



Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

Date First Published	October 2024
Version	1
Last approved	October 2024
Review Cycle	Annual
Review Date	October 2025

An academy within:



“Learning together, to be the best we can be”



1. Scope

1.1. This policy applies to all schools within Nexus Multi Academy Trust and is designed to support academies in ensuring that their provision for Religious Education and Collective Worship is in line with statutory guidance and the requirements of their funding agreements. Each academy will have its own approach the delivery of the curriculum which is tailored to meet the needs of the pupils on roll.

1.2. The aims of religious education (RE) at the Willows school are:

- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other religions and consider how the beliefs of others impact on their lives and the lives of others.

1.3. Here at The Willows Religious Education is taught under the title Morals & Values to allow pupils to build on their experiences, discuss and think about the morality and values of religions through:

The intent

1.4. To introduce pupils to a developmentally appropriately wide scheme of work that has a varied approach to Religious Education. Pupils will be engaged, inspired, challenged and encouraged. They will be equipped with the knowledge and skills to:

- Ask and answer challenging questions
- Explore different religious beliefs, values and traditions, recognising and understanding the British Values strands underpins what it means to be British regardless of religious and the protected characteristics set out in the Equality Act 2010.
- Develop an understanding of the differing religious traditions, beliefs and practices that are followed in our multi-cultural society, to prepare pupils for adulthood in a multicultural Britain.
- Recognise the right of people to hold diverse beliefs and values and to develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people
- To benefit from opportunities to enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

The implementation



1.5. RE is an entitlement for all pupils and the school plans lessons to link with the termly topics, through an enquiry based approach to each unit which pupil's answers in their own way at the end. The Willows curriculum is designed and based on the demographic of the Rotherham area. The following religions have been selected:

- Christianity
- Islam
- Judaism
- Hinduism
- Humanism – themed throughout, not a stand-alone unit

1.6. The Willows curriculum allows for experiences in school and out through:

- Termly topics, topic days, school council, assemblies, clubs, sports, trips, visits and visitors, workshops, fund raising, and community links.
- Use of a bespoke curriculum that meets the needs of all learners, where upper school pupils RE is embedded in the PSHE curriculum to allow pupils to make links with modern day England. To allow for pupils to make a deeper understanding of their own faith and others.
- Promoting respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs through trips and visitors into schools to deliver engaging activities to pupils.
- Valuing the religious background of all members of the school community to encourage individuals to share their own experiences with others freely.

The impact

1.7. Through Religious Education learning at The Willows School, pupils will be able to:

- Make links between their own lives and those of others in their community and in the wider world. To question their thinking and make connections with worldviews.
- Understand how other people choose to live and why they choose to live in that way, accepting differences and challenging their views and understand religious diversity.
- Recognise and identify their own emotions which will help them to modify their responses to situations in a measured and successful way to be respectful and tolerant members of our society.



- The School promotes learning, personal growth, understanding and recognition of morals and values in religions and maximise the development of every pupil through AQA unit awards.

2. Ethos

- 2.1. All pupils in Nexus schools are entitled to a programme of Religious Education which meets their needs and enables them to make progress in learning. As a Nexus steering group the Willows School subject lead is looking towards delivering RE in line with a Rotherham Local Authority's Agreed Syllabus but suitable to meet the needs of a MLD SEND setting. We may choose to adopt a locally agreed syllabus, but are looking towards a more developing this further, through Nexus Steering group meetings and trialling units to ensure our curriculum is fit for purpose, with feedback at end of autumn term 2024 from staff delivering RE and pupils. Our intention is that Religious Education in Nexus schools and the Willows should explore authentic and central concepts from religions on the basis of what will connect with pupils' experiences and enable them to respond whilst being sufficiently challenging and aspirational through further collaborative work in the steering group.

