Farsley Westroyd Religious Education Policy

At Farsley Westroyd Primary School, Religious Education (RE) is an essential component of our curriculum. It provides pupils with an opportunity to explore a diverse range of religious and non-religious worldviews, fostering understanding, empathy, and a sense of belonging. The RE curriculum is designed to stimulate critical thinking, engage pupils with life's big questions, and prepare them for a diverse and multicultural world. The 'Believing and Belonging' syllabus guides our approach, ensuring that learning is both comprehensive and meaningful.

Purpose and Value of Religious Education

The purpose of RE at Farsley Westroyd is to develop learners' understanding of religions and worldviews, exploring their commonality and diversity. The curriculum provides pupils with a broad and balanced understanding of major world religions including Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Sikhism, as well as non-religious beliefs such as Humanism. These diverse beliefs are woven into human experience, and learning about them fosters empathy, respect, and a deepened understanding of different perspectives. RE also aims to nurture informed and resilient responses to misunderstanding, stereotyping, and division. It offers pupils a safe space to tackle challenging questions about meaning, purpose, beliefs, and values.

'Schools should, through their RE programmes, aim systematically to prepare students for the spiritual and intellectual challenges of living in a world with diverse religions and beliefs as well as non-belief"

Big Ideas for Religious Education, Wintersgill 2017

RE 'should explore the important role that religious and non-religious worldviews play in all human life. This is an essential area of study if pupils are to be well prepared for life in a world where controversy over such matters is pervasive and where many people lack the knowledge to make their own informed decisions. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background and personal beliefs and practices.'

Commission on RE, September 2018

The syllabus we use is called Believing and Belonging because it weaves two key threads:

First, it is about beliefs and values. It aims to develop learners' understanding of religions/worldviews, exploring their commonality and diversity.

Specifically, RE:

a. **Enables learners to develop a broad and balanced understanding of religions/worldviews.**

   RE's primary purpose is to give learners a broad understanding of Christianity, other religious traditions and non-religious beliefs, and understand how these are woven into human experience and applied to life and decisions.

b. **Empowers learners to develop and use critical thinking skills.**

   Well taught, RE is a rigorous academic subject, supporting problem solving and critical thinking skills. It will inspire and motivate learners to enquire into religious and purposeful questions. Engaging and stimulating RE helps to nurture informed and resilient responses to misunderstanding, stereotyping and division. It offers a place in the curriculum where difficult or 'risky' questions can be tackled within a safe but challenging context.

   Secondly, the syllabus is about 'belonging'. It aims to nurture pupils' awareness of the treasury of diverse beliefs and cultures, as well as sensitivity to the questions and challenges that these can present. Ultimately, we all share a common humanity and our own patch of the Earth. In this way RE plays a part in helping pupils to discover their own place, identity and journey through life.

   Specifically, RE will:

c. **Broaden perspectives of faiths and cultures, encouraging tolerance of diversity.**

   A universal RE entitlement means that the subject must aim to develop understanding of diversity, empathy and cohesion. RE develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religious traditions and worldviews and explores their responses to life's challenges. This gives them the knowledge and skills to flourish both within their own community and as members of a diverse and global society.

d. **Develop their own personal worldview, identity, values and spirituality.**

The role of RE is neither to promote nor undermine organised religion. But part of its purpose is to provide structured opportunity for consideration of the non-material aspects of life. RE can contribute dynamically to children and young people's education 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. It can support their own discovery of their personal journeys of meaning, purpose and value, whether or not they identify with a specific, organised worldview.

e. Contribute to developing learners as positive, participating citizens of the world.

Human beings are strengthened and empowered by learning from each other. So, through experience and culture, it is possible to explore the opportunities, challenges and purpose of our individual lives and communities. RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for their future, for employment and lifelong learning.

It enhances spiritual, moral, social and cultural education by:

- Developing awareness of the fundamental questions raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them;
- Responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and other belief systems, relating them to their own understanding and experience;
- Reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- Nurturing curiosity and insights to become positive, participating citizens.

