

The Religious Education Policy Document

relating to St George's C of E Primary School

was approved by the Governing Body on

28.02.24

As we work within a Church school, the staff and governors of Great Bromley Church of England Primary will seek to ensure that within all policies and procedures we incorporate opportunities for identifying, understanding and developing our core Christian values and vision.

Our Vision

Working together, learning for life.....

*With the **compassion** of Jesus, we treat others with kindness and patience*

*With the **courage** of St George, we stand up for what is right*

*With **respect and friendship** we build each other up*

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY DOCUMENT

- 1.0 INTRODUCTION**
- 2.0 VISION AND VALUES**
- 3.0 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS**
- 4.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING**
- 5.0 THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE**
- 6.0 RE AND INCLUSION**
- 7.0 ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING**
- 8.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW**

1.0 INTRODUCTION

St George's C of E (Controlled) Primary School was founded in 1863 to provide education according to the principles and practice of the Church of England.

The school, which is legally owned by the trustees, is a church foundation and is controlled by the Local Education Authority which has full financial responsibility for its maintenance. The Church remains represented on the governing body and is able to foster links between the school, the Church and the local community. The aim of the school is to provide the best possible education for each child within the context of a Christian community.

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At our school we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children learn from religions as well as about religions.

This policy reflects the 2010 Equality Act. As a school we do not discriminate against any person on the basis of their sex, religion, or belief, race, disability and sexual orientation.

2.0 VISION AND VALUES

We believe that RE supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos and the value which we place on the development of the whole child is reflected in our RE curriculum. RE provides opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

We are a caring community whose core Christian values are built on mutual trust and respect and modelled by all members of staff on a daily basis.

St George's Core Values:

- We show compassion
- We are responsible
- We are respectful
- We persevere
- We are good friends
- We have courage

RE encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable pupils of whatever ability and level of development to:

1. acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of principal world faiths practised in Great Britain. These include Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism
2. develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures;
3. develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions

3.0 STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

Although there is not a National Curriculum for RE, all maintained schools must follow the National Curriculum requirements to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes RE. All maintained schools therefore have a statutory duty to teach RE.

Our school curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship.

As a CofE School, we share and work towards the Church of England's Vision for Education and adhere to the Religious Education Statement of Entitlement (Appendix 1).

As a Cof E (Controlled) school, we implement the Essex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education. We also use the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to support our teaching. Our curriculum map links units from both the Agreed Syllabus and Understanding Christianity, utilizing some resources from the Saffron Trust to support delivery. Each unit centres around a 'big question'. We work on a two year rolling programme in KS2.

4.0 TEACHING AND LEARNING

We plan our religious education curriculum in accordance with the LA's Agreed Syllabus. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the progression planned into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We believe that RE:

- provokes challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or nonreligious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics, and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives
- enables pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- teaches pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- prompts pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion

In EYFS and KS1, we present the children's work in large 'floor books'. The children are given the opportunity to look back at these books throughout the year to revisit prior learning.

In KS2, RE work is done in separate individual RE books.

5.0 THE EARLY YEARS FOUNDATION STAGE

We teach religious education to all children in the school, including those in the reception class.

In the Early Years Foundation Stage, Religious Education is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the Religious Education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals which underpin the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

The Early Learning Goal for Understanding the World (People and Communities) is: *Know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.*

Key learning experiences for EYFS children:

- Activities based on first-hand experience.
- Opportunities for play and learning that acknowledge children's particular religious and non-religious beliefs and cultural backgrounds.
- Activities that help children to become aware of, explore and question issues of difference in religion and culture.
- Activities that promote emotional, moral, spiritual and social development alongside intellectual development.
- Positive images in, for example, books and displays that challenge children's thinking and help them to embrace differences in religion and culture

7.0 RE AND INCLUSION

At our school we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs. Religious education forms part of the school's curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, those with special gifts and talents, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

We enable all pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in religious education. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom (a visit to a church, for example, that involves a journey) we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

8.0 ASSESSMENT FOR LEARNING

Pupils' work is marked and assessed in line with our policies on assessment and marking and this assessment is used to inform planning, to recognise and celebrate achievement and motivate the learner. Teachers ensure that lessons have a clear focus and objective and that learning experiences are evaluated. Both formative and summative assessments are used. Assessment strategies include listening to pupils, questioning, self-assessment opportunities and marking. The end of year annual report to parents includes grades for effort, attainment and progress in each subject, including RE. A copy of the annual report is retained within the pupil's file.

9.0 MONITORING AND REVIEW

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. S/he is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school.

This policy will be reviewed in line with the school's rolling programme.

Review June 2018:

- Changed wording of core values to reflect those around school and in other policies

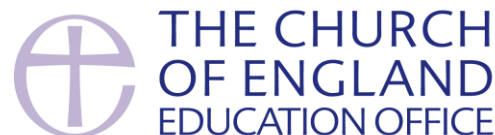
Review November 2022:

- 3.0
Added reference to Church of England Vision for Education and RE Statement of Entitlement
Removed reference to 'Explore' syllabus and made reference to new syllabus
- 7.0: Removed references to School Action / SA+

Review February 2024:

- 3.0 Removed reference to the upcoming new Agreed Syllabus as this has now been introduced. Added in reference to Understanding Christianity/Saffron Trust resourcs. Added in details of our rolling programme and reference to 'big questions'
- 4.0 Added info re floor/individual books
- 5.0 Added in ELG statement

Appendix 1



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 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.

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.

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 worldviews

3

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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