3. The legal framework

- 3.1. Government Guidance - [Religious education \(RE\) and collective worship in academies and free schools](#)
- 3.2. Under the terms of their funding agreement with the Secretary of State for Education, all academies have to provide RE for all their pupils, except for those whose parents exercise the right of withdrawal, this is stated on the Religious Education page on the Willows school website. RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered pupils, including all pupils in reception classes and sixth form, but excluding:
- pupils in nursery schools or nursery classes in primary schools, not applicable in the Willows setting;
 - any person aged nineteen or above for whom further education is being provided at school; and
 - any person over compulsory school age who is receiving part-time education.



3.3. Funding Agreement – *please see each school's supplementary funding agreement which can be found on the [Nexus website](#).*

3.4. The Academy Trust, where practical must provide for the teaching of religious education and for acts of collective worship at the Academy. *(School's Supplementary funding agreement, para 2.HH)* At the Willows collective worship is under review and subject lead is to work with Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) lead to develop further and have a more timetabled approach, to meet each key stage in school.

a) provision must be made for religious education to be given to all pupils at the Academy and Willows School in accordance with the requirements for agreed syllabuses in section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph 2(5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998;

b) the Academy and Willows School complies with the requirements of regulation 5A of the Education (Special Educational Needs)(England)(Consolidation) Regulations 2001 as if it were a maintained school.

(School's Supplementary funding agreement, para 2.II)

3.5. The Academy Trust must comply with regulation 5A of the Education (Special Educational Needs)(England)(Consolidation) Regulations 2001 as if the Academy were a community or foundation special school, and as if references to "Religious Education" and to "Religious Worship" in that section were references to religious education and religious worship provided by the Academy in accordance with clause 2.II.

(School's Supplementary funding agreement, para 2.JJ)

Education Act 1996

3.6. (3) Every agreed syllabus shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996.

The Agreed Syllabus

3.7. An agreed syllabus is a religious education syllabus that is designed by a local authority's Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC). The syllabus, like the provision for RE in academies, must reflect that the religious traditions in Great Britain



are, in the main, Christian while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principle religions represented in Great Britain.

- 3.8. The Agreed Syllabus applies to pupils with SEND 'as far as it is practicable'.
- 3.9. Academies in Nexus are situated across different Local Authorities, each having its own Agreed Syllabus.
- 3.10. RE is a statutory part of the basic curriculum at the Willows and the legal requirement is to provide Religious Education is varied by section 71(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998: we provide RE 'so far as is practicable', with all children taking part unless withdrawn by their parents.
- 3.11. At The Willows School we strive to have a creative, engaging curriculum with good practice using the Willows Teaching and Learning Cycle in lessons and planning. Religious Education in school is:
- basing our bespoke curriculum on the local Rotherham syllabus taking into account the needs of pupils when planning the RE curriculum. This syllabus is under review and more work to be carried out by the academy RE steering group.
 - Therefore allowing us to adapting the RE curriculum to suit the needs of pupils by, for example, choosing content from the age group below the actual age of the learners. As well as selecting aspects of RE which connect with the lives and experiences of learners with special needs, appropriate to their abilities and understanding.

Collective Worship

- 3.12. Academies should follow paragraphs 50 to 88 of the government [guidance on collective worship in schools](#). The main points of this are detailed below:
- Each pupil (up to the age of 19) must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form, they have decided to withdraw themselves. This applies to academies with and without a religious designation.
 - Academies without a religious designation must provide collective worship that is wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character. A school can reflect the religious backgrounds represented in its community, as long as the majority of provision is broadly Christian.



- Academies without a religious designation can apply via the central government to the Secretary of State for exemption from providing broadly Christian collective worship for some or all of its pupils. In its application, it will be asked to give reasons for the application (such as consideration of the family background of pupils), details of consultation with governors and parents, and of proposals for future collective worship.
- At the Willows collective worship is under review this academic year and subject lead is working with the schools SMSC lead to develop further and have a more timetabled approach to collective worship.

