



Our Approach to Teaching Religious Education

At Whitehall Junior School, we are committed to providing our pupils with a well-rounded education. Our curriculum is planned in a logical and well-considered way, to enable pupils to build upon their skills and have a secure knowledge base from which connections in learning are made. We use 'beautiful' resources from credible sources to enrich our lessons.

What is the big picture for Religious Education?

The purpose of RE is to give children a valuable insight into the diverse beliefs and opinions which are held by people today. This subject enables critical thinking from a young age; it helps to support children with their own personal development and their understanding of the spiritual, moral, social & cultural questions that they will come across throughout their lives.

In lessons, children develop knowledge of a range of the world's major religions, such as: Buddhism, Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam. As well as this, each unit ends with a segment on faiths, beliefs and values. This is vital, as it encourages pupils to think critically about the faiths that they have studied, as well as having an understanding of the beliefs and concepts that they may find unfamiliar.

Covering these elements enables pupils to engage with the big questions of life in a meaningful way; encouraging children to have the ability to think deeply and from different perspectives, rather than rote learn a set of information.

What is magical about it?

RE is a subject that enables pupils to feel included. It promotes the diversity in our school, community and society and celebrates the culture and background of everyone, no matter who they are or what their beliefs may be. We are fortunate to have such diversity in our school and we believe RE should celebrate that. This supports us significantly in our RE lessons, as we are all able to share our own experiences for some vital and highly beneficial opportunities to learn more about our beliefs, backgrounds, culture and traditions – some of which, many children may not have encountered before. For the children, the freedom to offer their peers their individual and personal principles, religious and cultural traditions ensures inclusion for all, regardless of differences; this ultimately strengthens understanding and knowledge. In turn, this promotes a powerful sense of unity and an environment that celebrates diversity. We explore the rich history and stories of each faith, from relatable parables to the huge variety and styles of beautiful art, music, text and architecture that make up our world – this is something we can all appreciate.

Why is Religious Education an important subject to learn?

Our world has such a strong foundation of a broad array of faiths and beliefs that it is important to have an understanding and knowledge of them. As our society has a fundamental basis on faith and belief, so should children have a thorough knowledge of our world.

RE gives children a chance to reflect, not only on their own religious background, but also to have the opportunity to learn about the religious traditions and beliefs of others around them. RE also provides discussion and critical thinking opportunities, where children are able to strengthen their understanding of morals, ethics, values and perspective; all of which are crucial to gain valuable insight into the world around us. Learning about the world's religions also diminishes ignorance, as it strengthens understanding and fosters respect for the diverse peoples, religions and cultures around us. It also addresses misconceptions that may have arisen due to mis-information.

'We become not a melting pot but a beautiful mosaic. Different people, different beliefs, different yearnings, different hopes, different dreams.' Jimmy Carter

What do we love about Religious Education?

- It connects us to the peoples, faiths, traditions, cultures and world around us.
- It offers us an insight into different perspectives, which strengthen understanding of morals, ethics and values.
- It celebrates diversity and inclusion.
- It offers us opportunities to strengthen our own beliefs and the understanding of our personal faiths and viewpoints.
- RE allows us to appreciate the wealth of rich art, traditions and festivals around us.
- It enriches our understanding of others and brings unity to our school and community.

How do we want our pupils to talk about Religious Education?

- To be respectful of all the religions that we teach.
- To ask questions which are relevant and thought-provoking.
- To encourage critical thinking, which helps enrich their morals, values, ethics and beliefs.
- To spark creativity and thinking about the world in a more philosophical way.
- To create a sense of harmony and peace across the different cultures and religions represented across our school.
- To want to enquire and know more about their peers and further their understanding and knowledge of others differences.


'Critical thinking and curiosity are the key to creativity.' Amala Akkineni

Our approach to teaching Religious Education

Lesson 1

Begin each unit with a **KWL** grid: What do children already of this particular religion? What would they like to know? This is vital, as it not only allows us to understand what they know already, but also which questions they have, which promotes questioning and critical thinking to enrich their understanding further. As units on the different religions are often revisited in a considered manner as year groups progress, this will also allow teachers to oversee what they have retained from previous learning and what new knowledge is to be shared. Allow time at the end of each lesson to fill in this grid with any new learning and understanding.

Provide pupils with a **knowledge mat** or **key vocabulary** reference sheet, featuring a tiered list of essential vocabulary, along with their definitions for reference throughout the study. These should be glued into their exercise books for ease of access.

