

LIFE Primary Schools

Religious Education Policy

Courageous Optimism Heartfelt Compassion Boundless Creativity

This policy and the RE curriculum to which it refers is inline with the RE statement of entitlement, DBE Guidelines and the Essex Agreed Syllabus.

It was written with the support of advisers from
The Church of England in Essex and East London; Diocese of Chelmsford, Board of Education.

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.

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 worldviews fostering respect for others.

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 to 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.

Purpose of Study Statement

RE is an essential area of study if pupils are to be well prepared for life in a modern, diverse world where controversy over such matters is pervasive and where many people often lack the knowledge to make their own informed decisions. It is a subject for all pupils, whatever their own family background or personal beliefs and practices.

High-quality RE will support pupils’ religious literacy. In the context of this syllabus, this means that pupils will have the ability to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews. Pupils will be able to make sense of religion and worldviews around them and begin to understand the complex world in which they live. RE is primarily about enabling pupils to become free thinking, critical participants in public discussion, who can make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief which shape the global landscape.

Aims and objectives:

- To enable our pupils to become Religiously Literate
- To engage all pupils in critical analysis of world views
- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith, through the exploration of its 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 gain this knowledge and understanding by learning to see these through theological, philosophical and human/social science lenses
- To engage with and be able to express ideas and insights about challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by religious views, 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
- 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 content, balance and time

The LIFE Primary School Religious Education Curriculum is set within the broader intent of the whole school curriculum. It is designed to support pupils in learning about the potential impact of RE on their lives so that they can flourish in an ever-changing world.

As a Church school, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that Christianity will be the majority religion studied in each year group, at least 50% across the curriculum. Parents and pupils should also expect to study a broad range of other religions and world views. Over the course of their time in school, in addition to the study of Christianity, pupils will study many other world religions/faiths including Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism, as well as non-religious views such as Humanism and Utilitarianism. The children will follow a 2-year rolling programme, except for EYFS who are on a 1-year programme. In order to ensure that our children achieve the highest quality of RE education, we will be using the Church of England's 'Understanding Christianity' resource as a main source of information when studying Christianity. We will also draw on information from various other sources to ensure our teaching and learning remains broad and balanced alongside focusing on the intent, implementation and impact of the curriculum.

We believe it paramount that our children understand the communities that they live within in order to understand the British Value of Mutual Respect, and to fulfil our aim that our children will become Religiously Literate. Therefore, the decision to study these religions is based upon information and data gathered from the census, current information and future predictions of the religions in our local areas. Across the Rural Primaries communities, both Christianity and Islam showed as the highest current percentage of all the populations; although Sikhism may currently have larger numbers of followers in some of the local areas, the global spread and influence of Islam and Buddhism, along with frequent reference to them in news and current affairs, mean that they are integral to preparing our pupils for life in modern Britain. In addition, there are many links between Buddhism and the growth of interest in mental wellbeing,

meditation and spirituality within the media and current affairs; our curriculum provides our children with a greater understanding and acceptance of these areas and the wider world.

Teaching and learning in RE will be rooted in three key disciplines: theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences; adapted for the school context in the following ways:

Theology	Philosophy	Human/Social Sciences
We call this <i>thinking through believing</i> . It is about asking questions that believers would ask. It requires pupils to think like theologians, or to look at concepts through a theological lens. Pupils will explore questions and answers that arise from inside religions and worldviews.	We call this <i>thinking through thinking</i> . It is about asking questions that thinkers would ask. It requires pupils to think like philosophers, or to look at concepts through a philosophical lens. Pupils will explore questions and answers raised through considering the nature of knowledge, existence and morality.	We call this <i>thinking through living</i> . It is about asking questions that people who study lived reality or phenomena would ask. It requires pupils to think like human and social scientists, or to look at concepts through a human/social science lens. Pupils will explore questions and answers raised in relation to the impact of religions and worldviews on people and their lives.

RE and the broader, whole school curriculum

In addition to the aims and objectives of the RE curriculum, the study of RE supports the broader aims of the school curriculum, which is to be balanced and broadly based. As such, the RE curriculum will strengthen:

- Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Personal, social, health and citizenship education
- Reading and writing
- Vocabulary development
- Spoken language
- Numeracy and mathematics
- British Values
- The Prevent Duty

Reporting on pupils' progress and attainment

Pupils' progress will be assessed in relation to the stated aims of the subject. The main question we will ask in order to assess our children will be: *'How well are pupils able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews?'* In order to answer this question, children will have targets from each of the 3 disciplines (theology, philosophy and human/social sciences) to work towards during their learning. We will report to parents on the attainment and progress of their child in RE. Assessment will take place every term and will sit alongside their maths, reading and writing assessments, with equal importance. Support will be given to children who are struggling or behind in their progress. RE is assessed as a core subject.

Withdrawal from RE

We believe that ***all pupils should study RE*** and that it is an integral part of the whole school curriculum, which helps prepare pupils for life in modern Britain. It is also a compulsory subject in the National Curriculum, however, a parent of a pupil ***may*** request:

- that their child be wholly or partly excused from receiving RE given in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus
- that a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving RE provided by the school may receive RE of the kind desired by the parent elsewhere, provided that it will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil on any day except at the beginning or end of a school session
- that a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving RE provided by the school may receive RE of the kind desired by the parent on the school premises provided that it does not entail any expenditure by the responsible authority

Supporting Teaching and Learning

To support our teachers with the planning and understanding of the curriculum, and to ensure the children are given the correct information, a pack of 'Religion Guidance' documents have been created to help give the staff a basic, background understanding of each religion that they will teach. These documents are always available to staff and can be accessed in both hard copy in school and via a shared portal should they need it to support their planning/preparation whilst at home.