

Religious Education

Curriculum Overview and Progression Mapping



Upper
Wharfedale
Primary
Federation



Introduction

At the heart of our Religious Education curriculum shines the guiding light of our federation vision: **“Be the Light”** (Matthew 5:14). We believe every child is born with a natural sense of wonder and a deep curiosity about life’s big questions. Through RE, we nurture that light, encouraging children to reflect, question, and explore beliefs, values, and meaning with openness, confidence, and joy.

Religious Education is more than a subject; it is a way of understanding ourselves, others, and the world around us. It invites children to explore faith, spirituality, and diverse worldviews, to think deeply and respectfully, and to appreciate the richness and diversity of religious and non-religious traditions. Our curriculum fosters empathy, reflection, and a lifelong curiosity about belief and meaning, helping children grow into thoughtful, compassionate individuals who seek understanding and truth.

Our core values, Love, Thankfulness, Trust, Forgiveness, and Kindness, are woven into every story, discussion, and reflection. They guide how we listen, share, and learn from one another. In embracing these values, our pupils learn to **“be the light”** living out their beliefs with integrity, respecting others, and making a positive difference in their communities and the wider world.

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Intent Statement

“Religious Education is not about making children religious; it is about helping them understand religion and belief in the world around them.”

At Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation, Religious Education equips children with the knowledge, understanding, and skills they need to navigate a diverse and ever-changing world. Our RE curriculum is designed to help pupils understand the influence of religion and belief on individuals, communities, and societies, both locally and globally.

Through high-quality RE, children are encouraged to explore Christianity and other major world religions, alongside non-religious worldviews, in a way that is respectful, balanced, and academically rigorous. We aim to develop pupils’ ability to think critically, ask perceptive questions, and engage thoughtfully with complex ideas about belief, morality, identity, and purpose.

RE is taught explicitly from Reception, enabling pupils to build a secure foundation of religious knowledge and vocabulary from an early age. As they progress through the school, children deepen their understanding by making connections between beliefs, practices, values, and lived experiences. Our curriculum supports pupils in forming their own informed views while appreciating the perspectives of others.

Ultimately, our intent is for RE to help pupils grow into reflective, open-minded individuals who demonstrate respect, compassion, and understanding, and who are prepared to play a positive role in a diverse society.

Implementation

At Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation, Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject during our federation working days. We believe this approach gives children the dedicated time and focus needed to engage with complex ideas, explore beliefs in depth, and develop thoughtful discussion and reflection skills. RE is taught in single year groups from Early Years through Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2. Carefully structured units ensure clear progression in knowledge, understanding, and religious vocabulary as pupils move through the school. Key themes and concepts are revisited in a planned and purposeful way, allowing learning to be embedded securely and built upon year by year.

In addition to timetabled RE lessons, we carefully plan RE-themed days in each school across the federation. These enriched experiences allow pupils to deepen their understanding, strengthen connections between different areas of learning, and engage creatively with religious ideas through discussion, storytelling, art, drama, and reflection.

RE lessons are inclusive, respectful, and discussion-based, encouraging children to:

- Ask and explore big questions
- Learn about and from different religions and worldviews
- Reflect on beliefs, values, and experiences

- Use and apply key religious vocabulary accurately
- Make links between faith, values, and everyday life

While RE is taught as a single subject, the skills it develops such as: critical thinking, empathy, reflection, and respectful dialogue, support learning across the wider curriculum. Through a well-planned and carefully delivered RE curriculum, pupils gain a deeper understanding of the world around them and their place within it.

Impact

The impact of our Religious Education curriculum is evident in pupils who are knowledgeable, reflective, and respectful learners. Children leave Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation with a secure understanding of key religious concepts, beliefs, and practices, and the ability to talk confidently and thoughtfully about religion and worldviews using accurate vocabulary.

Pupils demonstrate curiosity about faith and belief and are able to ask meaningful questions, make connections across different religions, and reflect on moral and ethical issues with maturity. They show empathy and respect when discussing similarities and differences and are confident in expressing their own views while valuing those of others.

By the end of their primary education, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of learning, having developed:

- A clear understanding of the role religion and belief play in the world
- Strong discussion, reflection, and reasoning skills
- Respect for diversity and different ways of life
- The ability to apply values such as kindness, forgiveness, and compassion in everyday situations

Our pupils leave as thoughtful, informed individuals who are equipped to contribute positively to their communities and to society as a whole.

SMSC and British Values in Our RE Curriculum

Spiritual Development Through RE

Spiritual education in RE encourages children to explore life's big questions, reflect on their own beliefs, and develop a sense of meaning and purpose. Pupils consider ideas about morality, values, and the human experience, fostering awe and wonder at the diversity of religious and non-religious worldviews. Through discussion, reflection, storytelling, and creative exploration, children develop insight into themselves and the world around them, nurturing empathy, respect, and a sense of responsibility.

