



Religious Education Policy

Approved by: Full Governing Body

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At St Leonard's VA Lower School our Christian faith and values form the basis of everything we do. We are '*growing and learning together with God's love*'.

Our school community is inspired by the Parable of the Sower. We are encouraged to think about and understand that the smallest things have the greatest potential when they are provided with the best conditions for growth.

We aim to provide a school community built on the foundations of our 'Christian Values', where all children feel safe, secure, welcome, included, challenged and nurtured and where they can grow personally, academically, socially and spiritually.

We are committed to providing a high quality RE curriculum, which is engaging, inclusive and inspiring, where pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, and reflect on their own ideas and ways of living. Ultimately supporting our pupils to grow and flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10)

RE Policy Statement

Religious Education is unique in the 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'.

Aims

The broad aims of Religious Education are set out within the locally Agreed **Syllabus** for Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2019).

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils can build on their knowledge of religion and worldviews to

1. Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs and ideas, so that they can:
 - identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions and worldviews, using appropriate vocabulary
 - explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities
 - recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation
2. Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs and ideas, so that they can:
 - examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways

- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world
 - appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning
3. Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:
- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses
 - challenge the ideas they study, and consider how these ideas might challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response
 - discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding

In achieving these aims, Religious Education contributes in a significant way to the flourishing of all children, allowing them to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). As a VA school, RE is taught in accordance with our Trust Deed.

Curriculum

We use Understanding Christianity and the RE Agreed Syllabus to support our teaching of Christianity, other Religions and Worldviews.

The use of the resource *Understanding Christianity* particularly supports the development of the theological perspective.

A sequential curriculum map has been designed in order to allow pupils to become religiously literate through developing, year on year, their knowledge and skills. Our Curriculum is a spiral curriculum aimed at developing mastery of knowledge.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2019), at least 60% of curriculum time is allocated to the teaching of Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly or blocked teaching of Religious Education, and through additional 'RE' days which focus on the Christian Faith and other worldviews

- At Key Stage One, pupils study Christianity, Judaism and Islam, with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and worldviews (eg. Humanism).
- At Key Stage Two pupils study Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism, with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and worldviews (Humanism and Hinduism).

Teaching RE

Religious Education uses an enquiry-based approach to learning. This is based on the best practice framework in Understanding Christianity and the Locally 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.

We use RE Today resources to support our curriculum and we subscribe to NATRE.

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

Assessment

In line with the school's assessment of other core subjects, teachers assess Religious Education half termly. Assessment will be based on work sampling and oral contributions to class discussions.

Pupils are assessed on their substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge.

Staff will use assessment grids to record an outcome at the end of each unit studied. Outcomes will be inputted and tracked, as with other core subjects and will be monitored by the RE subject leader, SLT and also reported to parents alongside attainment in English, Maths and Science at the end of the Academic Year.

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, questioning and quizzes.

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.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The co-ordinator will monitor provision and standards within the school through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff.

The co-ordinator is responsible for contributing to the school's self-evaluation process. In addition, the governing body monitor the role of Religious Education in upholding the Trust Deed of the school and its contribution to the Christian vision of the school.

Responsibilities for RE within each school (Headteachers and Governors)

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the local governing body and headteacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the aims of the RE curriculum;
- the subject is well-led and effectively managed;
- standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation;

- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD;
- clear information is provided on the school website about the RE curriculum;
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress;
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the headteacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to Religious Education. In these circumstances, headteachers might wish to seek advice from the Diocese.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

Our school is an inclusive community but recognises 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 headteacher of their academy to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education.

Managing the right of withdrawal

- Our school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from Religious Education are aware of the 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 Religious Education curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish;
- The school may 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 Religious Education without influence from the school, although the school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the 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 Religious Education is integrated in the curriculum, the school 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 Religious Education, the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on the premises;
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for Religious Education of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This Religious Education could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable Religious Education 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 Religious Education that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from the school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external Religious Education;
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the local authority is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at the school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

Role of the RE Leader

- To ensure that the RE policy is implemented and to keep up to date with reviews;
- To have oversight of the RE curriculum and keep up to date with local and national changes;
- To monitor, review and update resources;
- To monitor pupil progress and achievement;
- To maintain and build priorities set by the school;
- To develop links with the Church and Diocese;
- To coach, mentor and support teachers in developing their strengths in teaching RE, including planning, arranging and delivering CPD as appropriate; and
- To liaise with parents to ensure all children receive their entitlement.

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.

Parental and Community Involvement

Parents are encouraged to involve themselves in RE within each school. Parents are invited into the school to look at their children's work, and a report on their child's standard and progress in Religious Education is given out annually. The community is encouraged to support the teaching of the subject through visits and visitors, e.g.: the children visit the church to learn about concepts such as salvation.

Professional Development

Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

All teaching staff are trained in Understanding Christianity and the school seeks further training and development through the Diocese Education team.

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 Religious Education, 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

Religious Education 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

Religious Education 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. Effective Religious Education will promote community cohesion at each of these four levels.

The school community

Religious Education provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located

Religious Education provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community

A major focus of Religious Education is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community

Religious Education involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

Religious Education 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 school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

Monitoring and Review

The implementation and impact of the policy will be evaluated through the school’s self-evaluation processes. The policy will be reviewed every three years.