



Holy Trinity Church of England (Aided) Primary School

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (RE) Policy

The Best for Every Child - a Unique Child of God

See how much the Father has loved us! His love is so great that we are called God's children — and so, in fact, we are (1 John 3:1)

At Cookridge Holy Trinity Church of England (A) Primary School we serve the community by providing a happy, secure and caring Christian environment where all are valued and respected. We pride ourselves on being friendly and welcoming. We believe in the uniqueness of the individual as a child of God and recognise the range of contributions that each can make. We provide for the spiritual, emotional, physical, mental and social development of the whole child, as a child of God. We seek to foster self-esteem and instil a sense of responsibility to others and the world around them through the teaching of our Christian Values. We are committed to the pursuit of excellence, and the school curriculum aims to offer all children a broad and balanced, relevant and differentiated curriculum which provides consistency and continuity of teaching throughout the school, enabling every child to maximise their potential. We work in partnership with parents, the local church, the wider community and other schools to provide an education of the highest quality.

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At Cookridge Holy Trinity, 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 Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus, we learn about other religions and world views, ensuring that pupils develop mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. Links with our school's Christian values and vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

In recognition of our distinctive context, Religious Education has a high profile. We emphasise:

- A Christian ethos which permeates the whole curriculum, but finds particular emphasis in this subject
- A wide range of Christian resources
- Close links with Cookridge Holy Trinity Church and the wider Christian community
- The faith commitment of governors and staff
- The Christian foundation of the school

Religious Education Aims

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, a high quality Religious Education in our school aims:

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual and philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

As stated in the Church of England Religious Education Statement of Entitlement, the following objectives are age appropriate at the end of our pupils' education in school. The expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and, as a minimum, pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

The importance of Religious Education

At Cookridge Holy Trinity, Religious Education is taught in accordance with the Diocese of Leeds and York Syllabus and reflects the distinctive and inclusive ethos of our Christian foundation.

We aim to encourage an atmosphere in which children can extend their understanding of themselves and the world in which they live, and so develop spiritually, socially and culturally. The purpose of Religious Education is to:

- To provide a course of Religious Education in Christianity and other world faiths particularly Judaism and Islam, Sikhism and Hinduism represented in Great Britain, within the framework of the school curriculum, appropriate to the educational needs of children at their different stages of development
- To encourage children to develop respect for different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, through exploring issues within and between faiths
- To encourage children to develop an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures
- To develop pupils' skills of enquiry and response through the use of religious vocabulary, questioning and empathy
- To develop skills of reflection and the communication of personal responses to beliefs, values and practices
- To allow children to make their own spiritual journey

Teaching and learning

RE has a high profile within our school curriculum and is comparable with other core curriculum areas. Quality teaching in RE helps generate respect for different views and interpretations where real dialogue takes place. Learners develop and use a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion and world views as lived by believers. Key cross-curricular skills such as reading, writing, observation, enquiry and discussion are practised. Rigorous assessment based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts ensure that attainment is high and progress significant in developing an understanding of Christianity and a range of other world religions and on other world views as appropriate.

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
- Ask and discuss 'big' questions
- Reading of texts
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Discussion and debate with the teacher and other pupils
- Pair and group work
- Using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, VR, music and drama.
- Visits and visitors
- Artwork
- Time for reflection

Please see also Teaching and Learning Policy, Marking and Feedback Policy.

Curriculum balance and time

In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Diocesan Boards of Education for Leeds and York strongly recommend a minimum allocation of curriculum time for RE based upon the law and the Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office: Schools should aim to be close to 10% of curriculum for teaching RE, but must be no less than 5%. RE can be delivered in flexible ways and need not be confined to a lesson per week. The amount of time dedicated to the R.E. curriculum follows the recommendations set down in the Agreed Syllabus for Leeds and York and overall it should work out as:

Early Years Foundation Stage: 36 hours of RE integrated into Learning, eg, part of Personal, Social and Emotional Development and Understanding of the World.

Key Stage 1: 36 hours of tuition per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours of tuition per year.

Further opportunities should be sought to develop RE in the curriculum for example through RE days, RE weeks, visits and other projects. The guidance given within the syllabus leads to a study of up to 80% Christianity and 20% non-Christian faiths. Pupils will study aspects of the practices and beliefs of the other five major world faiths: Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism.

Attitudes in Religious Education and Links with other aspects of the Curriculum

The Governing Body endorses the view of the Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus regarding Religious Education. 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, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship. All areas of the curriculum contribute to the spiritual development of our pupils. Sensitively taught RE further enhances the attitudes that we wish to foster in our pupils of:

responsibility, respect, tolerance, empathy, care, acceptance, understanding and self-discipline.

