



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

|                     |              |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Policy Reference No | CUR002       |
| Review Frequency    | Annual       |
| Reviewed            | Autumn 2018  |
| Next Review Date    | Autumn 2019  |
| Ratified by SET     | January 2015 |

# TOGETHER WE EMPOWER EXCELLENCE

## Introduction

### 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

Within the Trust, we aim that Religious Education will:

- Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, ultimate reality and issues of right and wrong
- Explore what it means to be human
- Learn about and develop a knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, both in local and national contexts, describing, explaining and analysing beliefs and practices,
- Develop an understanding of religious diversity
- 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
- Learn how to agree and disagree respectfully
- Develop a sense of respect for other people and challenge prejudice
- Learn how to articulate personal beliefs, values and experiences
- Foster a sense of personal spiritual development and reflection
- Enable pupils to develop a sense of identity
- Develop a sense of awe and wonder within the world

For further details, please also refer to the following:

<https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/church-schools-and-academies/religious-education-and-collective-worship>

### Skills in RE

RE is more than just developing children's knowledge and understanding. It seeks to develop children's skills in investigation, enquiry, questioning, communication/dialogue, interpretation, application, analysis, evaluation and creativity. These are important skills for children to develop.

Skills may be explored in some of the following ways:

- Investigation/enquiry (finding out what people believe, how their beliefs affect the way they live, the impact of religion and belief upon communities and the different ways people express their beliefs).
- Communication/dialogue (sharing their ideas about religions and beliefs in a lively, informed, respectful way including different styles of writing, oral contributions, debate and the use of ICT).
- Interpretation (recognising and talking about religious symbols, stories and sacred texts).
- Analysis and evaluation (developing their own views and ideas, recognising the views of others, using sources of wisdom and authority to inform their thinking and understanding).

### **Attitudes in RE**

As with skills RE has a number of key attitudes it seeks to promote. These include:

- Self-esteem (so that every child feels valued and significant),
- Respect (including being sensitive to the beliefs, feelings and values of others so that children have a safe space in which to explore and discuss ideas and issues),
- Open-mindedness (being willing to learn and gain new understanding),
- An appreciation and wonder (developing children's imagination and curiosity)

### **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**

It is recommended that 5% of curriculum time be allocated to clearly defined religious education. This is in line with the requirement of the agreed syllabus. The programmes of study in this agreed syllabus have been written with this in mind. Approximately this amounts to:

Key Stage 1: 36 hours per year

Key Stage 2: 45 hours per year

**Within Church of England schools, this also** stands alongside the National Society's Statement of Entitlement. This states that 2/3 of the RE curriculum should be based on exploring Christianity. RE is taught discretely for 5% of the weekly timetable.

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

### **Locally Agreed Syllabus**

RE in Torbay, Devon and Plymouth schools and academies develops children's knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews that are represented in Great Britain. The syllabus reflects the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian and takes into account the other principal religions. Worldviews such as Humanism are also studied as part of the syllabus.

The Agreed Syllabus has one attainment target: Engaging with Religions and Worldviews.

Through engaging with religions and worldviews children learn about :

- Beliefs, Teachings and sources of Wisdom and Authority,
- Expressing Meaning,
- Questions of Meaning Purpose, Truth,
- Ways of Living,
- Identity; Diversity and Belonging,
- Values and Commitments

### **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. This means that they can use religious words to identify some features of religion and its importance for some people. They show awareness of similarities in religions and can identify how religion is expressed in different ways. They ask and respond sensitively to questions about their own and others experiences and feelings. They recognise their own values and those of others and are aware that some questions cause people to wonder and are difficult to answer.

By the end of Key Stage 2 children will be expected to achieve the expected standard as set in the locally agreed syllabus. In RE this means children can describe both similarities and differences within and between religions and worldviews. They make links between different aspects of religions and can describe the impact of religion and worldviews on people's' lives. They suggest answers to questions of identity and meaning. They apply their ideas to their own and others lives. They can also describe what inspires and influences themselves and others.

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.

### **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 met 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 instances 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](http://exeter.anglican.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Exeter_Diocese_RE_CW_Withdrawal_Policy.pdf)

### **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 so 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.