LEARNING AND GROWING; SAFE IN GOD'S LOVE

Birchington CE Primary School

Religious Education Policy

Introduction

Religious Education (RE) plays a central role in supporting our vision and values, enabling pupils to flourish academically, spiritually, morally, socially, and culturally. Through the study of Christianity and a range of other religious and non-religious worldviews, RE encourages pupils to develop knowledge, understanding, respect, and empathy for others in an increasingly diverse society. Rooted in the Church of England's commitment to educating for wisdom, hope, community, and dignity, our RE curriculum provides opportunities for pupils to explore questions of meaning, purpose, belief, and identity, helping them to become thoughtful, reflective, and responsible citizens.

At Birchington CEP, pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is challenging, rich and varied, enabling 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.

Everything we do and all the decision we make stem from our Christian vision,

We strive to ensure everyone in our happy, inclusive school flourishes and feels valued and safe.

Our peaceful learning environment and aspirational curriculum enables everyone to grow from their unique starting point, giving them a hopeful future.
Following Jesus' example, we forgive, respect, love and care for everyone.

As well as our Christian Vision, we also uphold our school values of **Peace, Hope, Forgiveness, Love** and **Respect** and our chosen parable, **The Lost Sheep**.

These are all intrinsic in our approach and strongly support our pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development.

Aims & Objectives of RE

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, religious education in this school aims for all pupils to: -

- Engage meaningfully and critically with learning which helps them to make sense of the multi-religious and multi-secular world in which they live.
- Know about, and understand, Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of beliefs and practices, using approaches which engage with biblical text and key sources of authority.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, appreciating the complexity, diversity, continuity and change that exists within those worldviews being studied.
- Grapple with questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- Understand the concept of religion and recognise its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals, communities and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- Develop disciplinary knowledge which equips pupils to be religiously literate.
- Explore their personal worldviews; their own religious or non-religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Curriculum for Religious Education

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 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
- 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

Reflecting the school's trust deed, 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. I n our school RE is taught weekly by the class teacher.

A sequential curriculum has been designed in order to allow pupils to become religiously literate through developing, year on year, their knowledge and skills.

• In EYFS, pupils study primarily Christianity and stories from Islam, Hindu Dharma, Judaism and Sikhi.
• At Key Stage One, pupils study Christianity, Judaism, Humanism and Islam.
• At Key Stage Two pupils study Christianity, Islam, Hindu Dharma, Sikhi, Humanism and Judaism

The curriculum for religious education is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences.

Theology: This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

Philosophy: This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

Human/Social Sciences: This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

Teaching and learning

We follow the new, updated (2022) Kent Agreed Syllabus which incorporates Understanding Christianity units and RE Today units.

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.

RE offers a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences, understanding that pupils learn best in different ways. Pupils will experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry based style of learning by:

- Listening to the teacher and each other
- Asking and discussing 'big' questions
- Reading and critically analysing of texts
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers
- Discussion with the teacher and other pupils
- Pair and group work
- Using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama
- Visits and visitors
- Artwork
- Outdoor learning
- 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.

Cross-curricular Links

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 health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Pupils are assessed in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within religious education.

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 and carers.

Role of the Spirituality Hub

The Spirituality Hub driver will work alongside members of the Spirituality Hub including, the Headteacher, Seniors Leaders and Link Governors to:

- ✓ Ensure that all pupils receive their entitlement of religious education. (Statement of Entitlement 2026, The Church of England Education Office) NSE+RE+Statement+of+Entitlement+for+publication+January+2026.pdf
- ✓ Produce and regularly review the subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date
- ✓ Produce, monitor and review a yearly Hub Plan with key targets linked to the School Plan
- ✓ 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
- ✓ Support colleagues and help develop their subject expertise
- ✓ Monitor and review the implementation of policy, schemes of work, the quality and effectiveness of the delivery of RE, pupils' progress and standards
- ✓ Liaise with other staff, parents, carers and pupils
- ✓ Seek opportunities for professional development for themselves and other staff
- ✓ Order resources
- ✓ Monitor end of year assessments
- ✓ Observe the teaching of RE, providing support and guidance for teachers and teaching assistants
- ✓ Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons
- ✓ Work closely with other schools through regular meetings/training

Resources

Religious Education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books, 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 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 (or their own request if aged 18 or over).

(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 reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

Withdrawal from RE

Parents/carers have the legal right to withdraw their child, either wholly or partly, from Religious Education (RE). The school recognises and respects this legal right and will process requests for withdrawal promptly. Requests for withdrawal should be made in writing to the Headteacher. The school will acknowledge the request and confirm the arrangements that will be made for the supervision of the pupil during RE lessons. While the school is responsible for supervising pupils who are withdrawn from RE, it is not required to provide alternative RE teaching or incur additional costs in doing so. The school is committed to ensuring that parents and carers are informed about the aims, content and educational value of Religious Education. Information about the RE curriculum is available through the school website, curriculum information and discussions with school staff. However, the decision to withdraw a pupil from RE rests with the parent and will be respected. The school will maintain appropriate records of all withdrawal requests and the arrangements made in response.