

Westleigh Methodist Primary School Religious Education Policy



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Mission Statement

Westleigh Methodist Primary School aspires to be a Christian family where all can develop to their full potential.

We aim to promote the value of self, others and the environment

Our Vision:

We are a loving, inclusive family, rooted in our Christian Values and nurturing ethos. We provide a positive learning environment where all children can achieve their full potential.

The vision of Westleigh Methodist Primary School is to maintain a small, Christian school where the SLT and staff are knowledgeable about each child's abilities and challenges so that we can offer the most effective support for each individual child to meet those challenges, grow completely as a "well rounded" person and increase his/her skills to perform successfully in all academic areas. We believe that 'With God, all things are possible' – Matthew 19:26.

Our Mission:

Underpinning our Mission Statement, we seek to sustain a Christian, educational community where:

- ✓ An emphasis on academic excellence is complemented by our concern for each learner's personal growth and spiritual, intellectual, aesthetic, and psychological development.

The curriculum is developmentally responsive, actively engaging children in learning skills in a context; integrative – directing children to connect learning to daily lives; and exploratory – enabling children to discover their abilities, interests, learning styles, and ways that they can make contributions to society

Safeguarding Statement

At the Westleigh Methodist Primary School we recognise our moral and statutory responsibility to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children.

We work to provide a safe and welcoming environment where children are respected and valued. We are alert to the signs of abuse and neglect and follow our procedures to ensure that children receive effective support, protection and justice.

The procedures contained in the Safeguarding Policy apply to all staff, volunteers and governors.

Religious Education Policy

1. Legal framework

This policy will have consideration for and be in compliance with the following legislation:

- Education Act 2002
- School Standards and Framework Act 1998

This policy will also have due regard to the following statutory and non-statutory guidance:

- Religious Education in Schools – February 2010
- The rites, practices and doctrines of the Methodist Church as laid down in the Trust Deed

2. Roles and responsibilities

The Local Advisory Board (LAB) and the Headteacher will fulfil their duty to:

- Ensure that RE is provided as part of Westleigh Methodist's curriculum.

The Local Advisory Board (LAB) and Headteacher must also ensure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum.
- The teaching of RE is well led and effectively managed, and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation.
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for continuous professional development (CPD).
- Teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact in promoting community cohesion.
- Where appropriate, pupils have opportunities to take courses which lead to an accredited qualification in the subject.
- Teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion.

- Clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw.
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that we can fulfil are legal obligations regarding RE and pupils can make good progress.

3. Aims

Although we live in a nominally Christian country, it is a fact that many children entering full time education have had little or no experience of either the Christian or any other World Faiths. We cannot, therefore, assume that even in a school with close church connections, pupils will have knowledge of any elements of the Christian Faith. This needs to be constantly kept in mind when considering our aims and objectives for Religious Education. The principal aim of Religious Education is to aid pupils on their spiritual journey. Every person is on a spiritual journey; discovering the things that matter, finding out what is of value to themselves, working out how to live, how to treat other people and how to find meaning in their lives. Our aim, then, for pupils of all ages, is to provide a framework in which individuals may explore these aspects of their lives.

Within the context of Religious Education our aim, as a Methodist school, is to provide stimuli enabling pupils to:

- Experience the physical world both in and out of the classroom
- Become aware of the mystery inherent in God, life and creation, understanding that there may be things that cannot easily be explained.
- Reflect upon the spiritual dimension in the aesthetic, creative and scientific domains.
 - Develop morals, attitudes and understanding of the feelings, beliefs and customs of others and how these philosophies influence people's lives
- Know about the main beliefs, books and celebrations of Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hinduism and show genuine appreciation and wonder
- Know that all faiths have special beliefs, rituals and books.
- Know about the Methodist Heritage and understand the beliefs and philosophies of Methodism • Grow to trust in the world as their parish.
- Capture their sense of worth and be inspired to live life in all its fullness
- Understand their calling to show love to others, in all the ways they can.

- Have knowledge of the rule of law, its impact on moral dilemmas and the challenges faced by society today

4. Teaching

Christianity will be the majority study in RE at Westleigh Methodist Primary School.

