



Religious Education Policy

Vision Statement

Everyone is encouraged to grow in body, mind and spirit as part of our caring Christian community and we celebrate the uniqueness of each individual. We promote equality and diversity through our shared Christian values of compassion, forgiveness and trust and inspire a life-long love of learning.

“Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other the same as God forgave you in Christ.”

Ephesians 4:32

Our vision for Religious Education (RE)

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

In Blackford Church of England School where pupils and staff come from different faiths and none, RE is a highly valued academic subject that enables understanding of how religion and beliefs affect our lives. There is 'a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person. (Statement of Entitlement 2019)

The school provides an RE curriculum that is rich and varied and studies a range of world religions and worldviews. At the heart of RE in this school, is the teaching of Christianity, rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ that enables learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith.

Our aim is to 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 studied. Links with the Christian vision and values of the school are intrinsic to our RE curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities that match the needs of all children. This includes providing relevant support, differentiated activities and a range of teaching and learning styles within lessons.

Pupils are encouraged to know about, understand and respond to the ultimate questions of life and ethical issues. Our curriculum inspires pupils to explore, develop and affirm their own faith and values whilst having respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others. We are committed to education for wisdom, hope, community and dignity.

Encountering religion and belief includes:

- Enquiry into and investigation of the nature of religion
- Key beliefs, teachings and practices
- Impact on the lives of believers and communities
- Different ways of expressing beliefs, teachings and practices
- Developing pupil skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation in relation to religion
- Pupils' communication of their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary
- Pupils reflection on and response to their own experiences, questions of identity and belonging, meaning purpose and truth, values and commitment
- Development of religious literacy

Aims

The aims of religious education **in this school** are to:

- enable pupils 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.
- enable pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- facilitate pupils to engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.

- enable pupils 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.
- encourage pupils to explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

National Society RE Statement of Entitlement 2019

Legal Framework

As a voluntary aided school, we are required by law to provide RE in accordance with our trust deed.

Parents have a legal right in accordance with the Education act 1996 to withdraw their children from RE lessons. As this subject is central to the life and identity of Blackford Church of England School, we ask parents to discuss with the Head Teacher any reasons they might have for doing this.

Teaching & Learning

- We follow the Diocesan units of work syllabus plus supplementary units from Lat Blaylock
- There are clear learning outcomes for all units of work, based on the appropriate expectations as set out in the RE syllabus.
- RE has at least 5% of curriculum time i.e. 50 minutes per week in the foundation stage and key stage 1 increasing to 1 hour per week in key stage 2.
- Long term plans for RE ensure that there is continuity and progression for all pupils.
- Pupil progress and attainment in RE is tracked and recorded by class teachers using our assessment ladders. Progress in RE is included in each child's annual report to parents.
- Inclusion and differentiation for children with SEND and EAL are an integral part of RE planning and teaching
- RE is taught either as a discrete subject or as part of a cross-curricular approach where appropriate. It includes half-termly 'Values' days linked to Collective Worship.
- A range of visitors support the teaching of RE, and whenever possible, there will be planned visits to places of worship
- In this school the faiths taught in RE are:
 - KS1 are Christianity and Judaism.
 - KS2 Christianity, Islam and Judaism.
- Other religions and worldviews may be taught implicitly or when comparing ideas or as thematic studies.
- Of the RE taught, 70% focusses on Christianity and 30% focusses on other faiths.
- Wherever possible, links are made between Religious Education and other curriculum subjects

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development/ British Values

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop morally, spiritually, socially and culturally. We invite children to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider those of others, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important.

We encourage children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within society as well as their own experiences

Religious education also strongly supports the school's citizenship programme by introducing pupils to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider community, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice. This includes work on British values (democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, respect and tolerance).

Assessment & Achievement

Appropriate to age, at the end of their education in our Church school the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and (as a minimum) they 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 worldviews in their search for God and meaning.
- reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions
- engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.

National Society RE Statement of Entitlement 2016

Leadership & Management

The teaching, assessing and resourcing of Religious Education is managed by the RE subject leaders, (in close collaboration with senior leaders) to ensure that the principles set out in the National Society's Statement of Entitlement for RE are implemented.

The RE subject leader will:

- support and regularly monitor the subject across the school
- have an annual budget to do this
- ensure that relevant and regular CPD is in place to keep his/her subject knowledge and expertise up to date and that staff receive appropriate training for the teaching and assessment of RE
- report regularly to the Governing Body, or a committee thereof, so that everyone has an overview about progress and attainment in RE
- ensure RE provision reflects diocesan advice and recommendations

Inspection of RE as a Church of England School will be under the SIAMS inspection schedule and will look at:

- effectiveness in ensuring that pupils flourish through the provision of high quality religious education
- effectiveness in ensuring that the subject expresses the school's Christian vision
- effectiveness of RE teaching and learning

Review

There will be a review every three years of this policy. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the RE leaders, together with a senior leaders and governors. This will include discussions with other members of staff, observation of teaching and monitoring of children's work. Evaluation of teaching plans will form part of any review. The outcomes will influence the school development plan.

