Westbury C of E Junior School

Religious Education Policy

"Let your light shine." – Matthew 5:16

This policy is to be read in conjunction with the vision, values and Christian character of the school. At the heart of Westbury C of E Junior School is the belief that every child should be supported to flourish, grow in confidence and fulfil their potential. Our approach is underpinned by our values:

Respect Care Inspire

Policy Information

Policy information	Details
Status	Draft for governing body approval
Prepared	3 November 2026
Subject leader	Aleks Young, Assistant Headteacher and RE Subject Lead
Headteacher	Lindsay Clough
Agreed syllabus	Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025
Principal teaching resource	Oak National Academy
Approval date	To be completed by the governing body
Review	Annually; next review November 2028

1 Purpose and school vision

Religious Education is a valued academic subject at Westbury Church of England Junior School. This policy establishes the entitlement of every pupil, including pupils in Wiltshire Class, to ambitious and accessible learning about religious and non-religious worldviews. It sets expectations for curriculum design, teaching, assessment and leadership across Years 3 to 6 and for age-appropriate provision for any younger pupils on roll.

Our Christian vision, "Let your light shine" (Matthew 5:16), shapes our commitment to every child's dignity and capacity to learn. Respect means listening carefully and representing beliefs fairly. Care means considering how beliefs affect people and communities. Inspire means encouraging curiosity, thoughtful questions and informed understanding of the world.

RE enables pupils to investigate belief and practice through evidence and enquiry. It is taught objectively, critically and pluralistically. Pupils are not expected to adopt Christianity or any other worldview, participate in religious observance or disclose private beliefs. Personal reflection is welcomed without assessing the worth of a pupil's faith or non-belief.

2 Aims

- Develop secure knowledge of Christianity as a diverse, living and global faith, alongside other religious and non-religious worldviews.
- Build understanding of beliefs, texts, practices and communities and the diversity, continuity and change within them.
- Teach pupils to investigate evidence, interpret sources, compare explanations and justify conclusions through theology, philosophy and social sciences.
- Provide a safe space to explore questions of identity, meaning, purpose and ethics and prepare pupils for respectful dialogue in a diverse society.

3 Statutory and diocesan framework

RE is a statutory part of the basic curriculum, although it is not a National Curriculum subject. As a maintained voluntary controlled Church of England school, we teach RE in accordance with the Wiltshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025. Relevant legislation includes the Education Act 2002, section 80; the Education Act 1996, section 375; and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, section 69, Schedule 19 and section 71.

Our policy draws on Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education guidance and the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE applicable from September 2026. The agreed syllabus determines the statutory curriculum; diocesan and national Church guidance informs our Church school entitlement. Oak Academy is teaching resource and does not replace the agreed syllabus.

RE and collective worship have distinct purposes and separate policies. Collective worship, assemblies, general PSHE, church services and school values activities do not substitute for RE. A visit or cross-curricular activity contributes to RE time only where it teaches explicit RE objectives and those objectives are assessed.

Where parents request denominational RE in place of agreed-syllabus RE, the Headteacher and governors consider the provisions applying to voluntary controlled schools under Schedule 19, with LA and diocesan advice. This is a separate matter from withdrawal and does not alter the normal entitlement to agreed-syllabus RE.

4 Curriculum time and Christianity entitlement

School timetables must protect dedicated RE time. In line with the current Church of England entitlement, leaders will secure at least 5% of taught curriculum time for RE and work towards an allocation close to 10%. This is a Church school expectation, distinct from the statutory requirement to provide RE. Leaders calculate the percentage using actual taught curriculum hours and review delivery, including any lessons displaced by other events.

Christianity will be the main religious worldview studied in each year group or phase and account for at least 50% of RE curriculum time. We demonstrate this through recorded teaching hours, not simply through the number or titles of units. Worship and church services are excluded from this calculation.

5 Curriculum content and core themes

At KS2, the curriculum includes sustained study of Christianity, Islam and Judaism and at least one of Sikhi, Buddhism or Sanatana Dharma, alongside other worldviews including non-religious perspectives. Our Oak-informed starting sequence includes all three additional religious traditions and Humanism. Rebalancing must preserve meaningful depth rather than reduce study to isolated festivals or facts.

