

Religious Education Policy



Date of Amendment: March 2025

Review Date: March 2028

Religious Education Policy

Rationale

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School we aim to always create a positive and challenging learning environment that stimulates thought-provoking questioning to enable and prepare children for the wider-world. Religious Education (RE) enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. RE at our school both underpins and reflects the school mission statement and provokes Christian values. It is an integral part of our school day, both implicit and explicit. We believe that RE helps children to explore their own faith and the faith of others in a way that will lead to religious and cultural harmony.

Intent

Following Chelmsford Diocesan guidance and consultation, we have developed a bespoke Scheme of Work for our school. This meets the Essex agreed syllabus and incorporates resources from Understanding Christianity and Saffron Academy Trust. Using the 'learning through a lens' approach children will examine faiths and world views from many different angles. We aim to develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, as well as address the fundamental questions of life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions and world views, especially those that are the main faiths of the children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding.

Our intent for RE is that during the course of their time at the school children will:

- 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 found in Britain and the world.
- Develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition including developing personal awareness of their own attitudes and beliefs.
- Be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life.
- 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 of society.
- Promote rigorous theological enquiry.
- Promote and explore spirituality.
- Promote our school Character Education values.

Implementation

Organisation

- RE is taught on a weekly basis for over one hour.
- Children are taught as a whole class and tasks are adapted according to age (EYFS, KS1 & KS2) and ability with three levels of challenge available for each main task.

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"Let all that you do be done in love." 1 Corinthians 16:14

- All lessons are taught in accordance with the Essex agreed syllabus as agreed by the Governing Body, and we follow a bespoke scheme of work.
- In KS1 and KS2, RE topics are taught as a two-year rolling programme, as specified in the school's curriculum maps.
- Each unit is planned around the use of one of three RE lenses: **Theology**, thinking through believing; **Philosophy**, thinking through thinking; and **Humans Social Science**, thinking through living. The unit, lasting between 5-8 weeks, explore a 'big question'. Each unit of work is spent exploring this big question in more detail with children comparing their answer at the beginning and end of a topic.

Adaptation and Inclusion

Teachers deliver the RE curriculum through a range of activities that take all abilities and needs into account. RE lessons include writing, discussions, pictorial representations, drama and other creative mediums to ensure all abilities are catered for. The activities are adapted with levels of challenge marked C1/C2/C3 in the format that children are familiar with from other subject areas. Class teachers also have the freedom to further differentiate according to the needs of their individual pupils where required.

Parents are informed in the school's prospectus that they have the right to withdraw their children from religious education and/or collective worship as set out by the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act. 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 Governing Body. However, religious education and collective worship are central to the character and purpose of the school and withdrawal is discouraged wherever possible.

Disability Equality Scheme

At St Thomas of Canterbury Church of England Primary School we recognise our duties and responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act as outlined in our Disability Equality Scheme and Action Plan. (December 2007). It is our aim that through specific and accurate planning, resource allocation, differentiated teaching and use of adult intervention and support (where necessary), that every child irrespective of disability, will have full access to the curriculum and feel and be enabled to participate actively in developing to their full potential their skills, knowledge and understanding. We will ensure that all 'reasonable adjustments' are made to help both children and adults with identified special needs and disabilities to participate in the learning and teaching of the RE curriculum.

Information and Involvement of Parents and the Community

- Parents are sent a copy of the topics/themes covered every term in the 'Parent Curriculum Guides' which outlines the topics covered in RE amongst the rest of the curriculum.
- Visiting clergy and representatives from other faiths and world views may attend the school in person or virtually to support the curriculum.
- Parents (after a DBS check) also have the opportunity to volunteer to support on trips to various places of worship.

Resources

- The Chelmsford Diocese website is available online for the syllabus and suggested resources for the lessons.
- Saffron Academy Trust RE scheme and 'Understanding Christianity' are the main resources used by staff to support and plan their teaching of RE.
- The school library has a selection of books about world religions and world views.
- There are a wide variety of Bibles in school, suitable for a range of ages and abilities.
- The school has some artefacts relating to Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Christianity.
- Many resources are now signposted and available online.

Training

- INSET and staff professional development meetings (PDMs) occur throughout the year and when appropriate.
- Courses run by the Diocese of Chelmsford are attended by the RE Subject Leader as appropriate, and disseminated to other teaching staff.
- Meetings are held regularly (termly) with the RE Adviser and Diocesan Schools Adviser.
- The school is part of a local cluster group supporting each other with the implementation of the curriculum and local moderation and assessment.

Contribution of Religious Education to Cross-Curricular Links

English:

RE contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. We look for opportunities to use texts with religious themes or content, which encourages discussion, and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening.

History:

Where appropriate, the historical context of topics covered within RE are explored to further aid the understanding of pupils. Links are made to topics covered within history lessons and the historical religious beliefs of different people groups will often come up within class discussion.

Science:

In Upper Key Stage 2 children explore links between science and Christianity and consider whether scientific beliefs conflict with religious ones or compliment them. This involves learning more about scientific discoveries and the scientists who made them.

Computing:

We use computing where appropriate in RE. The children find, select and analyse information using the internet. They use iPads to access a range of apps and programmes to enhance their learning.

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Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE):

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our diverse society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

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.

Assessment and Recording

We assess children's work in RE by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and the children complete a flashback four once a unit which recaps their previous learning. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the RE milestones; these are milestones for the end of Year 4 and Year 6 which are formally completed at the mid-year and end of year stage. By the end of the year each child will be assessed as either 'working towards', 'working at' or achieving 'greater depth' in RE against age related expectations (ARE). Children's effort in RE lessons is also evaluated and reported on the end of year report to parents.

Review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years and in line with The Church of England and/or Chelmsford Diocesan advice and guidance.