Date of policy: March 2021

Review date: March 2022

This guidance takes into account current requirements for RE in the new SIAMS schedule from September 2018

Religious Education in Church of England Schools

A Statement of Entitlement

Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together

Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.¹

A high-quality sequential religious education² (RE) programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews³ fostering respect for others. In voluntary aided schools, RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed: this document will help schools interpret that legal requirement. In foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus for RE unless parents request

¹ *The Church of England Education Office, Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good. (The Church of England Education Office, 2016), available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education>*

² *Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. The term religious education (RE) is therefore used throughout this document as it is connected to the Section 48 SIAMS inspection and, if and until the law changes we will need to continue to use the term. This does not stop individual schools, MATs or dioceses using other names including Religion and Worldviews for the subject.*

³ *The term worldviews is used throughout the document to refer to a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an 'institutional' worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a 'personal' worldview for an individual's way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from one or many institutionalised worldviews. Based on Commission on Religious Education, Religion and worldviews: The way forward A national plan for RE (Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018) p4.*

RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school. In academies and free schools RE must be taught in accordance with the funding agreement.

The effectiveness of denominational education in Church schools is evaluated during the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) section 48 inspection. That subsequent judgement will reflect the expectations set out in this document. The SIAMS evaluation schedule assesses the way RE contributes to the outworking of church school's Christian vision. It highlights the responsibility of Church school leaders to ensure that pupils flourish academically through the provision of high-quality RE. In addition, in voluntary aided schools, a judgement on standards in teaching and learning in RE is included in the SIAMS report.

The Entitlement: provision, profile and priority

In a Church school the pupils and their families can expect an RE curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, this should include the ways in which it is unique and diverse. Parents can expect the use of high-quality resources, for example, the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils can expect that teaching and learning in Church schools will use an approach that engages with biblical text and theological ideas.

Pupils can expect that a Church school RE curriculum will engage and challenge them through an exploration of core concepts and questions. They can expect Church schools to provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews. There should be opportunities for them to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help form identity in a range of religions and worldviews. Pupils should explore how these may change in different times, places and cultures. RE will go beyond a sociological study of religious phenomena and will introduce pupils to a range of relevant disciplines including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences. In all Church schools progress in RE should be significant and attainment high enabling pupils to develop confident religious literacy.

Parents and pupils can expect that in a Church school RE will have a high profile within the curriculum and will be a priority for senior leaders. The RE curriculum is intrinsic to the outworking of a Church school's Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, the RE curriculum will contribute to British values and spiritual moral social and cultural development

Learning activities must provide fully for the needs of all pupils. Pupils should develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Pupils should have a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They should have opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Curriculum statement: challenging, accurate and diverse

In all Church schools religious education must be considered an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. Pupils are entitled to a balanced RE curriculum which enquires into religions and worldview through theology, philosophy and the human and the social sciences. It should be a coherent curriculum that enables progress through ordered and sequential learning developing both knowledge and skills. There should be a clear curriculum vision and intent, a structure for implementation and provision and a process for evaluating impact.

Aims and objectives

- 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.

Curriculum balance and time: sufficient, appropriate and balanced

Reflecting the school's trust deed or academy funding agreement parents and pupils are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1-4.

All pupils in Church schools should follow a recognised and appropriate qualification or course in RE or Religious Studies at KS 4. This includes pupils who have SEND. The study of Christianity will be a significant part of any Religious Studies qualification offered.

The school must make it possible for those students who achieve suitable grades at GCSE or equivalent to follow appropriate A level courses. This should be in addition to the provision of core RE entitlement for all students at KS5 which should continue to develop student's understanding of Christianity and other religions and worldviews.

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship. Collective worship must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE.

Developing staff expertise and knowledge: confidence specialism professionalism

Pupils in Church schools are entitled to be taught by teachers who have a secure subject knowledge and are confident in helping them navigate and challenge cultural and religious stereotypes, prejudice and extremism. It should be a priority in Church schools to build up staff expertise in RE specifically, but not exclusively, working towards:

- at least one member of staff having RE qualifications or receiving specialist training.
- secondary schools employing specialist RE teachers and deploying them effectively to ensure pupils receive specialist teaching.
- all staff teaching RE having access to subject specific professional development.
- all staff teaching RE knowing how to create and maintain classrooms in which academic rigour is balanced with respect for different personal beliefs and identities.
- all teaching staff and governors understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.
- a governing body which is monitoring standards in RE effectively.

The role of the Diocesan Boards of Education

One function of Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) is to promote, or assist in the promotion of, religious education in schools in the diocese. This should be fulfilled by monitoring the quality of religious education in Church schools through taking note of SIAMS inspection reports and by securing high quality training for all schools throughout the diocese. This will help ensure that the provision for religious education is effective and is able to fulfil the expectations of this statement.

Support for effective and excellent RE

Teachers in Church schools belong to a wider educational and church community. They are entitled to expect positive support in providing effective and excellent religious education from:

- a named member of staff responsible for religious education and where that person is the headteacher someone who shadows the role
- their senior management team and their governing body, especially foundation governors or academy equivalents
- their local Diocesan Board of Education, including a school's adviser with an appropriate religious education background
- the Church of England Education Office
- local clergy and other ministers and Christian communities.

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School Character and SIAMS Development Manager

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