



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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TOGETHER WE EMPOWER EXCELLENCE

Introduction

Within the Learning Academy Partnership schools, we teach according to the RE Today Agreed Syllabus as provided and agreed by both Devon and Torbay SACREs.

Within our schools, we recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome this diversity and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child and their family through the teaching of the agreed syllabus. We are glad to have the active support of religious and non-religious members of our local community to support our teaching of RE and we draw on this expertise where appropriate.

As a Trust, we place importance on the inter-relationship between pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and the leading role which the RE curriculum plays in some of these areas.

The importance of Religious Education in the curriculum

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in line with the funding agreement of each academy within the multi academy trust. Therefore, academies that were previously aided schools will provide RE in line with their funding agreement and schools that were controlled or community schools their funding agreement. Therefore within the Learning Academy Partnership (hereinafter the Trust), the requirements for Religious Education in all schools is specified in their individual funding agreements. The Trust provides Religious Education in accordance with the requirements and advice of the Diocese of Exeter and the Agreed Local Syllabus as appropriate.

Purpose and Aims of RE

There is not a National Curriculum for RE. However, the National Curriculum requires schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum, which includes RE. RE within the Learning Academy Partnership will be provided in line with the legal requirements for schools and academies.

These requirements outline that:

- The basic curriculum will include provision for religious education for all pupils on the school roll;
- The content of RE shall reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain (section 375 (3) of the Education Act 1996 and paragraph (5) of Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998);
- The RE which is provided shall be in accordance with the trust funding agreement.

Within the framework of the law and the Agreed Syllabus, we aim that Religious Education will enable pupils to:

- Provide an ambitious, challenging, enriching and inclusive curriculum;
- Develop an understanding of religious diversity and diversity of non-religious worldviews;
- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in the United Kingdom;
- Develop an understanding of the influence of religious and non-religious worldviews, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, locally, nationally and globally;
- Learn about and develop a knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, both in local and national contexts, describing, and analysing beliefs and practices;
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the teachings and diversity within the religious and non-religious worldviews represented in the United Kingdom, enabling pupils to hold informed conversations about religion and worldviews by learning how to agree and disagree respectfully and develop a sense of respect for other people and challenge prejudice;
- Develop positive attitudes of respect towards other people who hold views and beliefs different from their own, and towards living in a society of diverse religions and worldviews;

- Develop pupils' dialogical skills to enable them to engage positively in pluralistic societies;
- Understand and interpret sources of text, authority, sources of wisdom and other evidence and evaluate the value of these;
- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, ultimate reality and issues of right and wrong, responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and worldviews relating them to their own understanding and experience; reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study;
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings and other beliefs can relate to them;
- Enable pupils to develop a sense of identity;
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder within the world, learning how to articulate personal beliefs, values and experiences and to foster a sense of personal spiritual development and reflection;
- Explore what it means to be human;

The Contribution of RE to the Wider Curriculum

Within the 2002 Education Act, Section 78 states that the curriculum for pupils provided should be a *'balanced and broadly based curriculum which—*

(a)promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society, and

(b)prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.'

Religious Education supports the wider curriculum by:

- Supporting the social, moral and cultural development of pupils, exploring the role that religion plays in the the lives of people within diverse societies
- Making links between the values of the school and how values are put into practice in the lives of people
- Promoting respect for all and challenging prejudice and discriminations
- Exploring and celebrating diversity within cultures, communities, values and beliefs
- Community cohesion; exploring diversity within the local area and developing skills of respect
- How religion and worldviews in the UK and the world impact on life
- Promotion of British Values

RE Curriculum

All pupils are entitled to receive a broad and balanced curriculum and RE plays an important part in this. We aim for all children to experience high quality Religious Education by planning in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus and guidance from the Diocese of Exeter, as appropriate to each academy. Credible RE publications may also be used to support the teaching of Religious Education.

Within Religious Education, pupils should be provided with a range of learning opportunities that may include:

- Visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities
- Using art, music, dance, drama and multimedia techniques
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas
- Using story, pictures, art, photographs and a range of sources/texts to interpret meaning and explore ideas in order to deepen understanding
- Using artefacts to help children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and forms of expression
- Discussing religious and philosophical questions giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- Developing the use of ICT (particularly DVDs and the internet) in helping children's awareness of religions and beliefs

- Developing their skills of communication, including debate, in order to be able to respond in an informed and respectful way

Approaches to Teaching and Learning and the Organisation of RE

RE explores Christianity, especially the beliefs, practices and significance of the Church of England where appropriate, and other principal religions and worldviews represented in Great Britain. It is taught through a range of key themes as outlined in the locally agreed syllabus and Diocese guidance. Religious Education is delivered as a discrete subject that is taught on a weekly basis. It may also, where appropriate and relevant, form part of the work of the wider curriculum. It may also be delivered through interfaith days.

