

Askwith Primary School

R.E. rationale

R.E. is a vital part of a broad and balanced curriculum.

"Religious education (RE) should make 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." (*Ofsted 2021*)

R.E. in primary schools provides the foundations for pupils to be able to understand our constantly changing world by gaining an insight into world religions. It helps pupils to develop their own beliefs and values, and promotes the virtues of respect and empathy, which are important in our diverse society. Alongside this, it contributes to pupils' personal development and well-being and to community cohesion by promoting mutual respect and tolerance in a diverse society.

At Askwith Primary School, we believe that **all** children's education begins in Early Years (this includes SEND, EAL, PP and vulnerable children). Our curriculum is aligned to the Early Years Framework and shows the sequential steps of essential knowledge acquired from Reception to Year 6. 'Children develop quickly in the early years and a child's experiences between birth and age five have a major impact on their future life chances.' (*EYFS Statutory Framework, 2021*)

Although RE is an entitlement for all, the parental right to withdraw is still applicable.

Why this, why now?

At Askwith Primary School, we have decided to adopt the North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus* for R.E. The whole school long term plan is designed in year groups but can equally be used for mixed age classes. R.E. is taught in a block at least once per term.

The essential knowledge is divided into: believing, expressing and living. Systematic unit are taught prior to thematic units.

Each year, this is supplemented by a progressive development of knowledge of Easter and Christmas (see rolling programmes) which includes a visit (or Zoom call) from our local Reverend.

*The North Yorkshire Agreed syllabus requires the shift in use of language: Christians rather than Christianity; Hindus rather than Hinduism etc

Ofsted research suggests that: 'similar concepts should be taught a number of times at different stages of the curriculum in increasingly detailed contexts thus enabling our pupils to build knowledge systematically and make connections between concepts.' (Ofsted 2021)

Knowledge in R.E.

For each key stage, the curriculum is divided into three distinct strands:

Believing

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses, offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning

Expressing

- explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion

Living

- find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all
- articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives

The main aim in each of the key stages is as follows:

EYFS	Key Stage 1	Key Stage 2
Discovering	Exploring	Connecting

Recent research (Ofsted 2021) suggests that there are 3 pillars of knowledge used in R.E. These broad types of knowledge are 'pillars of progression' within RE and making progress in R.E. comprises knowing more and remembering more of these pillars as they are set out within the RE curriculum:

- **substantive knowledge:** knowledge about various religious and non-religious traditions
- **ways of knowing:** pupils learn 'how to know' about religion and non-religion

- **personal knowledge:** pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions they study

Substantive Knowledge in R.E. is the concepts, the facts known about a particular religion and its followers. For example, substantive knowledge of Muslims would be to know the name of the religion they follow, their sacred book, where and how they choose to worship and important features of the religion such as the five pillars.

Substantive knowledge can be categorised as declarative knowledge - the 'know what' and procedural knowledge - the 'know how'. In R.E., declarative knowledge is the skills of enquiry such as asking and answering questions and reflection.

R.E. is a cumulative subject, knowledge is not necessarily hierarchical. For example, although helpful for comparison, a knowledge of Buddhism is not a necessary pre-requisite for developing knowledge of Christianity. Substantive knowledge is built over time by repeating, linking and extending knowledge.

Ways of knowing refers to the wider ways of thinking that frame smaller pieces of substantial knowledge. This may refer to different disciplines, such as history or art, in order to make sense of a person, people or action. While substantive knowledge describes 'what to know', the wider framing offered by disciplinary lenses allows pupils to understand 'how to know'.

'Ways of Knowing' in R.E. can be simplified into the disciplines: theology, philosophy and human/ social sciences. How questions are phrased within a unit of work will alter how it is approached. For example, 'Why do different Hindu stories talk about light?' or 'How does a festival of light bring Hindus together?' Each question enables pupils to consider the question through different disciplines.