The knowledge and personal development, which a child receives by participating in a RE curriculum, will complement all areas of learning.

Moral Education cannot be taught exclusively through Religious Education, although most religious traditions have an inherent moral code. In the same way moral education cannot provide for religious understanding.

Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)

The teaching and learning of RE enables our children to develop a positive sense of themselves, and others, and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. They will do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. They will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own community. Children in EYFS will encounter religions and worldwide views through special people, books, times, places and objects. Teachers record work in whole class big books; capturing the children's own work, thoughts and discussions made in the learning environment.

Key Stage One

The teaching and learning of RE in Key Stage One aims to develop children's knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews, recognising their local, national and

global contexts. They should use basic subject-specific vocabulary. They should raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Following the Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus, RE teaching and learning should enable pupils to: *Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious concepts and beliefs, Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, Make connections between religious and non-religious concepts, beliefs, practices and ideas studied.*

During the key stage, pupils will be taught knowledge, skills and understanding through learning about Christianity, Islam and Judaism. Pupils may also encounter other religions and non-religious worldviews in thematic units, where appropriate. The children record work in both individual RE books and whole class big books (year 1).

Key Stage Two

The teaching and learning of RE in Key Stage Two aims to extend their knowledge and understanding of religious and non-religious worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They should be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject-specific vocabulary. They should be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils should learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

Following the Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus, RE teaching and learning should enable pupils to: *Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious concepts and beliefs, Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, Make connections between religious and non-religious concepts, beliefs, practices and ideas studied.*

During the key stage, pupils will study Christianity for approximately two thirds of study time, plus, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism. Pupils may also learn from other religions and non-religious worldviews in thematic units. The children record work in both individual RE books.

Planning

Long, medium and short term planning for Religious Education is in line with school policy. Within EYFS, KS1 and KS2 there are 6 units of work covered each year. Unit outlines can be found in Year group RE files and on the school server. The school RE planning document outlines the learning objectives (taken from the Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus and Understanding Christianity resource), success criteria, individual/ group activities and assessment opportunities. Vulnerable groups and ability groups are indicated on the plans. Year group teachers plan together and consistency is established across year groups. This is regularly monitored by the RE Coordinator and regular feedback is provided to staff and governors.

Differentiation

Our whole school policy regarding pupils with special needs and differentiation, applies to RE. Teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This of course may not relate to their general educational ability. At Cookridge Holy Trinity appropriate learning outcomes for each key stage ensure progression. Pupils may revisit content but there are clear expectations of progression at each Key Stage in line with level descriptors. At the short term planning stage, care is taken to ensure that learning activities with clear objectives are matched to the ability of individual pupils.

Assessment

In accordance with the School Policy for Assessment, Recording and Reporting attainment in Religious Education is recorded on the RE school tracking format each half term. The RE Syllabus and Understanding Christianity units provide learning outcomes on each key question will help teachers to assess this, and to devise appropriate learning activities to enable pupils to secure their understanding and skills. Marking in books will support ongoing assessment of each child. Parents are entitled to expect a pupil report which describes the progress and achievement of their child annually in their school report.

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 Diocese of York and Leeds RE 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.

Inclusion

As an inclusive school *all* pupils, irrespective of social background, culture, race, gender, differences in ability and disabilities have access to a balanced and broadly based curriculum which includes Religious Education. We aim to meet the needs of the children in our care by:

- Setting suitable learning challenges,
- Responding to pupils diverse learning needs
- Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Equal Opportunities

In line with the Equal Opportunities Policy, we respect and value the right of all children to express their own beliefs and understand that some will be nurtured in a faith other than Christian. Children will be taught always to show respect and sensitivity for the beliefs of others. When studying key religious figures staff will be aware of the need to select both male and female contemporary figures as historically male figures predominate in the founding and development of most faiths.

Monitoring

Monitoring of teaching and learning in Religious Education is in line with school policy. It includes voluntary lesson observations, book monitoring and pupil interviews. The RE Coordinator holds staff meetings to ensure consistency and high expectations are evident.

Leadership in RE

Good RE depends upon quality subject leadership. RE is a core subject in a Church of England school. It should be a priority in church schools to build up the expertise of all those who lead and teach RE. Opportunities should be taken to provide access to specialist training and support from the diocese and other subject experts for all involved in RE. RE should have equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing. Higher Level Teaching Assistants (HLTAs) and Teaching Assistants (TAs) who are involved in the delivery of RE need to be supported by the RE subject leader or a member of the senior leadership team and must have access to professional development in RE.