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus, pupils will study the following:

- ***Within EYFS, pupils study Christianity and a range of stories belonging to different religious traditions***
- ***At Key Stage 1 pupils study Christianity alongside other world religions***
- ***At Key Stage 2 pupils study Christianity alongside other world religions and worldviews***

They will explore these religions and worldviews through the following themes:

Key Stage 1:

- Believing/Story
- Celebrations
- Symbols
- Leaders and Teachers
- Belonging
- Myself

Key Stage 2:

- Beliefs and Questions
- Teaching and Authority
- Religion and the Individual/Religion and Community
- Worship, Pilgrimage and Sacred Places
- Beliefs in Action in the World
- Symbols and Religious Expression
- The Journey of Life and Death
- Inspirational People

Time allocation

Time Allocation. It is recommended that RE is taught for a minimum of 36 hours per year at Key Stage One, and 45 hours per year at Key Stage Two. The programmes of study in this agreed syllabus have been written with this in mind. The teaching of RE in EYFS is planned within the EYFS Framework. RE curriculum time does not include assembly or collective worship, even when the assembly provides a starting point for curricular work. Christmas and Easter production rehearsals and performances are not RE.

Within Church of England schools, this also stands alongside the National Society's Statement of Entitlement. This states the following:

“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.”

- ***Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement (2019)***

Within community schools, RE will be taught in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus recommendations.

Locally Agreed Syllabus

A detailed scheme of work is available for teachers and other interested people (upon request) alongside this policy. It has been written in the light of the RE Today Agreed Syllabus as provided by Devon and Torbay SACREs.

Right to specifically Anglican RE

Parents who have children in academies that were previously controlled schools have a right to specifically denominational RE. Where this request is made RE will be provided by reserved teachers as set out in previous trust documents.

Assessment and Expectation in RE

Religious Education will be assessed in line with the assessment and marking policies of the Trust. Assessment will be used for two purposes:

- A. to promote pupils progress in RE over time
- B. To ensure that pupils are meeting the expected standard as set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus and, where applicable, the expectations of the SIAMS framework.

Assessed work will be moderated annually to ensure that all teachers are working towards the expected standards.

Occasionally teachers' marking and assessment will be scrutinised to inform the improvement of practice across the Multi Academy Trust.

By the end of Key Stage 1 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus.

By the end of Key Stage 2 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus.

The Trust RE Lead, in collaboration with each Academy RE Lead, is responsible for the monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning within Religious Education.

Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

Our trust policy regarding pupils with special needs and differentiation applies also to RE and teachers will use this when planning and delivering RE for all pupils.

Recording

Work in Religious Education can be recorded in a number of ways, which capture the learning and progress made within units of work. This work provides evidence of progress made by the children and identifies points for support and extension. A portfolio of children's work is built up over a period of time and this also supports evidence of progress within RE.

We also recognise that some of the most important learning in RE (e.g. how RE contributes to spiritual development) cannot be formally assessed in the same way. What we do assess is children's progress against the level descriptors in the local agreed syllabus.

Visits and visitors

As part of the curriculum, each academy ensures that appropriate visits are made available for the children in order for them to have first-hand experiences and gain a greater understanding of Religious Education.

Before inviting speakers into school, teachers will complete the proforma in the Trips and Visits Guidance which is then authorised by the Head of Academy who is responsible for ensuring that the Prevent guidance is adhered to.

Visitors to the academy are welcomed and enabled to share their experiences and knowledge.

All visitors to the school and visits to places of worship are in line with the academy safeguarding and health and safety policies. We ensure that all visitors are in line with the Prevent and British Values curriculum and that they have engaged in an informed dialogue regarding the purpose of the visit with a member of staff pre-visit.

Rights of withdrawal

RE must be included in the curriculum for all registered pupils, including pupils in Reception.

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning; it is an inclusive, broad minded subject.

We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE. We do encourage parents to contact the Academy Head if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the academy, recognising that parents have no obligation to justify their decision to withdraw their child from RE.

In any instance where RE is integrated into the wider school curriculum, the academy will discuss the arrangements with the parents to explore how the pupil's withdrawal can be best accommodated to meet the legal requirements of the right of withdrawal.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, the academy does not have a duty to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will be supervised during the time of withdrawal.

In addition to this, where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive and it is the duty of the parent to provide this alternative provision at no cost to the individual academy or the Trust.

This is inline with the guidance from Exeter Diocese

http://exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Exeter_Diocese_RE_CW_Withdrawal_Policy.pdf

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff. Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

Responsibilities for RE

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Head of Academy will ensure:

- All pupils make progress in RE
- The curriculum meets legal requirements
- That RE is effectively led and managed and that standards remain high
- Achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are regularly evaluated
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- Teachers, both newly appointed and existing teachers, are provided with the correct support to enable them to become effective teachers of RE
- That teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- Clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- That teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so as stipulated in their contracts

- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE do that pupils can make good progress

Equal Opportunities

Within the Trust, we are committed to ensuring equal opportunities for all children. We will continue to monitor the impact of this policy to ensure that it meets the needs of all children.

Conclusion

The Trust is a Church of England Multi Academy Trust and it holds dearly the anglican ethos of openness, inclusivity and the common good of the whole community.

It is our aim to support the Church of England Vision for Education so that we educate for knowledge and wisdom, hope and aspiration, community and living well together and dignity and respect.

Religious Education makes an important contribution to these aims and to the spiritual development of children. We aim to provide the knowledge, skills and opportunities for all children to explore their own beliefs and values and the beliefs and values of others. We aim that this will enable children to develop a sense of respect for the religious and cultural differences of others so that they may be able to contribute positively within a pluralistic society and hold respectful, informed discussions with people whose views may be different to their own.

Amendments

Autumn 19	Added page 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide an ambitious, challenging, enriching and inclusive curriculum • Enable pupils to hold informed conversations about religion and worldviews
Autumn 19	Added page 3 "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." - Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement (2019)