



Religious Education Policy

Date of Policy: Spring 2024

Review: Spring 2026

Vision statement: Every member of Waverley Abbey is a child of God who learns to live a life of love, compassion and hope within our school family on their way to fulfilling their God-given potential. We want children to leave having grown in faith and courage and established on their spiritual journey.

All things are possible for one who believes. Mark 9:23

Introduction

“Religious Education in a Church School should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person”. (Taken from the Statement of Entitlement – Church of England Education Office 2019)

Context:

At Waverley Abbey, we aim to promote a Christian ethos throughout. This is done through all areas of the curriculum including pupils’ relationships with staff and each other. Pupils are taught about gospel values in collective worship and this forms a central part of each school day. Religious Education is an integral part of our broad and balanced curriculum, playing an important part in supporting children in developing a strong sense of who they are while establishing an understanding of the wider community in which we live. It plays an important part in helping the children to understand the background and beliefs of Christianity as well as other world faiths. It also encourages children to consider their own beliefs and ideas, and to ask questions about the world around them in the light of their studies.

Aims and Objectives for Religious Education in the Curriculum

The aims of R.E. at Waverley Abbey incorporate the following aims of R.E in Church Schools as taken from the ‘Statement of Entitlement 2019’.

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain’s cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Appropriate to their age, at the end of their education at Waverley Abbey, the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and are able to:

- Appreciate the link between belief and behaviour of individuals, communities, societies and cultures;
- Understand how a faith impacts the life of a believer;
- Express curiosity about life and reflect on own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of study;
- Express their own personal viewpoints in a thoughtful, reasoned and considerate way;
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religious and non-religious world views in their search for God and meaning;
- Recognise the relationship between the natural world and human responsibility;
- Understand their role as global citizens, gaining an understanding of who they are within their own community and beyond;
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none;

Communication with Parents:

Parents are given an overview of the learning across the curriculum which includes topics to be covered in RE. When sensitive issues are due to be discussed e.g. a unit about funerals, staff may contact parents to advise them of this, where they feel this is necessary. A long term plan detailing unit titles and key questions is found on the school website alongside our Waverley Abbey progression of skills for R.E.

Teaching and Learning Methods

Pupils are taught to:

Learn about religion

- Identify, name, describe and give an account in order to build a coherent picture of each religion
- Explain the meanings of religious language, stories and symbolism
- Explain similarities and differences between, and within, religions
- Understand the practices, beliefs and festivals of each religion.

Learning from religion

- Respond to religious and moral issues in an informed and considered manner
- Reflect on what might be learnt from religion in the light of personal beliefs and life experience
- Identify and respond to the question of meaning within religion
- Consider how a religion impacts the lives of believers.

At Waverley Abbey, we base our R.E lessons around the Guildford Diocesan Guidelines with the support from Understanding Christianity resource. Our lessons follow an enquiry approach, with each unit being themed around a question. Core theological concepts underpin Christianity units taught, providing children with a greater understanding of the 'Big Bible Story'.

RE teaching specifically draws on the following:

- Visits and visitors; enabling children to see first-hand people of faith, objects, symbols, places, events, stories and explore with people who have faith
- Role play; encouraging children to learn through familiar or unfamiliar settings and ask questions from their own encounters
- Artefacts; being able to explore items which are precious and/or used in religious worship, encouraging respect and questioning whilst deepening knowledge

Assessment

Teachers' assessments are made through discussions with children and the pupils' responses in class to learning experiences. They will also display work and alongside continual observations of children in lessons, teachers have a good grasp of the needs of learners. Waverley Abbey also believes that pupils taking ownership and making their own self assessments forms a big part of each child's progress in RE.

Monitoring

The RE subject leader will support and monitor the subject by regularly monitoring the quality of RE teaching across the school through lesson observations or book looks. Feedback from monitoring will be discussed with year teams and clear actions put into place, which will be followed up by the subject leader the following half term. Where necessary, the subject leader will support other teachers with the planning and delivering of RE lessons.

Time allocation

Each class will receive a series of RE sessions (1 unit) over the course of each half term. This may be allocated in a block or weekly.

Planning

Waverley Abbey follows the Guildford diocesan RE guidelines with the support from Understanding Christianity. Our lessons follow an enquiry approach, which each unit being themed around a question, allowing children to make secure connections and engage with text. Big questions are an important part of school life for us as we encourage children to ask them as a way to deepen their learning and utilise higher level thinking skills. The units we teach draw on and reinforce previous learning and inform future units as pupils' progress through the school.

Inclusion

Children with special educational needs are supported by the teacher through differentiation of tasks to allow access to the learning. Lessons will be adapted to ensure children can use a suitable learning style to engage with the lesson and subject content.

In accordance with the 1993 Education Act, parents have the right to withdraw children from all or part of the Religious Education programme. Such requests should be made to the Head Teacher.

Collective worship

At Waverley Abbey, RE and collective worship are separate activities however collective worship reinforces the teaching of RE lessons. Throughout a child's time here, they are taught about the key aspects of Christian worship and the importance of these practices to those who believe in them. Our school values are key to supporting pupil's spiritual development throughout both collective worship and also in every day interactions. Each week, an act of collective worship takes place in classrooms, led by class teachers, where children are given the opportunity to reflect further on the theme of that week. This can be a time for whole class discussion or personal reflection and contemplation.