

Guidelines for Religious Education

Derby Diocesan Board of Education (DBE) 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.

The National Society

[2026 Statement of Entitlement](#)

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

- Engage meaningfully and critically with learning which helps them to make sense of the multi-religious and multi-secular world in which they live.
- Know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of beliefs and practices, using approaches which engage with biblical text and key sources of authority.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, appreciating the complexity, diversity, continuity and change that exists within those worldviews being studied.
- Grapple with questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- Understand the concept of religion and recognise its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals, communities and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- Develop disciplinary knowledge which equips pupils to be religiously literate.
- Explore their personal worldviews; their own religious or non-religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Religious Education in Different Types of Church Schools

The [1988 Education Reform 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 religious and non-religious world views. The DBE recommends that schools adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus – Derby City 2025-2030 or Derbyshire 2025-2030. The DBE also strongly recommend schools and academies use the Understanding Christianity resource to support units teaching Christianity.

RE is designated differently for different types of schools.

Religious Education in Voluntary Aided (VA) Schools

For VA 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 DBE recommends that governors, in consultation with the headteacher, adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Religious Education in Voluntary Controlled (VC) and Foundation Schools

VC or foundation schools with a religious designation must arrange for RE to be delivered in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Religious Education in an Academy

In academies the requirement to include RE as part of the broad and balanced curriculum is included in the academy funding agreement. For all academies, there is a requirement that RE must be taught to all pupils in full-time education and that it must meet the same requirements a locally agreed syllabus must meet, that is, the fact that "the religious traditions of Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain" (Section 375(3) of the Education Act 1996). The DBE recommends that they adopt the Locally Agreed Syllabus.

Withdrawal from Religious Education

If a parent wishes to withdraw their child(ren) from RE, the School Standards Framework 1998 Act (Section 71) states that:

If the parent requests that their child is excused:

- (a) from receiving religious education given in the school in accordance with the school's basic curriculum,
- (b) from attendance at religious worship in the school, or
- (c) both from receiving such education and from such attendance,

the pupil shall be so excused until the request is withdrawn.

If the parent wishes to withdraw their child from RE in order to provide an alternative form of RE that reflects their own background/wishes, then the pupil may be withdrawn from the school during such periods of time as are reasonably necessary for the purpose of enabling him to receive religious education, but the local education authority must be satisfied

- (a) that the parent of the pupil desires him to receive religious education of a kind which is not provided in the school during the periods of time during which he is so excused,
- (b) that the pupil cannot with reasonable convenience be sent to another community, foundation or voluntary school where religious education of the kind desired by the parent is provided, and
- (c) that arrangements have been made for him to receive religious education of that kind during school hours elsewhere

If this is the case, then:

A pupil may not be withdrawn from school unless the local education authority are satisfied that the arrangements will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil at school on any day except at the beginning or end of a school session (or, if there is only one, the school session) on that day.

The section goes on to say:

Arrangements may provide for making facilities for such education or worship available on the school premises, but any expenditure entailed by the arrangements shall not be met from the school's budget share or otherwise by the local education authority.

The [2025 Supreme Court judgement \(JR87\)](#) recognises that parents who wish to withdraw their child(ren) from RE must not encounter any burden in so doing. This includes the expectation that a parent should attend a meeting or have a formal conversation with school leaders before their child(ren) can be withdrawn from RE.

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.

Diocesan Links

Derby 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.