Key Vocabulary		The Buddha	Buddhists live by five rules:							
Buddha	The teacher and creator of Buddhism.	There are no gods in Buddhism. It was created by a man called Siddhartha Gautama, who was born into a sheltered early life. He lived a sheltered early life, but when he was older he went out into the world and saw that sickness, age and death come to everyone. After seeing this, Gautama meditated and found the answer to life. This made him the Buddha . This was called enlightenment and the Buddha decided to teach others how to reach it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never take the life of a living creature. • Do not steal. • Be faithful to your partner. • Do not lie. • Do not drink alcohol. 							
Meditate	When Buddhists close their eyes and breathe deeply, trying to empty their minds of thoughts.	 <p>Buddhism originated in Northeast India and now has followers from all over the world. The Dharmachakra is a symbol used in Buddhism.</p>								
Enlightenment	Breaking the Buddhist cycle of rebirth and reaching Nirvana.									
Eightfold Path	The rules laid out by Buddha which will lead to Nirvana.	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Dukkha</th> <th>Samsudaya</th> <th>Nirodha</th> <th>Magga</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Everyone suffers in life.</td> <td>The cause of suffering is a craving for things and wanting to control things.</td> <td>To end the suffering, life must be lived one day at a time. You must also let go of cravings.</td> <td>To end the suffering for good, people must follow the Eightfold Path created by Buddha.</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Dukkha	Samsudaya	Nirodha	Magga	Everyone suffers in life.	The cause of suffering is a craving for things and wanting to control things.	To end the suffering, life must be lived one day at a time. You must also let go of cravings.	To end the suffering for good, people must follow the Eightfold Path created by Buddha .
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Dharmachakra	'The Wheel of Dharma'.									
Nirvana	Perfect peace with no suffering.									

Buddhism Beliefs Keywords

Keyword	Definition	Picture/words to help remember definition
Arahat	For Theravada Buddhists, someone who has become enlightened.	
Ascetic	Living a simple and strict lifestyle with few pleasures or possessions.	
Bodhisattva	For Mahayana Buddhists, someone who has become enlightened but chooses to remain in the cycle of samsara to help others achieve enlightenment.	
Buddha	A title given to someone who has achieved enlightenment. Usually used to refer to Siddhartha Gautama.	
Buddhism	A religion founded around 2500 years ago by Siddhartha Gautama.	
Buddha rupa	A statue of the Buddha, often sitting crossed legged in a meditation pose.	
Buddhahood	When someone achieves enlightenment and becomes a Buddha.	
Chanting	In Buddhism, reciting from the Buddhist scriptures.	
Engaged Buddhism	A movement in Buddhism that is particularly concerned with applying the Buddha's teachings to matters of social and environmental injustice.	

Lesson 2

Begin lesson with a short retrieval quiz or questions to recap previous learning. Additionally, invite pupils to share new learning. Allow time for children to share their

	<p>own personal experience of any festivals or religious events they may have participated in recently, relevant to the lesson objective. Update KWL grid with any new learning to demonstrate progress.</p> <p>Finish each lesson with questions or instructions pupils can follow through, outside of school, to extend their learning. This can be recorded as part of their AFL to provide useful pupil: teacher feedback.</p> <p>Note: If any particular lessons focus on discussion, this should be recorded in pupil books, as follows:</p> <p>XX June 20XX – We have been learning about XXX and today we discussed XXX. I learnt that XXX.</p>
Lesson 3+	<p>Begin each subsequent lesson recapping previous knowledge and ask pupils to share what they know. Allow time for pupils to ask questions and discuss any misconceptions.</p> <p>Pupils to present work in their books like this:</p> <p><u>Monday 6th June 2022</u></p> <p><u>I am learning to recognise each of the five Precepts of Buddhism and understand why they are important to Buddhists.</u></p> <p>Consider Key or Big Questions within the unit for children to consider and answer. For example, a key or big question could be 'Does following any rules or precepts help us to be better people?' These can be written in the form of a mind map or responded to through group work on large paper. Record ideas and questions in books or on working walls where children can add to it. Photograph any shared evidence so pupils can transfer a record of this learning into their own books.</p>
Lesson Y	<p>Begin to draw the unit's teaching to a close in the penultimate lesson. After an initial discussion, which could explore a 'big question', ask pupils to write a paragraph outlining their discussion points. Ensure pupils write in an appropriate style. Model or share-write how to achieve this. Share outcomes.</p>
Lesson Z	<p>Complete KWL and key vocabulary grid with accurate definitions to ensure pupils have a clearer understanding of each term at the end of the unit. Hold a short quiz to consolidate their learning. Extend by asking pupils how the unit's learning has enabled them to learn more about the particular faith. Ensure pupils demonstrate our school values throughout RE lessons, with a focus on 'respect' for others, regardless of difference.</p>