Personal Knowledge 'When pupils study RE content, they do so 'from a position'. This position is their 'viewpoint' or perspective on the world, which is influenced by, for example, their values, prior experiences and own sense of identity.' (Ofsted 2021)

Pupils need to be aware of their 'viewpoint' to enable them to be aware of the assumptions they may bring to discussions. These may be based on the pupils' own background concepts and ideas about religion or their own personal experiences. Pupils must be given the freedom to express their own religious or non-religious identities, and share an understanding that these may or may not change.

Disciplinary Knowledge in R.E. is the connections that the children make between religious teachings and how followers live their lives. Explaining similarities and differences and offering their own suggestions about what they have been taught. It requires a meta-cognitive approach: once the children have a clear knowledge of the substantive concepts,

they can independently apply this to new material. The knowledge and understanding of a substantive concept enable children to analyse it in a variety of contexts, including in some cases, non-religious or secular contexts.

Reading opportunities in R.E.

Reading underpins our entire curriculum. Key texts and pieces of information are carefully selected ensuring that the content and reading age are appropriate. Key texts are on display and made available for the children to access during daily 'reading for pleasure' time.

SMSC in R.E.

At Askwith Primary School, we have a determined approach that drives us to ensure that all children meet the expected standard in R.E. and have the knowledge required for secondary school. Our intent is that all children know more, remember more and do more. As our R.E. curriculum is broad and balanced, it provides a wealth of opportunity to embrace **Fundamental British Values** and **SMSC**. Both are an integral part of R.E. and are threaded through whenever relevant.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural attributes are developed in our pupils throughout the R.E. curriculum:

Spiritual education in R.E. involves the experience and search for meaning, the purpose in life and the values by which we live. When learning about different religions and why people believe, pupils are given the opportunity to reflect on and interpret spirituality and their own lives.

Moral education in R.E. involves pupils learning about shared and differing beliefs and values. Pupils are given the opportunity to explore moral dilemmas about right and wrong, good and bad, peace etc. They are able to make personal responses whilst considering other peoples' responses to moral issues.

Social education in R.E. involves exploring similarities and differences in religions and cultures. Pupils are given the opportunity to link religion to personal action in everyday life. This is reflected in their relationships with others and their ability to work together co-operatively. Pupils becoming aware of the positive impact in society of different religions, they develop an understanding of how religion can affect daily life and decisions.

Cultural education in R.E. involves learning about a range of religions and non-religious groups thus enabling the pupils to embrace diversity. This gives the pupils an opportunity to learn 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 multi-cultural society. Pupils

are given the opportunity to explore different artistic images, architecture and symbols from a range of religious and non-religious groups.

Askwith Primary School will ensure that it equips pupils with 'systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities.' Thus enabling them to have the necessary cultural capital to succeed in the world.

Enhancements in R.E.

At Askwith Primary School, we have a carefully planned rolling programme of enhancements to ensure that all year groups are exposed to a wide range of opportunities that enhance children's knowledge and cultural capital in all subjects. This is a vital part of the R.E. curriculum which has many benefits, including:

- the opportunity for those children with only an abstract view on religion to have a first-hand experience
- the opportunity to experience the atmosphere of a place of worship
- the opportunity to hear an 'expert' speak and provide answers to questions
- the opportunity to see relevant artefacts

'A major success of R.E. is the way that it supports the promotion of community cohesion. In many schools, R.E. plays a major role in helping pupils understand diversity and develop respects for the beliefs and cultures of others.' (*Ofsted 2021*)

R.E. priorities for improvement 2024-2025

R.E. development 2024-2025	
Intent	Implementation
Review the RE curriculum in light of current research and the new North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend NYCC training re: Agreed Syllabus for 2024 • Review new research • Update progression documents - agreed with staff • Annotate LTP with justifications • Review balance of substantive knowledge, ways of knowing and personal knowledge across all units • Update essential knowledge documents for all units - agreed with staff • Review balance of systematic and thematic units across all year groups • Monitor implementation of essential knowledge documents (including staff views) • Review and improve enhancement opportunities •

Reviewed: September 2024