Moral Development Through RE

Moral development is promoted through engagement with questions of right and wrong, fairness, and ethical decision-making. Pupils learn to consider the consequences of actions, reflect on moral dilemmas, and develop the ability to make thoughtful, principled choices in their own lives.

Social Development Through RE

Social education in RE encourages collaboration, dialogue, and mutual respect. Children learn to listen to, understand, and value the perspectives of others, developing skills in communication, cooperation, and negotiation. RE supports pupils in forming positive relationships and contributing thoughtfully to their communities.

Cultural Development Through RE

Cultural education within RE enables children to explore a wide range of beliefs, traditions, and practices, both locally and globally. Pupils gain an appreciation of diversity, recognising how religion and belief influence culture, identity, and society. This understanding fosters tolerance, inclusivity, and the ability to celebrate difference.

British Values

Through Religious Education, British Values are embedded naturally: pupils explore democracy through discussion and debate, respect the rule of law through understanding moral and religious codes, develop individual liberty through reflection and self-expression, and embrace mutual respect and tolerance for those with different beliefs and practices. RE provides children with the knowledge, understanding, and values to become thoughtful, responsible citizens who contribute positively to society.

RE beyond the Curriculum

At Upper Wharfedale Primary Federation, RE learning extends well beyond the classroom, helping children to connect their understanding of faith, belief, and values to the wider world. Through Global Spotlight Weeks, pupils explore religions and worldviews across different continents, examining similarities and differences in beliefs, practices, and cultural traditions. These focused weeks broaden children's understanding of diversity, encouraging curiosity, empathy, and respect for people of all backgrounds.

Pupils engage in practical, values-led activities through school council initiatives, PSHE, and cross-curricular projects that link closely with RE learning. For example, children have raised money for charities such as WaterAid, allowing them to apply teachings about compassion, justice, and responsibility to real-life global issues. These experiences help pupils understand how religious and moral values can inspire positive action and social change.

Where appropriate, visitors are welcomed into school to enrich RE learning. For example, pupils may hear from representatives of different faiths or worldviews, such as a Humanist visitor in Year 5, who helps children explore non-religious perspectives and ethical decision-making. These encounters encourage respectful dialogue and allow pupils to ask thoughtful questions about belief, identity, and values.

RE learning is also strengthened through engagement with diversity beyond the local area. Trips to diverse communities and contextual visits support pupils in developing a deeper understanding of lived religion and belief in modern Britain. In Year 6, pupils studying Racism and Religion explore how stereotypes, prejudice, and discrimination can develop, and how these can be challenged and overturned. This learning helps pupils reflect critically on assumptions, promotes respect, and supports the development of inclusive attitudes.

Other ways in which RE learning extends beyond the curriculum include:

- Collaborative links with local community or faith groups to support shared events or celebrations.
- Creative opportunities such as drama, music, or art inspired by religious stories, rituals, and festivals.
- Engagement with national and global awareness days, such as Holocaust Memorial Day, Diwali, Ramadan, and Easter, to explore history, belief, and shared human values.
- Participation in sustainable or ethical projects inspired by teachings on stewardship, care for creation, and social justice.

Through these experiences, children develop not only secure knowledge of religion and worldviews but also a practical understanding of how beliefs and values shape actions within communities and the wider world. RE beyond the curriculum supports pupils in becoming reflective, empathetic, and confident individuals who are prepared to live respectfully and responsibly in a diverse society.

Skills Progression

North Yorkshire Agreed Syllabus – Progression grid

Aims in RE: A progression grid	At the end of KS1 most pupils will be able to:	At the end of key stage 2 most pupils will be able to:
<p>Know about & Understand A1. Describe, explain and analyse beliefs, and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities;</p>	<p>Recall and name different beliefs and practices, including festivals, worship, rituals and ways of life, in order to find out about the meanings behind them;</p>	<p>Describe and make connections between different features of the religions and world views they study, discovering more about celebrations, worship, pilgrimages and the rituals which mark important points in life in order to reflect thoughtfully on their ideas;</p>
<p>Know about & Understand A2. Identify, investigate and respond to questions posed by, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and world views;</p>	<p>Retell and suggest meanings to some religious and moral stories, exploring and discussing sacred writings and sources of wisdom and recognising the communities from which they come;</p>	<p>Describe and understand links between stories and other aspects of the communities they are investigating, responding thoughtfully to a range of sources of wisdom and to beliefs and teachings that arise from them in different communities;</p>
<p>Know about & Understand A3. Appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning;</p>	<p>Recognise some different symbols and actions which express a community's way of life, appreciating some similarities between communities;</p>	<p>Explore and describe a range of beliefs, symbols and actions so that they can understand different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning;</p>
<p>Express and Communicate B1. Explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;</p>	<p>Ask and respond to questions about what communities do, and why, so that they can identify what difference belonging to a community might make;</p>	<p>Observe and understand varied examples of religions and world views so that they can explain, with reasons, their meanings and significance to individuals and communities;</p>
<p>Express and Communicate B2. Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value;</p>	<p>Observe and recount different ways of expressing identity and belonging, responding sensitively for themselves;</p>	<p>Understand the challenges of commitment to a community of faith or belief, suggesting why belonging to a community may be valuable, both in the diverse communities being studied and in their own lives;</p>
<p>Express and communicate B3. Appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion;</p>	<p>Notice and respond sensitively to some similarities between different religions and world views;</p>	<p>Observe and consider different dimensions of religion, so that they can explore and show understanding of similarities and differences between different religions and world views;</p>