School documentation uses the syllabus terminology Sikhi and Sanatana Dharma, while explaining alternative terms, including Sikhism and Hinduism, that pupils may encounter in sources. Terminology is taught carefully, recognising the varied ways people describe their own traditions. Humanism is one non-religious worldview and is not presented as representing everyone without a religion.

The five LA core themes identified in the supplied alignment audit organise our curriculum. Every unit plan identifies its principal theme and relevant secondary themes. They are revisited with increasing conceptual depth, vocabulary and independence.

Core theme	Curriculum emphasis
Views on the existence of God	Concepts of God, reasons for belief and non-belief, and non-theistic perspectives
Origins of the universe and responsibility for the environment	Accounts and interpretations of origins, creation, stewardship and environmental responsibility
Nature of humanity, belief, belonging, community and spirituality	Identity, religious and non-religious commitments, community, practice and spiritual expression
Journey of life, rites of passage and afterlife	Life stages, belonging, remembrance and sensitive study of beliefs about death and what may follow

Global issues, ethics, social justice, conflict, poverty, forgiveness and reconciliation	Moral reasoning, beliefs in action, justice, conflict and responses to suffering

6 Christianity and other lived worldviews

Christianity teaching develops connected understanding of God, creation, Jesus, biblical texts, salvation, the Church and Christian life. Pupils encounter interpretation and disagreement, denominational differences and examples from local, national and global communities. All Saints Church and White Horse Team partners can enrich learning without becoming the only examples of Christianity.

All traditions are studied as living and internally diverse. Teachers distinguish sacred texts, institutional teachings, personal interpretation and lived practice. Case studies avoid implying that every member of a tradition thinks or acts alike. The curriculum includes contemporary voices, accurately contextualised artefacts and local examples, while recognising that local demographics do not determine which traditions deserve study.

7 Disciplinary learning and enquiry

Theology explores beliefs, texts, teachings, sources of authority and their interpretations. Social sciences explore how people live, express and change their worldviews within communities and cultures. Philosophy explores questions, reasons, arguments, knowledge and ethics. Pupils learn which kinds of evidence and questions are appropriate to each approach and that a unit may draw on more than one lens.

Teachers use an enquiry cycle: establish a question and prior knowledge; encounter sources and lived examples; investigate and interpret evidence; compare and discuss explanations; then communicate a reasoned response and revisit the question. Explicit vocabulary teaching, retrieval and modelling enable pupils to build understanding over time.

Pupils distinguish knowledge of a worldview from their own response to it. Teachers invite personal reflection without requiring agreement or disclosure. Respectful disagreement is taught explicitly: pupils may question claims and interpretations while respecting people's dignity. Misconceptions, prejudice and inaccurate generalisations are addressed promptly.

8 Using and adapting Oak

Oak National Academy is the principal resource bank. Teachers select and adapt units against the agreed syllabus and the school's progression map.

Every medium-term plan states the enquiry question, syllabus theme, worldview content, prior learning, substantive knowledge, disciplinary focus, vocabulary, sources, assessment and access arrangements. Teachers select resources that advance the enquiry rather than use every available activity.

In Wiltshire Class, a 4 Year, mixed-age rolling programme. Repeated themes deepen learning rather than repeat the same tasks. Transition information from infant schools and to secondary schools helps staff identify prior learning and gaps.

9 Teaching and recording

Lessons use clear explanation, carefully chosen texts and stories, artefacts, images, discussion, questioning and examples of lived religion and belief. Visitors, educational visits and virtual encounters enrich explicit RE learning. Teachers check digital materials for accuracy, suitability and representation before use.

Spirituality floor books capture shared enquiries, questions, discussion, vocabulary and responses. They complement individual evidence and teacher assessment; a group record alone does not establish what every pupil understands. Evidence may include writing, annotated drawings, models, photographs of learning and accurately recorded oral or communication-supported responses.

