

**POLICY NAME: RE Policy**

**DATE AGREED: January 2020**

**REVIEW DATE: January 2023**

## Religious Education (RE) Policy

### Learning Together for Life

Being a **caring, inclusive family**, that **believes** in **creativity** and **challenge** in our learning whilst being **inspiring** and **respectful** to others is of high importance to all at our schools.

#### RE Policy Statement

Religious education is unique in the academy curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'. We have adopted the principles of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (Norfolk).

Our academies are inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005, and it will be inspected under its previous designation as a Voluntary Controlled or Voluntary Aided school.

#### Aims

The broad aims of religious education (RE) are set out within the locally agreed syllabus and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2016). The purpose of religious education in all academies is to promote religious literacy. By this we mean that pupils are able to hold balanced and well informed conversations about religion and belief.

The aims of religious education are to enable pupils to:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British Culture and heritage.
- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Know about and understand other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- Show a well-informed, balanced and respectful attitude to religions and world views.
- Engage in meaningful and well-informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

#### Curriculum

The curriculum for RE is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences.

**Theology:** This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

**Philosophy:** This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

Human/Social sciences: This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached. In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that:

- At KS 1 pupils study primarily Christianity and Judaism, with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and worldviews.
- At KS 2 pupils study primarily Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and worldview.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2016), 2/3 curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly or blocked teaching of RE, and through additional RE days which focus on an aspect of the Christian Faith. The use of the resource Understanding Christianity particularly supports the development of the theological perspective.

### **Teaching RE**

Religious education uses an enquiry-based approach to learning. This is based on the best practice framework in the Norfolk agreed syllabus. This approach enables pupils to focus on an enquiry question which explores aspects of the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences. A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure learning is challenging and relevant including the use of art, music, thinking skills, artefacts and stories.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

### **Assessment**

Pupils are assessed in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within RE.

In broad terms the following principles have been applied to each aspect in terms of what it means to become more religiously literate:

- Extending knowledge and understanding from the concrete and familiar to the abstract and complex
- Moving from simple ideas and beliefs/concepts to making connections between them and placing these within a bigger picture or meta-narrative
- Demonstrating increasing layers of interpretation of religion, religions, beliefs and worldviews through engagement with a broadening and increasingly complex range of information
- Showing an increasing ability to critically question and form coherent, logical arguments, including increasing recognition of divergences of opinion about and the controversial nature of religion and belief
- Expressing a broadening understanding of diversity in terms of the nature of religion, religions and worldviews

Pupils are assessed using age-related expectations. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art work, discussion.... Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess all pupils in their class. We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject and to plan future work. In addition, pupils are encouraged to use self-assessment to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding. A comment about their progress is made in the annual report to parents.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

The co-ordinator will monitor RE provision and standards within the academy through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff. The co-ordinator is responsible for contributing to the academy's self-evaluation process.

### **The Right of Withdrawal from RE**

Our academies are inclusive communities but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the principal/head teacher of their academy to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education.

### **Managing the right of withdrawal**

- Each academy will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- Each academy may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the academy, although an academy should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the academy will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.
- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, academies have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on academy premises.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided

at the academy in question, or the pupil could be sent to another academy where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.

- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from academy for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at academy resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of an academy session.

### **Entitlement and Inclusion - EAL, SEN, More Able**

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum at an appropriate level. Teachers should include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child should be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self-esteem.

### **The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims**

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'.

Examining and exploring religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding. Personal development and well-being RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion, RE makes an important contribution promoting community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive academy ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.