Aims and Objectives

The aims of the RE curriculum at Farsley Westroyd Primary School are:

1. To stimulate pupils' curiosity and interest in different religions and worldviews by offering engaging and thought-provoking learning experiences.
2. To enable pupils to develop an informed and balanced understanding of a range of beliefs and practices, encouraging respect and empathy.
3. To foster pupils' ability to engage with challenging questions of meaning, identity, and values, developing critical thinking and personal reflection.
4. To equip pupils with the skills necessary for dialogue, enabling them to contribute positively to a diverse society.

Curriculum Implementation

The RE curriculum is implemented through the six learning pathways from the 'Believing and Belonging' syllabus. These pathways provide structured guidance for developing pupils' knowledge of religions and worldviews. The curriculum is delivered through a combination of weekly lessons, cross-curricular activities, and thematic projects. Visits to places of worship and interactions with members of various faith communities enrich pupils' learning experiences. The curriculum content is adapted to reflect the context of our school and to meet the needs of all learners.

Learning Pathways

The syllabus is based around six threads or 'pathways' through which the most important features of RE may be understood. Coherent and sequential learning is built on these pathways and then earthed by thematic and systematic study of specific religions/worldviews.

The syllabus therefore aims to:

• develop progressive understanding of the 'pathways' and

• build rich and profound knowledge of religions/worldviews

Pathway 1: The Nature of Religion and Belief

Religions/worldviews involve interconnected patterns of beliefs, practices, and values. They are highly diverse and constantly evolving in response to new situations and challenges. These patterns of diversity and change can be the cause of debate, tension, and conflict or result in new, creative developments.

Pathway 2: Expressing Belief

Beliefs are often difficult to express using everyday language. Religious communities use symbols, art, music, and drama to convey deeper meanings and experiences. This pathway explores how people express beliefs beyond words.

Pathway 3: A Good Life

Many people strive to live according to what they understand as a good life. This pathway explores moral principles and virtues, as well as how different religions and worldviews approach what is acceptable moral behaviour.

Pathway 4: Personal Journey

This pathway focuses on deeply felt experiences, which might be described as religious or spiritual. It considers how transformative experiences can lead to changes in beliefs, identity, and purpose.

Pathway 5: Influence and Authority
Religious and non-religious communities influence societies in various ways, including shaping laws, values, and cultural traditions. This pathway examines both the positive and negative impacts of religious authority.

Pathway 6: The Big Picture
Religions and worldviews often provide overarching narratives about the nature of the universe and humanity's purpose. This pathway challenges pupils to think critically about these grand narratives and their influence on human experience.

Early Years and Foundation Stage (EYFS)
E is a statutory requirement for all pupils, including those in the Reception year. The EYFS curriculum integrates RE within the broader framework of seven learning areas, allowing for flexible planning that responds to children's interests and needs. Through sensory exploration, children learn about religions and worldviews by engaging with special people, books, places, and objects. Activities such as handling religious artefacts, meeting members of faith communities, and visiting places of worship are incorporated to provide first-hand experiences.

Children use imagination and curiosity to appreciate the natural world and recognize diversity, fostering self-value and appreciation for others. They are encouraged to ask questions, express feelings, and listen to stories from a range of religions and worldviews. Planning for RE in EYFS is in line with the EYFS Framework (2023), promoting effective learning through playing and exploring, active learning, and creating and thinking critically. Practitioners adapt activities based on individual development rates and the diverse backgrounds of pupils, drawing content from Christianity and at least one other religious tradition, ensuring relevance to the class context.

RE lessons
RE is timetabled so that pupils are provided with 1 hour of RE each week. Lessons will be delivered weekly and also through awareness days, visitors, trips, festivals and experiences. Lessons are normally taught by the class teacher, a qualified teacher covering PPA or a HLTA. The school has a subject leader who support and monitors the subject. We encourage and promote teaching and learning through active engagement, including discussion, debate, role-play, creative arts, and enquiry-based activities. These methods help pupils to explore complex ideas in an accessible and meaningful way, fostering both critical thinking and a deeper understanding of the diverse worldviews studied in RE."

