

# Church of the Ascension CE Primary School

## Religious Education Policy



***‘Learn with love, flourish with faith.’***

*Do everything in love (1 Corinthians 16:14).*

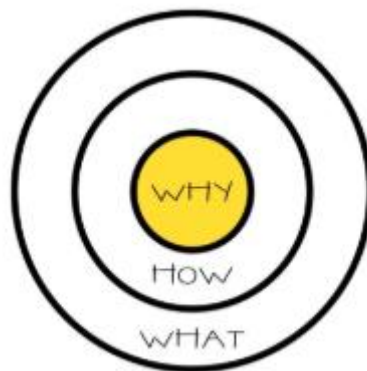
As an inclusive Christian school, Church of the Ascension C.E Primary School aims to create a loving, caring and respectful community, where individuals can flourish spiritually, socially and academically as children of God in a rich learning environment. Our vision is to inspire lifelong learning, whilst encouraging resilience, independence, aspiration and an appreciation of God’s wonderful world.

### **Curriculum Drivers:**

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
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| <b>Resilience:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To think critically.</li><li>• To ask questions and know how to find out the answers.</li><li>• To listen to others with an intention of understanding and appreciating.</li></ul> | <b>Independence:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To become courageous advocates and now when and how to be called to action.</li><li>• To develop confidence in expressing their own thoughts, opinions and where applicable, beliefs.</li></ul> |
| <b>Aspiration:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To develop skills in theology, social and human science and philosophy through a multi-disciplinary approach.</li></ul>                                                            | <b>Appreciation:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Understand how religious beliefs and traditions impact on the world.</li></ul>                                                                                                                  |

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|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Develop a positive attitude towards those who hold religious beliefs different to our own.</li></ul> |
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# Our Approach to the Teaching and Learning of Religious Education



## Subject Intent

*“Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads as long as we reach the same goal? In reality, there are as many different religions as there are individuals.”*

*Gandhi*

Religious Education has a special place at the heart of Church of the Ascension Primary School. Through our Religious Education curriculum, we are passionate about our children being: critical thinkers when enquiring and exploring questions arising from the study of religion and belief, courageous advocates promoting social action within the local community and beyond whilst being aware of their own beliefs and values, which they can reason and articulate confidently.

We aim for our children to develop skills to view themselves as theologians, social and human scientists and philosophers, with a secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religious traditions and beliefs represented in Great Britain including non-religious worldviews. Throughout their time with us, we aim for children to understand how religious beliefs and traditions impact on the world in which we live and to develop a positive attitude towards those who hold religious beliefs different to our own.

## Legal Position of Religious Education in School

Religious Education (RE) is unique in the curriculum as it is neither a core nor foundation subject. The 1988 Education Act states 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all pupils.

As a part of Elements Diocesan Learning Trust, Religious Education is provided **in-line with the funding agreement** and the Trust follows the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025 – 2030.

### The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement (September 2026) outlines the aims and expectations for RE in Church of England schools and guides this school's approach to RE.

It begins by stating: '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 to educate for dignity a respect encouraging all to live well together'. Quoting from the Church of England's Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, it continues: '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'.

### **Subject Implementation**

In-line with all church schools, this school has duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views.

RE is taught using an enquiry-based, whereby each unit of learning begins with 'The Big Question'. At the end of the unit, the children will apply their learning to answer the big question in an appropriate way. Understanding Christianity is used to support planning and teaching of Christianity units.

Research suggests that quality teaching of religious education is best conducted through a variety of different lenses. These different lenses create a multi-disciplinary approach; this enables pupils to go deeper in their learning and begin to understand more about the impact religious and non-religious worldviews have on individuals.

Each of the disciplinary lenses in RE, theology, philosophy and human and social science, have their own methodologies or ways of engaging. It is through these methodologies that children can interrogate religious and non-religious concepts. Using a range of disciplines and disciplinary methodologies in a unit of work not only supports the academic rigour of RE but also challenges pupils to become religiously literate individuals capable of holding informed conversations without prejudice. Not all disciplines and disciplinary methodologies will be appropriate for every unit of work; however, effective teaching and learning will select the most appropriate lens and methodology to the unit of work being completed.

At Church of the Ascension, our core Christian values, thankfulness, generosity, respect, forgiveness, honesty and perseverance, are at the heart of all we do and are taught indirectly throughout the school. RE lessons are planned and delivered in a variety of ways ensuring that all children can access and participate. Key vocabulary is displayed and revisited to enable children to develop their religious literacy and to articulate their ideas accurately. Interactive, practical activities encourage the children to discuss their ideas and extend their understanding of difficult concepts and challenging questions.