4. Context and Curriculum

Curriculum Provision

- 4.1. Nexus schools span several local authorities and the pupils attending each school have varying needs. For this reason, there is no one size fits all approach to the subject content delivered through the RE curriculum. Each school is aware of the religious make up of its pupils and therefore plans curriculum content which matches this so that pupils can see themselves in the taught content and are able to bring personal knowledge to their learning.
- 4.2. In special schools the legal requirement to provide Religious Education is varied by section 71(7) of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998: special schools should provide RE 'so far as is practicable', with all children taking part unless withdrawn by their parents. It is also good practice for special schools to:
 - take into account the needs of their pupils when planning the RE curriculum;
 - adapt the RE curriculum to suit the needs of their pupils by, for example:
 - choosing content from the age group below the actual age of the learners;
 - selecting aspects that connect with the lives and experiences of learners with special needs, appropriate to their abilities and understanding;
 - ensuring sensory learning strategies are implemented rather than discussion or written tasks.



- 4.3. A Nexus RE curriculum has been produced which takes account of the Agreed Syllabus for Rotherham. This covers content for pupils working at an age-related expectation from 3 years to 14 years. This curriculum is available for use by all Nexus schools and short-term planning will be tailored to the individual needs of the pupils. The Willows RE subject is part of the RE steering group and working towards a more accessible and SEND appropriate curriculum and is trialling units of work that includes elements of deeper thinking this academic year.
- 4.4. An alternative curriculum is also available for use which is based on the '[Big Ideas for RE](#)' approach. This curriculum provides content for pupils who are not yet engaged in subject specific study through to those working at the Key Stage 5 standard. This curriculum has a thematic approach allowing pupils to acquire a deeper understanding of the subject matter across the broader areas of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) aspects of the curriculum.

Pre Formal Curriculum

- 4.5. Pupils in some Nexus schools will not be engaged in subject specific study and will be assessed using the Engagement Model. The Engagement Model celebrates the different abilities of pupils not engaged in subject specific study. This intention is always appropriate for RE. It enables the collection of qualitative information and evidence that should inform a teacher's assessment of their pupils' evidence of progress in the following areas:
- the effective use of their senses, including the use of both near and distant senses and the use of sensory integration;
 - the application of physical (motor) skills to permit active participation in new experiences;
 - states of emotional wellbeing to facilitate sustained motivation to learn;
 - communication and language skills to inform thought processes.
- 4.6. Pupils working at this level will still access the curriculum for Religious Education but will experience it through a more sensory approach. The Willows school this academic year has no pupils working below subject specific level in RE.

School websites

4.7. *All academies should publish:*

- *the content of the curriculum in each academic year for every subject, including mandatory subjects such as religious education (RE) – this applies even if it is taught as part of another subject or known by another name.*



- *information to make parents and carers aware they have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE”*
- *the Willows school website contains the RE curriculum as well informing parents and carers they have the right to withdraw their child from all or part of RE lessons.*

[What academies and further education colleges must or should publish online - Government](#)

5. Collective Worship

"Collective worship in schools should aim to provide the opportunity for pupils to worship God, to consider spiritual and moral issues and to explore their own beliefs; to encourage participation and response, whether through active involvement in the presentation of worship or through listening to and joining in the worship offered; and to develop community spirit, promote a common ethos and shared values, and reinforce positive attitudes."

paragraphs 50 to 88 of the government [guidance on collective worship in schools](#)

- 5.1. Each pupil must take part in a daily act of collective worship unless they have been withdrawn by their parents, or if in the sixth form they have decided to withdraw themselves. The legislation for collective worship exists to enable pupils, wherever possible, to share a single act of collective worship, while ensuring that worship is appropriate for the pupils taking part. In special schools, this should be fulfilled as far as is reasonably practical and may take the form of 'Candle Time' or form time in classrooms where pupils collectively take time to reflect and review aspects of their learning through the school's SMSC curriculum.
- 5.2. At the Willows collective worship is under review this academic year and subject lead is working with the schools SMSC lead to develop further and have a more timetabled approach to collective worship.

