# Religious Education Policy

*Ratified by Full Governing Body: 13th February 2025*

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| Draft Prepared | January 2025 |
| Date Agreed | 13th February 2025 |
| Signed by Headteacher | |
| Signed (Chair of Governors) | |
| Date Policy to be Reviewed | February 2026 |
| VERSION CONTROL: Annual update | |

**This policy has been created using guidance from the Diocese of Canterbury Children and Young People team. It is in line with the latest *Church of England Religious Education Statement for Entitlement (2019)* and the *SIAMS Evaluation Schedule.***

## Policy Statement for Religious Education

Religious education 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.
***(Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement February 2019)***

This policy document provides a framework to enable us to ensure that all of our children, regardless of background or circumstances, fulfil their potential within our Christian community. The school Christian Values of Respect, Friendship, Perseverance, Forgiveness, Compassion and Trust are applied when following this policy, and we will use this guidance to ensure that our children will be fully prepared for the future, with high self-esteem and having forged strong and respectful relationships with other people.

We want our children to be fully prepared for God's ever changing world.

### Introduction

At Ashford St Mary's Church of England C of E VA Primary School pupils and their families can expect a high quality Religious Education (RE) curriculum that is challenging, rich and varied, enabling all learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the Understanding Christianity resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Using the Kent Agreed Syllabus we learn about other religions and world views, fostering respect for them. Links with our Christian values (friendship, forgiveness, trust, compassion, respect and perseverance) 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 and objectives**

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all 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.

• 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 of living, believing and thinking.

**Curriculum for Religious Education (RE)**

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with all of other curriculum subjects.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.
- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy*

  **Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. (Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE.)*
- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.
- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs.
- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

## Curriculum balance and time

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.

Although work on Christianity will predominate, there will be in-depth work on the major world religions and on other worldviews as appropriate. 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.

***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.***

## Teaching and learning

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

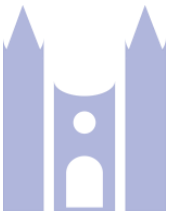
Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing ‘big’ and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
- Engaging in pair and group work.
- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Experiencing visits and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- Taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek 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 are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables 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.



**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 strategies to achieve differentiated learning are used including task, outcome, 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.

**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.

**Teaching and Learning interconnectivity** *(Cross-curricular learning)*

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.

**Health and Safety**

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's relevant policy(ies) in these circumstances.

**Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in Religious Education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as Understanding Christianity.
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Kent Agreed Syllabus.
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.
- Include pupil self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.

**Role of the RE subject leader**

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the The Church of England Statement of Entitlement https://www.canterburydiocese.org/media/childrenandschools/re/statementofentitlement.pdf
- 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, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy, schemes of work,
- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of the teaching and learning of RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.

- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

**Resources**

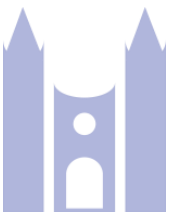
Religious Education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

**Legal Requirements**

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request *(DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28).*

The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in EYFS classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the headteacher before making this decision.

It is expected that any child withdrawn from RE lessons will be provided with an alternative religious education by their parents. The exact nature of this will be determined by the child's age and ability and should be discussed with the class-teacher and RE subject leader. Ashford St Mary's Church of England Primary School's duty in this situation is to provide a safe environment in which the child

will be able to complete this work away from the RE lesson being taught to the rest of the class.