



Religious Education and Collective Worship Policy

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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. The statutory guidance for Religious Education (RE) in 2025 emphasizes the importance of equipping pupils with an understanding of religious ideas and experiences, through a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based, preparing pupils for their future responsibilities and experiences.

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 units, through an enquiry-based approach in 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 units, topic days, 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 post 16 pupils RE is embedded in the Preparing for Adulthood curriculum to allow pupils to make links with modern day Britain, as well as a multifaith AQA unit award. Thus, allowing for pupils to make a deeper understanding of their own faith and that of others, recognising the importance of respect and tolerance of others beliefs.
- Promoting respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs through experiences, 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.



- Be taught the importance of equipping them with an understanding of religious ideas and experiences, through a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based, preparing pupils for their future responsibilities and experiences.
- Understand how others choose to live and why they choose to live in that way, accepting differences and challenging their views and understand religious diversity, as well as challenge misconceptions.
- 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 pupils deeper understanding 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. The delivery RE through the National Oak Academy scheme but adapted to meet the needs of the Willows MLD SEND setting. Our intention is that Religious Education in Nexus schools and the Willows will 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 challenged. In line with the statutory guidance for Religious Education (RE) in 2025 the Willows recognises the importance of equipping pupils with an understanding of religious ideas and experiences, through a curriculum that is balanced and broadly based, preparing pupils for their future responsibilities and experiences.

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 embedded daily during lunchtime prayer and has timetabled approach linked with Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) to develop and further enhance experiences on a weekly basis, to meet of 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. At the Willows Religious education is taught through the Oak National Academy scheme of work which better meets the needs of pupils.

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 pupils 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 Oak National Academy scheme of work taking into account the needs of pupils at the Willows when planning the RE curriculum.
- adapted 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 embedded daily during lunchtime prayer and has timetabled approach linked with Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC) to develop further and enhance experiences on a weekly basis, to meet of each key stage in school.

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 is based on the Oak National Academy scheme of work and adapted for our SEND setting into an appropriate curriculum with units of work that includes elements of deeper thinking understanding of the subject matter through an enquiry-based approach.

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.
- At the Willows collective worship is embedded daily during lunchtime prayer and has timetabled approach linked with Social, Moral, Spiritual and Cultural (SMSC)



to develop further and enhance experiences on a weekly basis, to meet of each key stage in school.

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 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 continuous professional development (CPD) where required.
- 6.4. The Willows subject lead has identified non specialist teachers within the setting areas for CPD and this is to take place on a termly basis. Subject lead completes medium term planning checks, learning walks and book looks 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 or the Headteacher where they are unsure of the provision made for pupils in their classes.



- 6.6. The Willows subject lead has identified the schools non specialist teacher of RE areas for CPD and this is to take place on a termly basis. Subject lead completes medium term planning checks, learning walks and book looks 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 at the Willows worked with Rebecca Allard, Nexus Executive Assurance Partner as part of the RE steering group, and has developed and adapted the Rotherham syllabus to meet the specific needs of pupils at the Willows. The bespoke RE curriculum is now embedded 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 embedded in daily worship at lunchtimes and through collaboration with Willows school SMSC lead a timetabled approach to collective worship through assemblies with clear focus is now in place through each key stage on a weekly basis.



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-sacre.org.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-sacre.org.uk)

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