The place of RE in our school

Religious Education (RE) holds a central role in our curriculum at Farsley Westroyd Primary School, making a significant contribution to pupils' wider development, wellbeing, and understanding of the world. Through RE, students engage with a wide range of religious and non-religious worldviews, promoting respect, empathy, and appreciation for diversity.

To enrich pupils' experiences, we incorporate a variety of ongoing projects, such as arranging visits to local places of worship and inviting community members to share their lived experiences of faith and belief. These activities provide students with firsthand encounters, enhancing their understanding of different cultural and religious practices.

RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social, and Cultural (SMSC) development as well as promoting Fundamental British Values and Protected Characteristics by fostering respect for different beliefs and encouraging tolerance. It supports students in developing an informed perspective on ethical issues, thus nurturing a respectful and cohesive school environment. The subject also connects closely with our Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education by exploring identity, diversity, and the impact of belief systems on individual choices and community values.

Furthermore, RE underpins our commitment to equality by highlighting the importance of understanding and respecting diverse perspectives, and promoting inclusivity for all. We highly value the support given to RE through links with both the local and wider community, which include partnerships with religious and cultural groups, thereby providing students with a richer learning experience.

Diversity

RE at Farsley Westroyd Primary School acknowledges that faiths are not uniform, monolithic systems; there is significant diversity both within and between different religions and worldviews. Effective teaching must reflect this complexity, recognizing not only the major religions but also other belief systems and non-religious worldviews, such as Humanism. The purpose of RE is to explore a wide spectrum of beliefs, allowing learners to investigate questions of meaning, purpose, and value beyond traditional religious structures. This inclusive approach ensures that all pupils can engage with diverse perspectives, whether based on faith or secular philosophies.

Inclusivity and Adaptability

At Farsley Westroyd, we ensure that the RE curriculum is accessible to all learners, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The curriculum is adaptable,

ensuring that each pupil can engage meaningfully with the content. Learning activities are differentiated based on the Engagement Model, which supports exploration, realisation, and persistence. Our inclusive approach ensures that every child, regardless of their background or ability, benefits from a high-quality RE education.

Assessment

Assessment in RE is ongoing and linked to the end-of-key-stage expectations outlined in the syllabus. Teachers use formative assessment to monitor pupils' progress throughout units of work, with summative assessments conducted at the end of each key stage. Pupils' progress is reported to parents, and assessments are used to inform planning and ensure that learning objectives are being met.

Roles and Responsibilities

The Headteacher and Governors have overall responsibility for ensuring that RE is delivered in line with statutory requirements and school policies. The RE Coordinator is responsible for planning the curriculum, supporting staff, and ensuring high-quality RE teaching across the school. Class teachers are responsible for delivering lessons and assessing pupils' progress. All staff are expected to engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their understanding of RE.

Communication and Engagement

Farsley Westroyd Primary School values open communication with parents and the wider community regarding the RE curriculum. Parents are encouraged to engage with their child's learning, and we welcome any questions or discussions about the content being taught. We also engage with local faith communities to provide authentic learning experiences for pupils, and we arrange visits and invite guest speakers to help pupils understand the lived experience of different religions and worldviews.

Withdrawal from RE

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw a child from religious education. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. If a parent is considering withdrawal from RE, we will listen to their concerns, inviting them to do so with the head teacher or other representative of the school. We work hard to ensure that any reservations or doubts may be accommodated to avoid withdrawal but recognise that a parent has this right if reservations cannot be resolved. Any

formal decision to withdraw should be made in writing to the head teacher. We will ask parents if they wish to continue the withdrawal each year.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the school has a duty of care to look after the pupil, but not to provide alternative education. Any arrangements made must not incur extra cost for the school or the local authority.

Enquiries and questions

The school welcomes enquiries or questions about RE. In the first instance parents should contact their child's class teacher.

Responsibility: RE Lead, Headteacher and Governors

Date: October 2024

Review Date: September 2025