

Policy for Religious Education

Provision

All schools and academies in England are obliged by statute to provide Religious Education. It is seen to be a key element of a child's education, a contributor to SMSC and a support to the understanding of British Values. Religious Education is a curriculum area; it not the same as Collective Worship or a school's ethos.

Religious Education in all Church of England schools and academies is seen as having equal standing with the core subjects.

Policy pointers: The following paragraphs indicate the expectations for RE in Church of England schools. It is for each school to take these expectations and personalise them into their own clear policy statement. The Headteacher of each school and its governing body are responsible for its implementation and review.

You will need to choose the relevant paragraph here and adapt all the sections throughout the document so that they relate to your own school.

Our school is a Church of England **Voluntary Aided School** and the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of the School i.e. the practices and principles of the Church of England. The C of E 'Statement of Entitlement' for Religious Education 2019' underpins our provision and informs this policy¹.

*OR Our school is a Church of England **Voluntary Controlled School** and the provision of RE must be in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Suffolk, and is informed by the Church of England's 'Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education' (2019).*

*OR Our school is a Church of England **Academy (converter)**. RE must be provided under the terms of our Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. We follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Suffolk as a former VC school and our policy is informed by the Church of England's 'Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education' (2019).*

*OR Our school is a Church of England **Academy**. RE is provided under the terms of our Funding Agreement with the Secretary of State. The Church of England's 'Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2019' underpins our provision and informs this policy.*

¹ The Statement of Entitlement should inform RE in all C of E schools.

We provide a religious education curriculum which is rich and varied and which enables learners to acquire both a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, and to find out about a broad range of other faiths and world-views.

The content, teaching, learning and attainment of RE in a church school are inspected as part of the SIAMS framework. In some schools this leads to a specific judgement as part of the report. All schools should be familiar with what is asked about RE when schools are inspected. See the SIAMS Evaluation schedule: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/siams-inspections#siams-2023-documents--resources>

Aims

The broad aims of RE are set out in the church of England's Statement of Entitlement <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf> and the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE- <https://suffolklearning.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Suffolk-Agreed-Syllabus-Where-do-I-stand-2023-28.pdf>. The primary aim of the subject may be described as promoting religious literacy.

Leadership and Management

RE in all church schools should be well-led and managed. Positive support from senior management and governance are expected and key to achieving excellence in the subject. Continuity in leadership helps ensure ongoing progress.

All schools should:

- ***appoint an RE subject leader, and, where possible, a 'shadow' leader. In small schools, pairing subject leaders across schools is advised. The subject leader will develop the subject, support and mentor staff, and monitor pupil progress and perceptions***
- ***appoint a governor for religious education to support the subject leader (s) and monitor the subject***
- ***offer subject leaders appropriate training, support and a good level of resourcing to do their job***
- ***discuss progress in RE at least annually at staff / governing body meetings.***

There is evidence that a name change has been effective in raising the profile and status of the subject. School leaders might consider a change from RE to 'Beliefs and Values' or BV, or 'Beliefs, Religions and Values Education' (BRaVE).

Staffing

Teachers are entitled to professional support and development in their careers. Few staff have access to RE as part of their initial training. In church schools, priority is given to staff expertise and qualifications in religious education, so pupils receive high quality experiences.

All schools should:

- ***Offer staff appropriate and ongoing professional development in religious education.***
- ***Ensure that where HLTAs are used to cover RE, this is normally a part of a rotation of subjects to ensure broad professional development for both teacher and HLTA.***

The curriculum

Religious Education in church schools should contribute to the school's Christian character and teaching about Christianity, rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ, is at its heart. However, as inclusive communities, church schools encourage learning about and learning from other religions and foster respect for different world views.

All children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum and steps should be taken to ensure a range of teaching styles, groupings and resources to allow all children to make progress in RE.

- ***All schools in the diocese follow the Emmanuel Project, a scheme of work for EYFS to Y6, which follows an enquiry-based approach looking at the key beliefs and concepts which are important in different faiths. The scheme matches the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.***
- ***All schools should enrich their RE curriculum with creative and varied teaching methods and a range of visits and visitors, and aim to build a good bank of resources.***
- ***All schools enrich their pupils learning in RE with additional whole school theme days on aspects of Christian Faith e.g. Pentecost, The Lord's Prayer***

Assessment

Assessment in RE is an important tool by which teachers know that children are making good progress and which enables them to plan future work. Assessment is based on pupils' depth of knowledge and understanding related to the key questions addresses in the curriculum. Standards in RE should be equal to, or exceed, those of other curriculum subjects.

- ***All schools should ensure assessment tasks offer proper levels of challenge and assess children's knowledge and understanding in RE, rather than English.***
- ***Class teachers should assess the work of their pupils and ensuring that this is done in a variety of ways.***
- ***Pupils should use self-assessment to develop their own sense of progress and to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding.***

- ***The Emmanuel Project offers a range of tasks in each unit to ensure teachers can measure the progress of their pupils.***

Monitoring, progress and standards

Subject leaders in all schools are responsible, alongside the Headteacher and LGB for monitoring the provision and standards in their subject area.

- ***The Headteacher will enable the RE subject leader to monitor provisions and standards on a regular cycle.***
- ***The RE subject leader will monitor provision and standards in RE through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum regularly with staff.***
- ***The subject leader will report annually to the GB on progress and standards in RE and contribute to the school's self-evaluation, in readiness for SIAMS.***
- ***A member of the GB will assist in monitoring the subject, for example, conducting pupil perceptions and learning walks.***

The withdrawal clause

In all schools, parents currently have the right in law to withdraw their children from the RE provided. This right does not extend to other areas of the curriculum where spontaneous questions may arise about religions or religious matters. Parents may arrange for their child to receive alternative religious education off-site as long as the school is satisfied it only affects the start or end of a school session.

All schools will:

- ***clarify for parents the educational nature of RE and ensure there is a clear procedure for requesting withdrawal***
- ***discuss with parents the management of their request for a child's withdrawal, noting whether it is complete or partial withdrawal***
- ***provide supervision for a withdrawn child remaining on the premises, but not additional teaching or materials which incur cost.***

Links with the Diocese, Cathedral and parish church

All schools are part of an Anglican parish and all children should have the opportunity to visit a local church as part of their RE. In Church of England schools, this entitlement should be broadened to include an interactive relationship with the local church, growing connections with the Cathedral through the Discovery Centre Team, and an awareness of some Diocesan events.

Approved by the Diocesan Board of Education on 12 February 2020. Updated with new links February 2024.