



**POLICY FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**  
**2018**

## Religious Education (RE) Policy

**1 JOHN 4:21 - AND HE HAS GIVEN US THIS COMMAND:  
ANYONE WHO LOVES GOD MUST ALSO LOVE THEIR  
BROTHER AND SISTER.**

**PSALM 133:1 - OH, HOW WONDERFUL, HOW PLEASING IT  
IS WHEN GOD'S PEOPLE ALL COME TOGETHER AS ONE.**

(A song for David for going up to the Temple)

### 1 Aims and objectives

- 1.1 Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of life's most fundamental questions. At Homefield CofE V.C. Primary School we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions and world views. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religion and belief well as about religions.

The aims of Religious Education are to help children:

- develop an understanding of the word religion;
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues in life experiences;
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other major world religions and world views.
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life;
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and to appreciate the cultural differences in Britain today;
- develop investigative and research skills and to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other peoples' views and to celebrate the diversity in society.
- enhance a pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding and appreciation.

### 2 The legal position of religious education

- 2.1 Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the *1988 Education Reform Act* (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on Norfolk LA's Agreed Syllabus 2012 and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are

in the main Christian and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions. All of the children in our school will have had the opportunity to achieve the basic outcomes listed in point 6 of the 'Statement of Entitlement' provided by the Board of Education (**appendix 1**)

### **3 Teaching and learning style**

- 3.1 The Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2012 advocates: "A broad understanding of enquiry-based learning which encompasses an environment in which learning is driven by a process of enquiry owned by the children. This syllabus advocates that enquiry-based learning 'inspires children to learn for themselves, bringing a real research-oriented approach to the subject'" (Dr Bill Hutchings, University of Manchester).
- We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.
  - Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali, Passover etc. to develop their religious thinking. We organise visits to local places of worship and invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children.
- 3.2 Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in class or assemblies.
- 3.3 We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:
- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
  - setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
  - grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
  - providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
  - using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.
  - mixing ability groupings to provide peer support.

### **4 Curriculum planning in religious education**

- 4.1 We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with Norfolk LA's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in religious education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.
- 4.2 We carry out the curriculum planning in religious education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each term during each class. The RE subject leader works out this plan in accordance with the 2012 Agreed Syllabus' programmes of study for Foundation stage, KS1 and KS2.

- 4.3 Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each half term. The RE subject leader writes some of these plans, with class teachers writing others using key resources, such as Understanding Christianity, and class teachers adapt them to suit their class. We ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus.
- 4.4 The teacher plans lessons with specific learning objectives with the help of the children. The content of these plans will differ from class to class, dependant on the line of enquiry that is created. S/he discusses them on an informal basis with the RE subject leader.
- 4.5 Pupils will have more opportunities within RE to write more at length. This amount will vary depending on pupil age.
- 4.6 Some planning has been resourced from ECRE, an RE planning HUB. These plans must be annotated and developed by teachers to enhance the provision.

## **5 Early Years and Foundation Stage**

- 5.1 We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the nursery and reception classes.
- 5.2 In these classes, religious education is taught through a scheme of work based on the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus called Growing Foundations. This scheme acts as an introduction to the key concepts that will be studied in depth at a later date. Aspects of religious education also form an integral part of the topic work covered during the year.

## **6 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

- 6.1 Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

## **7 Teaching religious education to children with special needs**

- 7.1 In our school we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE we ensure that we provide learning opportunities matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children.

## **8 Assessment and recording**

- 8.1 Through effective assessment and recording we aim to raise the standards of RE in our school. In our school we use the level descriptors and assessment material provided in the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2012. Each medium term plan has been cross referenced to the level descriptors.

Using observations, informal judgments, marking and levelled work, teachers will level each child in the class at the end of each unit using a best fit model. These records will then be passed to the RE Coordinator. Children will all receive a comment regarded their progress in the end of year report and at the end of each Key Stage, parents are informed of their child's RE standard.

(With the onset of a new agreed syllabus from September 2019 and assessment framework from September 2018. Our current RE leader is working on an evolved assessment system with the support of the local Diocese.)

## **9 Resources**

- 9.1 On the whole we have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in the staff room, where there is a box of equipment for each religion studied. There are age appropriate bibles or bible story books and a collection of religious artefacts, which we use to enrich teaching in religious education.

Understanding Christianity is a new teaching resource enabling the strengthening of religious literacy in RE. The key purpose of this project is to help all teachers support pupils in developing their own thinking and their understanding of Christianity, as a contribution to their understanding of the world and their own experience within it. We aim to see pupils leave school with a coherent understanding of Christian belief and practice. Pupils from 4-14 explore the significant theological concepts within Christianity as part of developing their wider religious, theological and cultural literacy. We seek to support teachers in developing their own knowledge and understanding of Christianity theology to be able to teach with confidence.