10 Inclusion and Wiltshire Class

All pupils retain an RE entitlement, including those with SEND, disadvantaged pupils and pupils learning English as an additional language. Staff maintain ambitious subject goals and adapt the route to learning rather than routinely withdrawing pupils for interventions. Reading or writing barriers do not determine a pupil's capacity to understand RE.

Teachers use visuals, objects, concrete experiences, accessible texts, signing or communication aids, pre-teaching, structured talk, repetition and alternative recording. Pupils who need additional challenge investigate more demanding sources, interpretations and reasoning rather than simply completing extra tasks.

In Wiltshire Class, learning is responsive to developmental and communication needs. Carefully sequenced small steps and opportunities to revisit meaningful concepts are planned. As pupils work within a semi-formal curriculum teachers identify appropriate RE learning, meaningful religious and non-religious encounters and how progress will be recognised.

The Resource Base team and RE lead review the intended curriculum. They check access, worldview breadth and Christianity allocation separately from mainstream provision. Personalised outcomes and EHCP provision support participation but do not replace the subject entitlement. Any change of access or content is documented and reviewed.

11 Assessment and reporting

Assessment checks both substantive knowledge and disciplinary thinking against the taught curriculum. Teachers establish starting points, use retrieval and questioning during lessons, identify misconceptions and assess an enquiry response at the end of a unit. Responses should show increasing precision in explanation, comparison, interpretation and justification.

Assessment is proportionate and accessible. Staff can use oral, practical or communication-supported evidence where writing would mask understanding. Knowledge and reasoning are assessed; personal belief, religious practice, willingness to pray and strength of faith are not graded. Personal reflection is valued without awarding marks for a preferred worldview.

Staff moderate a sample of work termly via Pupil Book Study, including evidence from Wiltshire Class. Curriculum expectations guide judgements; obsolete levels are not used as a substitute for the current syllabus. Parents receive information on RE progress through the school's reporting arrangements annually.

12 Visits visitors and sensitive learning

RE visits and visitors have clear educational objectives and follow safeguarding and educational visit procedures. Staff brief contributors on age, access needs, content, impartial teaching and the distinction between education and worship. Pupils encounter personal perspectives as examples rather than as the sole authoritative voice of a tradition.

No pupil is required to perform a religious observance as part of RE. Families are told what a visit involves, including any separate act of worship and relevant consent arrangements. Sensitive topics, including death, suffering and identity, are planned with pastoral awareness. Staff do not ask pupils to represent a whole tradition, expose family beliefs or disclose personal experiences. Safeguarding concerns follow school procedures.

13 Parental right of withdrawal

Parents and carers with parental responsibility may withdraw their child from all or part of RE under section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. No reason is required, and choosing a Church school does not remove this right. The school respects a request without pressure to reconsider.

Contact the Headteacher through the school office on 01373 822695 or admin@westbury-jun.wilts.sch.uk, specifying whether withdrawal concerns the whole subject or particular parts. The school offers an optional discussion about the curriculum and practical arrangements. A written record assists implementation, but a written application or attendance at a meeting is not a condition of exercising the right.

The Headteacher records the scope of withdrawal, informs relevant staff and arranges appropriate supervision, normally on school premises. The school is not required to provide additional teaching or incur additional costs. Requests for alternative religious education are considered under the relevant statutory provisions, with advice where necessary. Arrangements are reviewed when circumstances change; withdrawal continues until the request is withdrawn and does not require annual renewal.

The RE withdrawal right does not extend generally to religious references arising in other curriculum subjects. Where RE is taught through a cross-curricular project, staff identify the RE elements so the withdrawal request can be implemented. Withdrawal from collective worship is a separate right, explained in the Collective Worship policy; a request about one does not automatically apply to the other.

14 Leadership professional development and governance

Governors approve this policy, ensure statutory RE provision and monitor entitlement, quality, resourcing and improvement. The Headteacher protects curriculum time and supports effective staffing. Aleks Young, RE Subject Lead. Class teachers remain responsible for accurate teaching, adaptation and assessment.

The RE lead draws on Wiltshire SACRE, Salisbury diocesan advice and RE networks to support subject knowledge and leadership. Staff receive guidance on disciplinary approaches, worldview diversity, sensitive questions and accessible assessment.