

Religious Education* Curriculum Statement of Intent

Rationale – why this curriculum design?

Our children live in a very different world to that of 1944 when the Education Act enshrined in law a duty for all schools to teach Religious Education (RE). In preparing for adult life, they need to learn to respond well to a local, national and global landscape of religion and belief diversity. In the context of today's world, we are advocating that RE should help children and young people to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief, i.e. be religiously literate.

Pupils will access a high quality RE curriculum that engenders an interest in exploring, improving understanding of and showing respect for different faiths and cultural diversity. This will enable them to develop a knowledge and acceptance of religions and worldviews, with the skill to “disagree agreeably”. Each school's curriculum should be academically rigorous and examine theology, philosophy and social science within a historical context.

The schools' curriculum for RE is a vehicle for delivering some aspects of Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Education (SMSC), but SMSC should permeate across and underpin each school's wider curriculum.

Ambition – what do we want to achieve?

- A balanced RE curriculum with the aim of producing religiously literate pupils that includes aspects of the following disciplines:
 - Theology (this is about believing): looking at 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 thinking): finding out how and whether things make sense; dealing with questions of morality and ethics; taking seriously the nature of reality, knowledge and existence;
 - Social Sciences (this is about living): exploring the diverse ways in which people practise their beliefs; engaging with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.
- To create a safe and stimulating environment in which children are entitled to question, evaluate and express themselves through debate and discussion - “disagree agreeably”.
- Teachers who are empowered through strong subject knowledge to have the skills to challenge conceptions, preconceptions and misconceptions.

Children and young people will have a knowledge and understanding of:

- The major world religions and non-religious worldviews:
 - Theology: key texts and traditions; beliefs, teachings/doctrines and sources; practices and ways of life; forms of expression; identity and belonging;
 - Philosophy: how religion has influenced humanities' search for meaning and purpose;
 - Social Sciences: investigate and observe lived religious practices within local, national and international contexts; and consider how they have shaped and continue to shape society.
- Historical, geographical and scientific contexts.

Children and young people will have the skills to:

- As theologians:
 - analyse a range of primary and secondary sources;
 - understand symbolic language;
 - use technical terminology effectively.
- As philosophers:
 - interpret meaning and significance;
 - evaluate and reflect upon beliefs and ethics and how they impact upon the lives of others and themselves;
 - refine the way they think about the world and their place in it;
 - consider moral principles, including the nature of good and evil.
- As social scientists:
 - respectfully critique and value the wide range of beliefs and cultural influences that have shaped their own heritage and that of others, considering both differences and commonalities;
 - recognise bias and stereotype;
 - represent a range of views, other than one's own, with accuracy.

The curriculum may also develop the following:

- a moral compass - recognise the difference between right and wrong and readily apply this;
- reflection upon their own beliefs and cultural practices;
- make informed personal choices;
- empathy with and an understanding of others.

ALT Religious Education Development Group

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This document has been written using content from the following sources:

- Ofsted (May 2019) *School Inspection Handbook*
- Chipperton, Georgiou, Seymour and Wright (March 2018) *Key Principles of a Balanced Curriculum in RE*
- Hall, J (Sept 2018) *Religion and Worldviews: The way forward. A National Plan for RE.*