RE will also:

- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. As well as Christianity, it will also develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- Encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- Enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- Teach pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, thereby helping to challenge prejudice.
- Prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion and demonstrates our core school Christian Values.
- Each class will have a reflection area that demonstrates the beliefs and values of our school both in Christianity and Methodism with the John Wesley Rule being visible to be referred to.

5. Curriculum Planning

The school follows the 2017 Wigan Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. In conjunction with this syllabus, the Methodist Church Guidance on the teaching of Christianity is used in Years 2, 4 and 6. These planned units of work relate to:

Belonging together: Why does it matter to be part of a community? What can we learn about Christians and community life?

Warm Hearts: What does it feel like to experience God's presence? The life of John Wesley

Commitment to Christianity: Is it long ago and far away, or is it here and now?

Class teachers are responsible for their own class organisation and teaching style in relation to Religious Education, while at the same time ensuring these compliment and reflect the overall aims and philosophy of the school and this policy.

6. Reflection Areas

Reflection areas are part of every classroom. They are quiet, invitational spaces that are accessible to all children. They contain a prayer space, a symbolic representation of the Holy Trinity, the Methodist symbol of the cross and the Orb and John Welsey's Rule for reference. All spaces contain interactive activities around their class Christian Value for children to engage in. These are spaces where children can develop socially, morally, spiritually and culturally through innovative and imaginative techniques. Staff, children and the Ethos Committee evaluate the impact of these areas regularly and suggested additions and alternatives are responded to.

Each class studies a Christian Value across the year and partakes in a range of activities around this value. These are as follows:

Nursery: Love

Reception: Teamwork

Year 1: Thankfulness

Year 2: Generosity

Year 3: Peace

Year 4: Forgiveness

Year 5: Equality

Year 6: Justice

Reflection areas are hospitable and welcoming to all children and young people, whatever their beliefs or cultural backgrounds. They enable children and young people to interact in their own way with an environment of prayer that includes opportunities to experience stillness, to express their thanks, hopes, dreams, questions and fears, and to explore ways of praying as practised by the saints of old and people today.

Through interaction with these areas, opportunities are provided for children and young people to stop, think and ask questions about their lives and the lives of others locally, nationally and globally, whilst considering the school's aim to learn, love and live without limits. Through class worship, children are supported with ideas on how to use their area to reflect on their experiences, their beliefs, and their relationships with themselves, others and God, and to learn from this reflection.

7. Community Cohesion

RE makes an important contribution to our duty to promote community cohesion. It provides key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.

Westleigh Methodist Primary School will use RE to promote community cohesion:

- Through the exploration, promotion and celebration of diversity, beliefs and values.
- At the local level, investigating patterns of diversity of religion and belief, and forging links with different groups.
- At the national level, through the study of the diversity of religion and belief across the UK and how this influences national life.
- At the global level, through the study of matters of international significance, recognising the impact of the diversity of religion and belief on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting an inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

8. Staffing and Training

A well trained and confident workforce is crucial in ensuring good quality RE. We will therefore ensure that:

- All teachers can contribute to the teaching of RE, regardless of their personal beliefs.

We will also ensure that:

- All teachers teaching RE are up-to-date with the latest regulations, guidance and best practice regarding RE.
- Our school action plans identify the CPD needs of staff in relation to RE.

9. Right of Withdrawal

Westleigh Methodist Primary School recognises the right of withdrawal of pupils from RE at the request of their parents. No reason needs to be given.

Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive.

Where alternative arrangements cannot be met, the pupil may receive their RE externally and may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend these classes.

10. Monitoring and Evaluating

The Headteacher/RE leads monitors Teaching and Learning of RE through learning walks, book scrutiny and pupil interviews.

Each class has a reflection book that includes photographs and evaluations that are not shown through written RE lessons.

The Ethos Committee (including the School Child Chaplains and foundation governors) act as critical friends and further support and challenge the Headteacher/RE leads in providing the best quality RE and worship.

The Headteacher/RE leads attend conferences and curriculum update meetings and disseminate this to wider school staff.

The Headteacher is responsible for reporting on standards and developments in RE through termly written updates to committees and full Governors.