

Guidelines for Religious Education

Diocesan Board of Education Rationale

The Diocesan Board of Education in Derby has a commitment to enabling high quality, meaningful and transformative religious education (RE) in church schools across the diocese as it sees RE as a core part of a school's Christian distinctiveness. It recognises that RE continues to have a unique legal position in the curriculum as an academic subject, but it is also clear that in a church school its significance goes well beyond these two reasons. In considering how the diocesan purpose, '**The Kingdom of God: good news for all**', is lived out in our church schools, the DBE recognises that relevant RE, which offers pupils opportunities to deepen their understanding of other people's faith and beliefs and provides opportunities for God and faith to be discussed openly and honestly, also has a vital part to play in offering children and young people from Christian backgrounds the opportunity to grow as disciples.

RE in a church school should provide opportunities for children to understand what it means to be a religious believer in the world today and help them to understand how Christian beliefs inspire and underpin the values of the school community that they are a part of. RE in the church school should support children to recognise and act on the insights, principles, beliefs, attitudes and values that could influence, inspire or guide them in life.

Church of England Education Office: a 'Statement of Entitlement'

The Church of England has set down the following aims for RE in a Church of England School:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Opportunities in RE

In a Church of England school pupils should have opportunities to:

- Learn about and from the life, teaching and example of Jesus Christ through the gospels.

- Explore and discover Christianity locally, nationally and globally.
- Recognise and learn from diversity within Christianity.
- See the Christian faith in the context of religious diversity, learning about and from other major religions and beliefs in the UK and beyond.
- Face the challenges of diversity with respect.

Religious Education in Different Types of Church Schools

The 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum and that it is compulsory for all registered pupils.' RE encompasses non-religious world views.

Religious Education in Voluntary Aided (VA) schools

For Voluntary Aided Schools with a religious character, RE is the responsibility of the governing body. Provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School. The Diocesan Board of Education recommends that governors, in consultation with the Head teacher, adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus and supplement this with material from the Diocese to ensure that two thirds of the curriculum time is spent on Christianity. The DBE strongly recommend schools use the Understanding Christianity resource as it is of a very high quality and consistently receives excellent feedback from practitioners. The diocese through its RE Advisers and representatives on SACRE has contributed to the writing of these materials and is confident that they reflect the religious foundation of a Voluntary Aided school in Derby Diocese.

Religious Education in Voluntary Controlled (VC) and Foundation schools

Voluntary Controlled or Foundation Schools with a religious designation must arrange for RE to be delivered in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The DBE strongly recommend schools use the Understanding Christianity resource to support units teaching Christianity, as it is of a very high quality and consistently receives excellent feedback from practitioners.

Religious Education in an Academy

The requirements for RE in an academy with a religious foundation are specified in the funding agreement for that academy. For a VA school which converts to academy status the model funding agreement specifies that an academy with a religious designation must provide RE in accordance with the tenets of the particular faith specified in the designation. Foundation or Voluntary Controlled schools with a religious designation that convert to academy status must arrange for RE in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The DBE strongly recommend academies use the Understanding Christianity resource to support units teaching Christianity, as it is of a very high quality and consistently receives excellent feedback from practitioners.

The Contribution of RE to Other Curriculum Aims

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (SMSC)

SMSC prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. Learning about and from 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. Church schools are particularly concerned about the holistic development of children and young people - [Character Education](#) - and recognise that a good education is about forming people who have the moral strength and spiritual depth to live a fulfilled life in a society that is marked by rapid change, global competition and insecurity. RE should play a key role in this.

The school's Christian values

RE along with all the other subjects in the curriculum, should contribute to the promotion of the school's distinctively Christian values. Making connections between the values and learning in RE will bring about greater understanding of these values, where they come from and how they can be put into practice across a range of experiences.

Respect for All & Global Learning

RE makes an important contribution to a school's responsibility to promote respect for all, responsible citizenship and global learning. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism, discrimination & extremism. It can also impact on the school's duty to promote community cohesion. By examining the beliefs and inspiration provided by key religious figures, RE should also play a part in encouraging pupils to contribute to the school and wider community and to develop attitudes of service to others.

RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values within the school community can be celebrated and explored. It provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief in the local community in which it is located and for forging links with different religious groups in the local area in particular local churches. A major focus of RE should be the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life. RE also involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

The promotion of 'British Values'

RE provides opportunities to promote and discuss the 'British Values' of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty & mutual respect. These discussions may also play a part in helping schools with their new duties in terms of preventing individuals from being drawn into terrorism. Church of England Schools should see themselves as part of the solution to the threat of radicalism. This should involve not just trying to prevent the development of an extremist view but should be more about promoting a positive vision of the contribution of different religions. This means high quality RE should equip children with accurate information, critical skills and that pupils should be taught that those who advocate violence and hatred in the name of God are distorting their faith.

Approaches to teaching RE

For RE to play its full part within the broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled, schools should ensure that:

- high quality knowledge rich, learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through the locally agreed syllabus and diocesan materials taking into account the need to offer breadth of content
- RE is delivered in ways that make it a lively, active subject by employing a variety of teaching methods; including technology, art, music, discussion, the development of

thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories and the use of periods of stillness and reflection

- where possible pupils should have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities.