6. Roles and responsibilities

Trust/Governance

- 6.1. The Trust and/or local governors should ensure that each school is meeting statutory duties in line with this policy and that provision is made for all pupils to engage in Religious Education and Collective Worship.



Headteachers

- 6.2. Headteachers should ensure that there is an appropriate curriculum, including access to Collective Worship, in place for all pupils at the school. They are also responsible for making sure that they publish the required details about the RE curriculum and should also ensure that parents and carers are aware of their right to withdraw their children from Religious Education and Collective worship. Headteachers should ensure that subject leaders have access to high quality CPD to support them in the leadership of their subject across the school and enable them to provide advice and guidance to other members of staff.

Subject Lead

- 6.3. The RE subject lead (or person with responsibility for the oversight of RE) should ensure that the agreed curriculum for RE is consistently delivered and should monitor the quality of the education provided with school leaders. They should offer support for staff delivering RE and Collective Worship and should access and provide CPD where required.
- 6.4. The Willows subject lead has identified after non specialist teacher of RE areas for CPD and this is to take place on a termly basis. Subject lead is to complete a learning walk and book look termly.

Class teachers

- 6.5. Class teachers are responsible for delivering high quality RE lessons and ensuring that pupils in their class are making progress. Class teachers are often the key people to talk to parents about their children's access to RE and should therefore be well informed about the legal requirements. Class teachers should be able to speak to the subject leader of the Headteacher where they are unsure of the provision made for pupils in their classes.
- 6.6. The Willows subject lead has identified after non specialist teacher of RE areas for CPD and this is to take place on a termly basis. Subject lead is to complete a learning walk and book look termly.

7. Quality assurance

External QA



- 7.1. As there are currently no schools within Nexus with a religious character who are subject to a Section 48 inspection through the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist School (SIAMS) framework. Provision for RE and Collective Worship will be inspected through Ofsted's Education Inspection Framework. This may be through the inspection of the Quality of Education but will be considered in the inspection of Personal Development.

Trust QA

- 7.2. QA from the Trust will come through the work of the Executive Assurance Partners and Executive Regional Directors linked to the school and through the Trust's audit process. Aspects of Quality Assurance will be identified through the Collaborative School Improvement Framework and priorities may arise as part of the Annual Support and Challenge Board.
- 7.3. RE subject lead is working with Rebecca Allard, Nexus Executive Assurance Partner as part of the RE steering group, to develop and create a SEND appropriate curriculum to meet the specific needs of pupils at the Willows. New RE curriculum to be in place after consultation with Willows school SLT, subject lead and feedback from non-specialist RE teachers.

School QA

- 7.4. Each school should have its own process for the internal quality assurance of RE and Collective Worship. This process should celebrate the strength in provision and the quality of education that pupils receive and also outline the areas for development in the delivery of the subject.
- 7.5. At the Willows collective worship is under review and subject lead is working with Willows school SMSC lead to develop further and have a more timetabled approach to collective worship.



Appendix A

Useful websites

RE Online – Festival Calendar

[Festival Calendar - RE:ONLINE \(reonline.org.uk\)](http://reonline.org.uk)

NATRE – National Association of Teachers for RE

[National Association of Teachers of Religious Education \(natre.org.uk\)](http://natre.org.uk)

RE Today

[RE Today supporting Religious Education in schools](http://re-today.org.uk)

Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education (SACRE):

Rotherham - [Committee details - Rotherham Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education \(SACRE\) - Rotherham Council](http://rotherham.gov.uk)

Sheffield - [SACRE | Christians and Sheffield Schools \(cass-su.org.uk\)](http://cass-su.org.uk)

Doncaster - [Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education \(SACRE\) - City of Doncaster Council](http://doncaster.gov.uk)

Nottinghamshire - [Nottinghamshire standing advisory council for religious education \(SACRE\) | Nottinghamshire County Council](http://nottinghamshire.gov.uk)

Government - [RE and collective worship in academies and free schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

Big Ideas for RE - [Big Ideas for RE - Free Religious Education Curriculum for schools](http://bigideasforre.org.uk)