We also have access to the Diocesan Resource Centre at Diocesan House. Teachers are encouraged to use this resource and hire equipment as and when it is needed.

The RE Subject Leader has a budget for new resources as needed. Currently we have an RE leader with specific RE subject knowledge, enhanced through training. The Headteacher has also had this training and assists with the subject. We also, have a member of staff in place as an RE adviser, as they possess a subject knowledge enhancement qualification, as well as a degree in Theology.

## **10 Monitoring and review**

- 10.1 The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The RE Subject Leader and Headteacher regularly report to Governors.

*This policy was written in February 2018 and taken to Governors.*

*This policy will be reviewed in 2023 unless government legislation requires an earlier update.*

Signed: ..... (Headteacher)

Signed: ..... (Chair of Governors)

# Appendix 1

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS

A Statement of Entitlement from the  
Board of Education/National Society Council

This statement is intended as a guide for all involved in church schools and academies ensuring the teaching and learning of RE is treated with the importance and delivered with the excellence it deserves. It includes aims, outcomes, teaching and learning about Christianity, teaching and learning about other faiths and world views, curriculum balance, curriculum time, staff and outcomes for pupils. These areas raise the important issues for policy making for schools and dioceses. They can be used with parents and staff to promote understanding of the value of RE as well as to support curriculum development and syllabus writing where appropriate.

### Education and mission

1. The General Synod motion of 1999 affirmed that Church of England schools stand at the heart of the mission of the Church to the nation. This was followed by the Dearing Report ***The Way Ahead***, which looked in detail at how this was to be exemplified in the life of the schools.
2. ***Going for Growth*** (endorsed by General Synod in 2010) examined the work of the church with children and young people within the mission framework. The final Action Points have significant application to schools, especially the first: “*the Church at national, diocesan and local level is called to work towards every child and young person having a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and the person of Jesus Christ*” (5.2)
3. The mission imperative was clearly stated at the first meeting of the National Society in 1811, when the commitment to set up Church of England schools across the nation was undertaken specifically so that “the national religion (should be) the foundation of national education”.
4. Consistent with this understanding of mission church schools put spiritual development at the heart of the curriculum. All members of the school community should experience Christianity through the life of the schools, as well as through the taught curriculum

### Religious Education

5. Religious Education is central to this understanding of education and mission. The aims of Religious Education **in church schools** are:
  - To enable pupils to encounter Christianity as the religion that shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today
  - To enable pupils to learn about the other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents
  - To develop understanding of religious faith as the search for the expression of truth
  - To contribute to the development of pupils’ own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs.

6. The outcomes for pupils at the end of **their** education in church schools are that they are able to:
- Think theologically and explore ultimate questions
  - Reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief
  - Develop the skills to analyse, interpret and apply the Bible text
  - Recognise that faith is a particular way of understanding and responding to God and the world
  - Analyse and explain the varied nature and traditions of the Christian community
  - Make a well informed response to Christianity
  - Respect those of all faiths in their search for God
  - Reflect critically on areas of shared belief and practice between different faiths
  - Enrich and expand their understanding of truth
  - Reflect critically and express their views on the human quest and destiny

### **Teaching and Learning Christianity**

7. Christianity should be the majority study in RE in every school. In church schools that should be clearly adhered to. Understanding Christianity as a living religion is the foundation of pupils' Religious Education in schools. It is important that this draws on the richness and diversity of Christian experience in the breadth of its Anglican and other denominational forms, and in the variety of worldwide forms. The encounter must be an open one which stems from and instils respect for different views and interpretations and in which real dialogue and education takes place. Pupils will be enabled to deepen their understanding of God as encountered and taught by Christians.

### **Teaching and learning about other faiths and world views**

8. Church schools have a duty to foster an accurate and increasing understanding of world religions and world views. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also be able to appreciate the faith of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own beliefs and practices. These outcomes must contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice.

### **Curriculum balance**

9. Christianity will form the majority study in all church schools
- KS 1 – 3 at least 2/3 Christianity
  - KS 4 the study of Christianity will be a significant and substantial part of any public qualification
  - KS 5 the opportunity to continue the study of Christianity at As and A level

### **Curriculum time**

10. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to RE. Normally this should be between 5% and 10%.

## **Staffing**

11. It should be a priority in church schools to build up staff expertise in RE
  - At least one member of staff should have specialist RE qualifications
  - All teachers teaching RE to have appropriate professional development
  - RE to have equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing

## **Outcomes for pupils**

12. Pupil achievement in RE should equal or be better than comparable subjects, and all pupils should take a recognised and appropriate qualification at KS 4