<p>Gain & deploy skills: C1. Find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively;</p>	<p>Explore questions about belonging, meaning and truth so that they can express their own ideas and opinions in response using words, music, art or poetry;</p>	<p>Discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, applying ideas of their own thoughtfully in different forms including (e.g.) reasoning, music, art and poetry;</p>
<p>Gain & deploy skills: C2. Enquire into what enables different communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all;</p>	<p>Find out about and respond with ideas to examples of co-operation between people who are different;</p>	<p>Consider and apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the well-being of all, responding thoughtfully to ideas about community, values and respect;</p>
<p>Gain & deploy skills: C3. Articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain reasons why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.</p>	<p>Find out about questions of right and wrong and begin to express their ideas and opinions in response.</p>	<p>Discuss and apply their own and others' ideas about ethical questions, including ideas about what is right and wrong and what is just and fair, and express their own ideas clearly in response.</p>

Understanding Christianity – end of phase outcomes and progression

Teaching and learning approach	At the end of KS1 most pupils will be able to:	At the end of lower key stage 2 most pupils will be able to:	At the end of upper key stage 2 most pupils will be able to:
<p>Element 1 – Making sense of the text</p> <p>Developing skills of reading and interpretation ;understanding how Christians interpret, handle and use biblical texts; understanding of meaning of texts for Christians</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognise that God, Creation, Incarnation and Salvation are part of a big story of the bible. Identify at least two different types of texts from the Bible: for example a story, a parable, a gospel account of Jesus' life and instructions about how to behave. Tell stories from the Bible and recognise a link with a concept: for example, Creation, Incarnation, Gospel and Salvation Give clear accounts of what the texts mean to Christians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Order at least 5 key concepts of the bible's big story List 2 distinguishing features of at least 3 different types of biblical text. For example Gospel, parable, letter Make clear links between biblical texts and the key concepts studied. Offer suggestions about what texts might mean and give examples of what the texts studied mean to Christians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Outline the timeline of the big story of the bible, explaining the place within it of the core concepts studied Identify at least 5 different types of biblical texts, using technical terms accurately Explain connections between biblical texts and key concepts studied, using theological terms Taking account of the contexts, suggest meanings for biblical texts studied and compare their ideas with ways in which Christians interpret the biblical texts, showing awareness of different interpretations

<p>Element 2 – Understanding the impact</p> <p>Examining ways in which Christians respond to biblical texts and teachings and how they put their beliefs into action in diverse ways within the Christian community and the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give at least 3 examples of ways in which Christians use biblical concepts, stories and texts to guide their beliefs, in their individual lives and in their church communities • Give at least 3 examples of how Christians put their beliefs into practice in church worship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make simple links between bible texts and concepts studied and how Christians live in their whole lives and in the Church community • Describe how Christians show their beliefs in worship and in the way they live 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make clear connections between Bible texts and concepts studied with what Christians believe, how Christians worship and how Christians behave in their whole lives, their church communities and in the wider world • Show how Christians put their beliefs into practice in different ways; for example in different denominations
<p>Element 3 - Making connections</p> <p>Evaluating, reflecting on and connecting the texts and concepts studied and discerning possible connections between these and pupil's own lives and ways of understanding the world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Think, talk and ask questions about whether the text has something to say to them, exploring different ideas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise questions and suggest answers about how far the big ideas explored in the bible and the concepts studied might make a difference to how pupils think and live • Make links between some of the stories and teachings in the Bible and life in the world today, expressing some ideas of their own clearly 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify ideas arising from their study of texts and concepts and comment on how these are helpful or inspiring. Justifying their responses • Weigh up how biblical ideas, teachings and beliefs relate to the issues, problems and opportunities of their own lives and the world today, developing insights of their own.