

Ashford CE Primary School



Religious Education Policy

Signed: _____ P Wells _____

Approved by FGB: 18 July 2024

Chair of Governors

Religious Education Policy

Our School Vision

We are a caring Christian community where everyone adopts an “I can” attitude; everyone feels valued, safe and loved by God. We celebrate our God-given individuality, achievements and talents and we aspire, with God’s help, to become the best that we can be. We believe that each one of us has the ability to achieve our highest potential, living and learning in the fullness of God.

I can do all things through Christ who gives me strength.

Philippians 4v13

Introduction

This policy is intended to assist staff and pupils in developing a knowledge and understanding of Religious Education and is set within the context of the Church of England Vision for Education, the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and the school’s theologically rooted vision and associated Christian values.

Our RE curriculum aims to support and contribute to the vision of the school as a whole by:

- Encouraging and enabling children to express and explore their own beliefs
- Developing children’s knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity and other principle religions, their beliefs, values and practices
- Helping children to understand and appreciate the beliefs of others
- Assisting children in their personal search for the meaning of life
- Assisting children in developing self-worth and a respect for others
- Encouraging spiritual awareness of people and the natural world
- Encouraging positive Christian values and helping children to explore them for themselves
- Ensuring that RE is intrinsic to the whole curriculum and life of the school

What is Religious Education (RE)?

RE is a core academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and world views, recognising their local, national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Taken from the *Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement*, the aims and objectives of Religious Education in Church schools are:

- 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.

Legal Requirements

In accordance with the 2016 Statement of Entitlement, Religious Education is provided for all registered pupils, except those withdrawn at their parents' request. (*DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28*) The teaching of RE comprises between 5% and 10% of the curriculum timetable. This equates to 1 hour per week in KS1 and 1 hour 20 minutes in KS2.

Right of Withdrawal

The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child from RE and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the distinctively Christian vision of the 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. Such requests should be made to the Headteacher in writing. We trust, however, that through open communication at the outset and a clear message about the vision and values of the school, such situations will be rare.

How We Teach RE

RE at Ashford Church of England Primary School is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum and the school theologically rooted vision.

Curriculum Balance and Time

The school has adopted the LDBS scheme across the school. This is taught in half-termly units with a clear skills progression as pupils move through the school. An introduction to other faiths is part of the scheme with two thirds of the learning being Christian based. The other faiths studied are Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism and Islam.

The Intent of the LDBS Syllabus

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – *Vision for Education* (Church of England).
- To offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
 - Ability to be critical thinkers

- Ability to engage critically with texts
- Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions
- Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews
- Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions
- Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.

To offer units of learning that

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content.
- Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences.
- Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children.
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own.

To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances

- The Christian vision of the school.
- Contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children.
- Takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement.
- The Church of England’s vision for Education – every person deserves to live a ‘life in all its fullness.’

Implementation of the LDBS syllabus

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process

Enquire: Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, philosophy or human/social science.

Investigate/explore: What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This ‘explore’ stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to ‘deepen’ learning:

- Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
- Using challenging and controversial questions
- Extended pieces of writing
- Discussion which continually asks ‘Have we gone deep enough yet?’
- Children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc)

- Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues

Evaluate/communicate: What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

Reflect on/express: What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

Early Years Foundation Stage

In Reception, Religious Education is taught as a whole class. The class teacher leads an input and the learning is followed up in continuous provision. The provision provides hands on activities using resources and engaging stimuli.

Religious Education in Key Stage One

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level. Children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. Children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life. They will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own. Some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

Religious Education in Key Stage Two

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level. That they will be able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary. That they will have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life. We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two, to be able to express and justify their own views with confidence. We aim for them to be critically thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts. We want our children to be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

Access to the Curriculum

We recognise, through our adaptive planning system, that children have a variety of learning needs and therefore these are reflected in the activities that are planned. We take each child as an individual and with sensitivity, in order to minimise any barriers to learning. Our aim is that this will enable them to develop new skills, concepts and knowledge and to flourish.

All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

Impact of the LDBS syllabus

- Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews. (Religious literacy)
- Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points as a result of a rich and engaging RE curriculum.
- Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- Children will be able to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.
- Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness.

Environment and Resources

RE teaching will be supported by a range of resources on different religions, such as books for teachers, pupils and artefacts. We use resources from the local community to further enrich our RE teaching and learning. We also use guidance materials and CPD opportunities produced by the Diocese. 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.

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which Religious Education can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking.

We plan and organise the environment, with a range of tasks and activities that are adapted accordingly, to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of development and learning need. We promote both independent and collaborative working. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum.

We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts. We value the importance of hands-on experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips and visitors. We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with our parish and work collaboratively with the church and wider community.

Planning, Assessment, Recording, Monitoring and Evaluation

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort. The LDBS syllabus is designed to have content that is two thirds Christian and one third other major world faiths.

We use the LDBS assessment statements and assess the children termly using emerging, expected and greater depth. Formative assessment is used to adapt teaching content and ensure that gaps in knowledge are addressed in a timely manner.

The quality of RE teaching and learning is monitored regularly through a range of activities such as lesson observations, book looks, evaluation of data and pupil voice.

Continued Professional Development

Through our monitoring of teaching and learning in RE, we identify key areas for staff professional development activities. We work closely with LDBS advisors who are available to provide training and additional support as needed.

Parents and Carers

As a school we recognise that a partnership with parents and carers is essential to help children flourish. We encourage parents to discuss RE learning with their child at home and we share half termly curriculum maps with information about future learning to support this discussion. We aim to involve parents in RE learning as much as possible and invite parents in to discuss their faith with the children as an additional resource to support learning.

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 Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- To keep up to date with developments in the area of Religious Education through reading, attending LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools.
- To monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching and assessment of Religious Education across the school in collaboration with the leadership team.
- To support staff in the teaching of Religious Education across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation.
- To lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards.
- To plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective Religious Education teaching.
- To work closely with the senior leadership team to identify CPD needs of individuals, teams and the whole school.

- To regular review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document.
- 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.