Assessment and Recording of RE

Assessment and recording of progress in RE should be conducted with the same rigour as it is for all other areas of the school curriculum and in line with the school policy.

Monitoring and Evaluation of RE

Standards of teaching and learning in RE should be regularly monitored as part of the agreed monitoring cycle in school. Governors should be involved in determining the monitoring cycle and participate in it. This should include the usual methods of lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, analysis of assessment data and pupil voice.

It is expected that the RE co-ordinator will play a lead role in monitoring RE within the school and that the co-ordinator will be responsible for providing evidence of how RE contributes to the life of the school as part of the (SIAMS) self-evaluation process.

Support Provided by the Diocese

The diocese works with our associates from RE Today on a consultancy basis. Additionally, we aim to train several lead RE teachers to lead networks around the diocese. Once established, they will be available to offer courses and in-service training on all aspects of RE to staff and governors in schools.

Diocesan Links

The DBE has strong links with the Open Centre and RE Today. These organisations offer excellent resources to schools and the Open Centre offers high quality interactive experiences /workshops in schools which help to deepen children's understanding of other religions. They bring learning to life through offering first-hand experiences and an introduction to some of the cultural practices of different religions.

Outline of a model policy for Religious Education (RE) in church schools

Introduction

RE is central to the purpose of Primary School because as a church school we see that the Christian faith informs all aspects of our life together and commits us to a search for truth.

RE in Primary School explores how individuals and communities make meaning and sense of their lives through the major religions of the world. It enables pupils to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life. RE is taught in such a way that it inspires pupils to explore, develop and affirm their own faith and values and have respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others. It is not the practice of this school to preach to or seek to convert children. Values education permeates the RE curriculum at Primary School.

The Church of England Education Office publish a 'Statement of Entitlement' for RE which has been considered in the formation of this policy.¹

Aims

At this school, RE supports and strengthens the vision, ethos and values which are at the heart of what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. The importance placed on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually is reflected in the RE curriculum.

Specifically, RE aims to enable pupils of all abilities and stages of development to:

1. Develop knowledge and understanding of the Christian beliefs and practices so that they understand the importance of the Bible, the role of the church and recognise that for Christians their faith provides a way of interpreting life and its meaning.
2. Develop knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and practices of some of the other principal religions and non-religious world views in Britain.
3. Understand how belief impacts on culture, relationships, values and lifestyle.
4. Understand how belief can be expressed in a variety of ways including art, dance, music, ritual celebration and in different cultural settings.
5. Develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially by helping them to reflect upon personal feelings, responses and relationships.
6. Explore ways in which religious values and teaching have an impact on actions and decisions for people of faith.
7. Be supported in their own search for meaning and purpose in life.
8. Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
9. Explore concepts of love, forgiveness and sacrifice.
10. Develop skills of reflection, empathy, communication, analysis, investigation, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis.

¹ https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2017-10/re_statement_of_entitlement_2016_0.pdf

11. Develop attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open mindedness and self-esteem.

Legal Framework

In a Voluntary Aided (VA) school the governors determine the RE policy and syllabus in consultation with the headteacher, teaching staff and Diocesan Board of Education. In a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school, the Locally Agreed Syllabus is a statutory document for the teaching of RE. Academies, under the terms of their funding agreements with the Secretary of State, must provide RE for their pupils.

Parents have a legal right to withdraw their children from RE lessons, but as RE is central to the life and identity of Primary School we would ask parents to discuss with the headteacher any reasons they might have for doing this.

Teaching and Learning

1. The scheme of work for RE will maintain a balance between Learning about Religions and Learning from Religions
2. There will be clear learning outcomes for all units of work, based on the appropriate expectations as set out in the RE syllabus.
3. The scheme of work will ensure that there is continuity and progression for pupils and opportunities for assessment in both attainment targets.
4. A range of teaching and learning activities will ensure that pupils learn effectively and with interest.
5. Pupil progress and attainment in RE will be tracked.
6. Progress in RE will form part of the pupils' annual report to parents.
7. RE will be taught either as a discrete subject or as part of a cross curricular approach where appropriate.
8. A range of visitors will be invited to support the teaching of RE, and where possible, there will be planned visits to places of worship.
9. In this school the faiths taught in RE at KS1 are Christianity and and at KS2 Christianity, (and three others).
10. RE will be prioritised within the organisation of the curriculum. We aim to dedicate 10% of curriculum time to RE and not less than 5%.

Subject Leadership

1. The RE subject leader will support and monitor the subject and will receive an adequate budget to do this.
2. The RE subject leader will ensure that his/her subject knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by means of regular training
3. The RE subject leader will ensure that staff receive adequate training in the teaching and assessment of RE.
4. The RE subject leader will regularly monitor the quality of RE teaching across the school.

5. The RE subject leader will liaise with the governor who holds responsibility for RE and they will report regularly to the governing body on progress and attainment in RE.
6. The RE subject leader and headteacher will ensure that the principles set out the Church of England's Statement of Entitlement for RE are implemented.