Non-religious worldviews are simply that – views of the world and approaches to life that are formed without reference to a god, the supernatural or an afterlife. In the world around them, children will encounter the views of people who may call themselves ‘non-religious’ because they do not belong to any religious community, yet others may align themselves with a specific viewpoint within that broad spectrum e.g. atheist, agnostic, Humanist etc. Within the Agreed Syllabus, there are specific places where nonreligious beliefs are included in order to reflect this breadth of understanding, and give pupils opportunities to examine these beliefs alongside those of religious people. There is no expectation within many units that pupils are introduced to one specific branch of non-religious belief: as in EYFS, it is suggested that the opinions and beliefs of non-religious families within the class should be reflected in the content of the learning. However, to be able to gain a better understanding of non-religious belief, it is perhaps most helpful to look at Humanism as an example, as, like religion, it offers an approach to life based on a comprehensive system of shared beliefs and values and attempts to address similar big questions about truth, morality, meaning and purpose.

Humanism:

Humanists today maintain that the world is a natural place best understood using science, evidence, reason and critical thinking: their view of the Universe does not depend on belief in any god. Humanists believe that they should treat all human beings equally, regardless of race, gender, belief or sexual orientation, and that they should use empathy and compassion to make the world a better place for everyone. Humanists believe that morality is based on human nature, human society and human experience and has not come from any god: they can work out for themselves what is right and wrong, and also how to find meaning, beauty and happiness for the one life they have. Humanism presents a positive attitude to the world, focused on human experience, thought and hopes. Humanists are secularists, meaning they believe in freedom of belief, and support a state in which no one should be privileged or disadvantaged on grounds of their religious or non-religious beliefs. There are no sacred texts or sources of authority in Humanism, and although there are no prescribed rituals in Humanism, there are Humanist ceremonies (led by celebrants) for weddings, baby naming and funerals.

Assessment:

RE is assessed using work completed by the pupil as a work sample alongside teacher judgements based on discussions and class participation. Pupils are assessed as working towards, expected or greater depth.

From the Surrey Agreed Syllabus

The syllabus gives clear guidance about expected progress in RE, though end of phase statements which reflect our three Golden Threads of ‘God’, ‘Community’ and ‘Identity’. Our end of phase expectations are based on national guidance, widely used in syllabus development across the UK. The chart on Surrey Agreed Syllabus page 10 illustrates how pupils will develop increasing understanding through theological, sociological & philosophical approaches to learning, reflected in end of key stage expectations and within units of work. We have also created a document showing the end of phase expectations alongside skills development in RE. This can be located in the ‘Materials for school leaders’ section of GDBE-elevate. Do I need to assess every unit of work? No, although formative assessment will be taking place during all units of work in order to match learning to pupils’ needs. However, some summative assessment in RE should be taking place in order for teachers to be able to report pupils’ progress to parents. The timing of summative assessments should be determined by each school’s assessment policy, and match what is being required of other foundation subjects. It should be manageable and informative, not burdensome. We recommend that

any summative assessment gives a balanced picture of what pupils know and can do across the Golden Threads. How do the thematic units contribute to end of year assessment? Each year group must study one thematic unit. These units pull together learning from across the units in the year, providing a chance for some deeper thinking, building of schemata, weaving in of new content and an assessment opportunity in the second half of the summer term. They are not merely a revision unit, although pupils will revisit prior learning. They provide opportunities for pupils to demonstrate understanding across several religions and beliefs, and across the Golden Threads, which is one reason that we are recommending these as an assessment opportunity.

Impact

All principle religions set out by the Surrey Agreed Syllabus are taught in every year group, every year. This means that no child has to wait until upper key stages to have their story told. Children have the opportunity to engage with and appreciate festivals from a diverse range of religions, learning about the cultures and customs of those celebrated and taking part in fun activities to enrich their learning. Children from a variety of backgrounds feel celebrated and included using this approach.

Consistent themes in Christianity, including covenants and the relationship between Jesus and Adam, allow for children to develop their knowledge in stages. By laying the foundations in Year 3, children are able to explore complex concepts such as incarnation in Year 6 with a deep understanding.

Depth and nuance is explored across the school, and is not reserved for upper key stages. Children present a deep understanding of the topics they have covered in all year groups which is evidenced by their ability to relate topics covered in RE with other areas of the curriculum, including history and geography.