The Role of the Subject Leader:

Policy, knowledge and development:

- Prepare a School Policy;
- Whole School Plan and Schemes of Work which cater for progression;
- Decide which religions are to be included at which key stage;
- Ensure that curriculum time is sufficient. The Statement of Entitlement says that this should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5%;
- Devise appropriate procedures for planning, assessment, recording and reporting pupils' work in line with whole school policy;
- Ensure SEN, EAL and gifted and talented school policies are promoted in RE;
- Promote RE with staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- Promote display of pupils' work in RE;
- Audit available resources, buy new ones and deploy appropriately;
- Keep up-to-date with local and national developments.

Monitoring:

- Review, monitor and evaluate provision and the practice of RE;
- Identify trends, make comparisons and know about different groups;
- Monitor planning, checking for clarity of outcomes and aspects of differentiation;
- Provide observation feedback and report on findings;
- Sample pupil's work;
- Evaluate outcomes for pupils in RE for progress and attainment;
- Set overall school targets for improvement.

Supporting and Advising:

- Prepare a subject action plan, including short and long term targets and a funding policy, which builds on existing practice and strives for continuous improvement;
- Lead curriculum development and ensure staff development through courses, in-school meetings and training;
- Keep up-to-date with new developments and resources;
- Support non-specialist teachers and staff;
- Work alongside colleagues to demonstrate good practice;
- Prepare statements about RE for parents and governors, as required;
- Ensure parents and children are involved in the process.

The role and responsibilities of governors:

The Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2016 states:

“A high quality Religious Education (RE) curriculum is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all maintained schools to teach a broad and balanced curriculum. At the heart of RE in church schools is the teaching of Christianity, rooted in the person and work of Jesus Christ. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools encourage learning about other religions and world views fostering respect for them. Although there is not a National Curriculum for RE, all maintained schools have a statutory duty to teach it. This is equally applicable to academies and free schools as it is to maintained schools. In foundation and voluntary controlled schools with a religious character, RE must be taught according to the Locally Agreed Syllabus unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school; and in voluntary aided schools RE must be taught in accordance with the trust deed.”

Therefore, governors in our school have a responsibility for holding the school leaders to account for the high quality of RE provided for pupils. All governors should have an understanding of the place and quality of Religious Education in Church schools; foundation governors bear particular responsibility in this area.

The role and responsibilities of governors are:

- To have strategic oversight of Religious Education
- To ensure that proper provision and resources are available in accordance with the Trust Deed
- To contribute to and support Religious Education, as a core subject of the school*
- To contribute to and support the formation of a policy and curriculum for Religious Education
- To ensure that the policy and curriculum prepares pupils with a religious understanding and sensitivity to take their place in the world
- To be a ‘critical friend’ in order to ensure the highest possible standards in teaching and learning in Religious Education
- To ensure a curriculum that is inclusive and reflects breadth and depth
- To ensure curriculum time and staffing meet the requirements of this syllabus.

Religious Education in a Church of England school or academy is a core subject

*To demonstrate the subject’s comparable status with other core curriculum areas in both staffing and resourcing, 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 specialist RE training or qualifications
- All staff teaching RE having access to appropriate professional development
- All teaching staff and governors having an understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within Church schools
- A governing body, which monitors standards in RE effectively.

(The Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2016)

Visits and visitors

We are able to visit places of worship in the immediate vicinity of our school / our local area / our region, where faith leaders and other members of the community are willing to meet with children and be involved in the teaching of RE. We aim to use this valuable resource for all classes. All pupils have the opportunity to visit a place of worship and participate in the visit of a representative to their RE class. The RE subject leader supports class teachers to organise these educational visits.

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.

Staff training and CPD

All staff have access to RE CPD in line with the subject leader's identified areas for development. This is either 'in house' or through Diocesan support. The RE subject leader also attends local network meetings.

Resources

We have a wide range of resources, to support our RE teaching, that we continue to develop. Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, subscriptions and artefacts. Our school makes use of guidance material produced by the SACRE and Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources are listed, stored and easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks are available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate. Our staff are given protected time to familiarize themselves with any new materials. A regular audit of resources takes place by the RE subject leader in order to update our collection.

Right to Withdraw

Our school complies with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the importance placed on RE as a core subject in a church school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. 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. We ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Head teacher before making this decision. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy should operate for the next 3 years, and then be fully reviewed by all staff and governors. To ensure that our RE policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, all staff are asked to continue to follow the Leeds and York Diocesan Syllabus guidance and Whole School Long Term Plan as set out by the RE coordinator. The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We maintain a 'self-evaluation' of our RE work in preparation for any scrutiny.

Self-Evaluation

The subject leader for RE will assess and review the subject's strengths and areas for development. This will be in line with SIAMS and OFSTED guidance about self-evaluation and review.