We appreciate the positive impact that local faith communities can have on pupils' experience in RE. Therefore, our school encourages visits to places of worship and

welcomes visitors from different faith communities. We recognise it is vitally important that teachers demonstrate respectful attitudes towards all faiths, modelling the attitudes and responses we would expect from our pupils.

As identified in the Statement of Entitlement, teaching and learning in RE in this school will provide:

- 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.

RE that makes a positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

### Organisation and Time Allocation

The Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education specifies that Christianity is to be the main religious worldview studied in and through RE in each year group/phase equating to at least 50% of curriculum time. It also states that, in a Church school there should be sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages (KS) 1-4.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement and the structure of Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus, we have agreed that, as a minimum:

- in the Foundation Stage pupils will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it. They will be introduced to a range of faith traditions and will be taught RE for 36 hours over the year
- at Key Stage 1 pupils study Christianity and Judaism or Islam - RE will be taught for at least for 36 hours over the year
- at Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and also consider non-religious worldviews - RE will be taught for at least for 45 hours over the year.

### Subject Impact

## **What are the outcomes for our children in this subject?**

Through our carefully designed curriculum, by the time children leave Church of the Ascension they will be:

- Critical thinkers
- Effective debaters
- Respectful and appreciative of all faiths and worldviews
- Independent and resilient learners
- Active listeners
- Articulate and effective communicators
- Courageous advocates
- Reflective

## **How do we know that we have achieved these outcomes?**

Pupils' progress in RE is based on the expected outcomes outlined in the Worcester Agreed Syllabus. At the end of each unit, the children are given the opportunity to answer 'the big question' in the most appropriate way.

## **Assessment / Recording & Reporting**

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025-2030 sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the expected end of Key Stage learning outcomes as outlined in the syllabus.

As a school, we track progress regularly to ensure best outcomes for all children and inform future planning.

School reports are sent home in the Summer Term of each year and the RE report is written with reference to assessment records as well as pupils' individual work.

## **Responsibilities for RE in School**

The Headteacher has ultimate responsibility for ensuring that the legal framework for RE is carried out and that the teaching of RE fits within the school's distinctively Christian vision.

The Subject Leader is responsible for:

- ensuring personal subject knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by participating in Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for RE and share good practice
- attending RE clusters / hub meetings
- providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- all teaching staff and those responsible for governance understand the distinctive role and purpose of RE within a Church school
- ensure that Christianity is the main religion taught in and through RE in each year group/phase equating to at least 50% of curriculum time
- ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as Understanding Christianity

- ensure that the teaching of RE enquires in to religious and non-religious worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences
- supporting and clarifying approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- engage with their diocese when developing the school's RE curriculum and adapting schemes and frameworks, such as a locally agreed syllabus, to the school's context
- acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary
- monitoring the teaching and learning of RE through regular lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, analysis of data and pupil voice and being able to discuss impact and standards, all in conjunction with the Headteacher / Senior Leadership Team
- contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process, including, but not limited to Inspection Question 6 and 7.

The Headteacher and Governors must ensure:

- RE's high priority within the curriculum and status as an academic subject are clearly articulated.
- that the legal framework for RE is upheld within the school
- that the Statement of Entitlement for RE is adhered to within school
- that all pupils make progress in achieving the learning outcomes of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- all teaching staff and those responsible for governance understand the distinctive role and purpose of RE within a Church school
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have effective and regular opportunities for CPD
- teachers newly-appointed to church schools are provided with support offered by the diocese to enable them to become effective teachers of RE
- that clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils make good progress
- engage with the diocese when developing the school's RE curriculum and adapting schemes and frameworks, such as a locally agreed syllabus, to the school's context
- appropriate support is in place to ensure the effective provision of RE
- monitor RE effectively in accordance with the Statement of Entitlement.

### **The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education**

In the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This provision will be the parents' responsibility. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this

does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

At Church of the Ascension School, we believe that Religious Education helps all children, irrespective of their own religious beliefs, understand the world around them and the communities in our world. We wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship.

Any request from a parent for the withdrawal from RE must be made to the Headteacher. All requests will be granted, and parents are under no obligation to provide a reason for their decision. Once a request has been received and granted by the headteacher, parents may be offered an opportunity to discuss the nature of RE within school, to support the school's understanding of the parents' decision. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with you about Religious Education in the school; however, parents are under no obligation to take up this offer and it is not conditional on a request for withdrawal being granted. Should parents take up the offer of a discussion, the school may seek to establish the religious issues about which the parent objects to their child being taught.

## **Review**

This policy will be subject to the normal cycle of policy review. Furthermore, there may be occasions where this policy is reviewed outside the normal review cycle, including but not limited to:

- Change in Agreed Syllabus
- Change in Church of England Statement of Entitlement
- Change in legal position framework for RE