



Religious Education Intent Statement

What is Religious education?

Religious education is knowledge and understanding of the world's religions.

Intent

At John Wheeldon Primary Academy, we believe Religious Education has never been more relevant, engaging or challenging as religion & religious issues are in the news every day. For pupils to be able to understand our constantly changing world they need to be able to interpret religious issues & evaluate their significance. RE gives students valuable insights into the diverse beliefs & opinions held by people today. It helps with their own personal development & supports an understanding of the spiritual, moral, social & cultural questions that surface again & again in their lives. In tackling difficult questions, it provides pupils with insight that can work to challenge stereotypes and promote cohesion. RE does important work encouraging young people to value themselves & the communities within which they live.

Implementation

At John Wheeldon Primary Academy, we follow Discovery RE, which we chose because it is an enquiry-based scheme of work, covering the six principal world faiths in a progressive way from Year 1 to Year 6. Throughout all the enquiries, the children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is carefully considered. Religious Education has a significant role for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It promotes respect and open-mindedness towards others with different faiths and beliefs and encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging through self-awareness and reflection. The principle aim of RE is to engage pupils in an enquiry approach where they can develop an understanding and appreciation for the expression of beliefs, cultural practices and influence of principle religions and worldviews in the local, national and wider global community.

The Discovery RE scheme of work has been closely mapped to the Staffordshire

Agreed syllabus for RE, for 2 years. It is an enquiry-based program and there are 6 enquiries per year group. The children study Christianity in every year group. Each enquiry lasts for half a term and begins with a "big" question such as "What is the best way for a Christian/Jew/Muslim etc. to show commitment to God?" The children then start discussing the theme of the enquiry (in this case, commitment) from their own experience. What have they shown commitment to? Brownies? Cubs? Their sporting team? Playing an instrument? Only when the children fully understand the concept they are considering, do they then move on to investigating what the people following the studied religion believe about it. They will spend approximately 3 lessons on this, learning in a variety of ways, so they can adapt their responses and come to a measured conclusion. In lesson 5 they will complete an activity which can assess their learning, by answering their "big" question. The assessment activities are child friendly and can be answered in a variety of ways, as long as the child can justify their view with the knowledge they have gained throughout the enquiry. This demonstrates the level of critical thinking that the children can apply - a valuable skill for them throughout the school curriculum.

The final week in every enquiry gives the children time to reflect on what they have learnt about the concept and apply to it their own lives, thus allowing them to form their own beliefs and identity. These lessons are often very creative and children have opportunities to make items to express themselves in ways other than just writing.

The four steps are:

- Step 1: Engagement: the children's own human experience is explored to act as bridge from their world (which may or may not include religion) into the world of the religion being studied.
- Step 2: Investigation: over approximately 3 lessons the teacher will guide the children to explore and investigate appropriate subject knowledge relevant to that question of enquiry.
- Step 3: Evaluation: An assessment activity enables each child to show their thinking and the depth of critical evaluation.
- Step 4: Expression: This refers the children back to the starting point of their own experience and allows them to reflect on whether their findings have influenced their own thinking.

As a school we identify on their learning objectives whether they are studying theology, human science or philosophy which are the three key principles in Religious Education.

To further enhance the delivery of religious education in school, we make links with our local faith communities, for example children walk to the local mosque. This enables faiths to be brought to life and gives further context and relevance to the children within our school. This is an area we are actively looking to build on and create stronger, ongoing links within our religious communities.

Impact

At John Wheeldon Primary Academy, our RE curriculum will build on, develop and extend children's knowledge and understanding of religions and beliefs. Our children will be more familiar and knowledgeable with the community they are part of and what religions are celebrated. Our children will develop an accurate religious vocabulary and interpret religious symbolism in a variety of forms. They will have opportunity to reflect on questions of meaning, offering their own thoughtful and informed insights into religious and secular world-views. By exploring ultimate questions of beliefs and values in relation to a range of contemporary issues, they will understand their part in an ever-changing society. Our children will be encouraged to develop strong community links with people of different faiths and understand how to build on and celebrate these links throughout their life.

We are PROUD of all we do!