

Religious Education Policy

Ermine Street Church Academy

First approved by Governors	30th January 2019
Policy to be reviewed annually	
Reviewed by Governors	18th October 2023

Legal Requirements

The primary legislation covering Religious Education (RE) from 1944 to 1993 was consolidated by The Education Act (1996) and the School Standards and Framework Act (1998). Circular 1/94 and the subsequent revision of this guidance in 2010 (Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010) offered an interpretation of the legislation.

Introduction

At Ermine Street Church Academy, children can expect a high-quality, knowledge-rich, broad RE curriculum that is challenging and varied, enabling learners to acquire and retain a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. As a church academy, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the Understanding Christianity resource and clearly outline knowledge-rich curriculum, pupils acquire the substantive knowledge and disciplinary knowledge, incorporating methods from academic disciplines and extend their personal knowledge building an awareness of their own presuppositions and values, engaging in significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Using the Cambridgeshire Agreed Syllabus [[Agreed Syllabus 2023-28 \(cambridgeshire.gov.uk\)](#)] we learn about other religions and world views, fostering respect for them. Our own Multi-Faith Units aim to explore themes and ways of life where we can find common ground and respect difference. In celebration of our partnership with the MAST, we have also developed a Methodist unit of learning. Links with our Christian values and vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for

learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

Aims

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, religious education in this school aims:

- to develop religious literacy;
- to acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions and world views represented locally, nationally, and globally;
- to develop an understanding of the influence of the beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies, and cultures;
- to develop attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own;
- to develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious issues, with reference to the principal religions and world views represented locally, nationally, and globally
- 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.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

Religions and worldviews deal with some of the most profound and difficult questions in human life,

questions such as:

- What is the purpose of life?
- How should people treat each other?
- How do we explain and cope with death and suffering?

Religions and worldviews approach these issues in complex ways, in ways of life, culture and action, as well as ritual, tradition, story, symbol and belief. RE must take account of this depth and complexity, helping pupils to an understanding appropriate to their age and aptitude.

To do this RE needs to develop pupils' skills:

- to read fluently;
- to enable them to ask questions;
- to discover information, to approach new material with empathy;
- to reflect on their learning. Pupils should not only acquire knowledge but also be able to use their knowledge to understand their world, build community, and develop their personal position.

Throughout the RE curriculum pupils should be encouraged to **explore** religions and worldviews, **engage** with their knowledge, and **reflect** on their learning and their lives.

Objectives

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, the following objectives are age appropriate at the end of our pupils' education in school. The expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

Teaching and Learning

RE has a high profile within our school curriculum and is comparable with other core curriculum areas. Quality teaching in RE helps generate respect for different views and interpretations where real dialogue takes place.

RE offers a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences. Pupils will develop the following key skills in RE in order to enhance learning across key stages:

1. *Investigation and enquiry*: asking relevant and increasingly deep questions; using a range of sources and evidence, including sacred texts; identifying and talking about key concepts.
2. *Critical thinking and reflection*: analysing information to form a judgement; reflecting on beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and experiences.
3. *Empathy*: considering the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others; seeing the world through the eyes of others.
4. *Interpretation*: interpreting religious language and the meaning of sacred texts; drawing meaning from, for example, artefacts and symbols.
5. *Analysis*: distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact; distinguishing between the features of different religions.
6. *Evaluation*: enquiring into religious issues and drawing conclusions with reference to experience, reason, evidence, and dialogue.

Teaching and learning in Religious Education has two dimensions – learning about and learning from. Learning about can be considered as looking through a window – learning from what we see, hear and experience. Learning from is more like a mirror – learning that encourages children to ask questions about what is this reflecting to me and how can I respond.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

Policy and practice in Religious Education reflects whole school policy and encompasses the full range and ability of all pupils. All pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs. A range of teaching and learning pedagogical approaches are used to achieve access for all learners are used including scaffolding of task, provision of additional resource, support and pupil grouping. There is particular concern to ensure that all tasks are challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils whilst extending the most able.

Breadth and Balance

Although work on Christianity predominates (66%), the other major world faiths are also an essential element of our curriculum (34%). Teaching will seek to bring about a deeper knowledge and understanding of religious traditions but also to develop a range of skills such as the ability to empathise and evaluate attitudes, and develop respect for diversity.

Equal Opportunities

Religious education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. It seeks to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions will be treated with sensitivity and respect.

Relevance

Teachers will establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching will enable pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives. This will be done through engaging pupils by posing challenging questions to and by pupils and incorporating quality time for reflection.

Cross-curricular links

Religious education supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Progression Targets (statutory)

There are two progression targets in RE:

PT1 – *Knowledge and understanding of religion and worldviews*

Enquiring into, investigating and understanding religions and beliefs. This includes thinking about and interpreting religious beliefs, teachings, sources, practices, ways of life, and ways of expressing meaning with reference to the specific beliefs and religions studied.

PT2 – Responding to religion and worldviews

Questioning, exploring, reflecting upon and interpreting human experience in the light of religions and beliefs studied. This includes communicating reflections, responses and evaluations about questions of identity, belonging, diversity, meaning, purpose, truth, values, and commitments making increasingly insightful links to the specific religions studied

Assessment in Religious Education will:

- Take place once per half-term, at the end of a unit of learning.
- Be made against the unit criteria for the Understanding Christianity units and the above criteria, in relation to the appropriate KS targets as stated in the Cambridgeshire RE Syllabus.
- Assessed using DEMAT Foundation Subject Assessment Document which will:
 - Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
 - Inform future teaching and learning and not simply be used for summative purposes.
- Be reported to parents in every child's annual report and at other times as appropriate.

Role of the RE Subject Leader

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education.
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- Ensure all teachers are aware of what should be taught in religious education, when and what resources are available.
- Support colleagues and help develop their subject expertise.
- Monitor and review the implementation of this policy and the RE curriculum.
- Liaise periodically with the Headteacher and Governors.
- Seek opportunities for professional development for themselves and other staff.
- Maintain and order resources.
- Monitor, analyse and report on assessment data.
- Observe the teaching of RE and learning outcomes, providing support and guidance for teachers.

Resources

Religious Education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also support, where

possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. Resource boxes will be maintained and stored in the Teacher Hub.

The right to withdraw from RE

In England, parents and carers have the right to withdraw their children from RE. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Parents and carers also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation.