



Religious Education Policy

This is a Trust Policy– details specific to individual academies and their procedures are added by the academy in the *Appendix*. (For a copy of the policy for a specific academy which includes the *Appendix* – see the individual academy website).

Date	Revision & Amendment Details	By Whom
January 2022	Approved	Central Executive
January 2023	Reviewed and Approved	Central Executive

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1. Our Vision

Peterborough Diocese Education Trust's (the Trust) vision is:

“For every child, within our Trust, to experience an excellent education and to realise their God-given potential to flourish”

and each academy within the Trust has their own vision linked to this. An individual academy's vision is set out in the appendix to this policy (the *Appendix*).

2. Introduction

“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 educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live together. 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”. *(Taken from the Statement of Entitlement – Church of England Education Office 2019).*

At our academies, pupils and their families can expect a high quality RE curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews. As church academies, 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 Diocese of Peterborough RE syllabus we learn about other religions and worldviews, fostering respect for them. Links with our 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 pupils to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

3. Aims and Purposes

The principal aim for RE is **“to enable pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief”**.

(Taken from the Diocese of Peterborough RE Syllabus and based on continuing Diocesan Adviser work on the Purpose of RE – www.reonline.org.uk/news/revision-rethinking-re-a-conversation-about-religious-and-theological-literacy/)

This principal aim incorporates the following aims of RE in Church Schools as taken from the “Church of England Statement of Entitlement 2019”. For pupils 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
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied
- Engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience

- 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
- Explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Appropriate to their age at the end of their education in Church schools, 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 non-religious worldviews 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.

4. Legal Requirements

RE must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents’ request.

(DfE Circular 1/94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28)

The law relating to RE for pupils who are not yet in Key Stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As RE must be taught to ‘all registered pupils at the school’, it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or playgroups.

5. Right of Withdrawal

In keeping with the law, parents / carers may withdraw their children from RE provided they give written notification to the academy. Parents / carers are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. The academy will ensure that suitable supervision is provided for the pupil. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our academies, we would hope that all pupils admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making such a decision.

Staff always refer to the Subject Leader or Headteacher any questions from parents / carers about withdrawals.

6. Cross-curricular Links

RE supports the development of a wide range of educational skills 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, history, geography, computing, music, as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship.

7. Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in RE on different occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts
- Consume food
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to the guidelines set out in the Trust's Health and Safety Policy in these circumstances.

8. National and Local Context

We provide a range of opportunities for learners to make links between beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

Our teaching and learning pedagogy uses an enquiry-based approach that engages with text and beliefs and helps to develop religious and theological literacy. For academy specific details about local context– see the *Appendix*.

9. Curriculum for Religious Education

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our academies curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects.

This means that the RE curriculum:

- Contributes to British Values (mutual tolerance, respectful attitudes, democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty) and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- Is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews
- Enables pupils to develop their religious literacy
- Enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas
- Provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and world views
- Supports the development of other curriculum areas and a wide range of skills such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs
- Encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs
- Offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it
- Ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs.

10. Curriculum Balance and Time

Reflecting academy trust deeds and funding agreements 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. In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Trust expects a minimum allocation of curriculum time for RE based upon the law and the *Statement of Entitlement* from the Church of England Education Office –

www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/201902/RE%20Statement%20of%20Entitlement%20for%20Church%20Schools.pdf

Academies should aim to be close to 10% of curriculum for teaching RE, but must be no less than 5%. (In practice, this means a starting point of 60 minutes per week for Key Stage 1 and 75 minutes per week for Key Stage 2).

For details of how an individual academy organises their RE time – see the *Appendix*.

11. Teaching and Learning Styles

Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons, provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and / or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews. Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and worldviews in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the pupil's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

The Diocese of Peterborough RE Syllabus is designed to support schools / academies in developing and delivering excellence in RE. It sets out an approach to teaching and learning, supporting teachers to help pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs.

The Syllabus is underpinned by three core elements (Text / Beliefs, Impact and Connections) which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, thus supporting the aims of RE. Further details are found in Section A3 of the Diocese of Peterborough RE Syllabus.

For details of an individual academy's teaching and learning styles – see the *Appendix*.

12. Subject Leadership

RE is a core subject in all Church of England schools. RE has equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing.

The Subject Leader for RE has the following role:

Policy, knowledge and development

- Devises a whole academy Long Term Plan and Schemes of Work which cater for progression

- Decides which religions are to be included at which key stage, based on the syllabus requirements
- Ensures that curriculum time is sufficient across the academy
- Devises appropriate procedures for planning, assessment, recording and reporting pupils' work in line with whole academy policy
- Ensures that SEN, EAL and gifted and talented academy policies are promoted in RE
- Promotes RE with staff, pupils, parents / carers and governors
- Promotes displays of pupils' work in RE
- Audits available resources, buys new ones and deploys appropriately
- Keeps up-to-date with local and national developments.

Monitoring

- Reviews, monitors and evaluates the provision and the practice of RE
- Identifies trends, makes comparisons and knows about different groups within the academy
- Monitors planning, checking for clarity of outcomes and aspects of differentiation
- Provides observation feedback and reports on findings
- Samples pupil's work
- Evaluates outcomes for pupils in RE for progress and attainment
- Sets overall academy targets for improvement.

Supporting and Advising

- Prepares a subject action plan, including short and long-term targets and a funding policy, which builds on existing practice and strives for continuous improvement
- Leads curriculum development and ensures staff development through courses, in-house meetings and training
- Keeps up-to-date with new developments and resources, including accessing the Diocese of Peterborough termly RE Newsletter
- Supports non-specialist teachers and staff
- Works alongside colleagues to demonstrate good practice
- Prepares statements about RE for parents / carers and governors, as required
- Ensures parents / carers and children are involved in the process.

13. Quality Assurance

Academies ensure that there is external verification of standards in RE in a variety of ways – see the *Appendix*.

14. Resources

For academy specific details – see the *Appendix*.

15. Matching Work to Pupils' Needs

The Trust's policy with regard to special educational needs, the gifted and talented and differentiation applies to RE. Teachers should be alert to the fact that some pupils have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This, of course, may not relate to their general educational 'ability'.

16. Assessment, Recording and Reporting

Assessment in RE will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work / resources used such as “Understanding Christianity”
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Diocesan Syllabus. Further detail including End of Phase Learning Outcomes, Unit Outcomes and Pupil Speak Unit Outcomes can be found in Section D of the Diocese of Peterborough 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 academy’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 academy areas for development
- Enable effective reporting to parents / carers.

An annual report for RE informs parents / carers of their child’s progress and attainment, as required by law. Each academy will make specific, individual, accurate comments on each pupil’s progress in RE in this report, based on regular monitoring of work and with regard to the end of phase outcomes. This information will be transferred to new schools / academies when pupils leave.

17. Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

We intend that this policy will be reviewed annually.

To ensure that the 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 return a copy of the medium-term plan for RE, or plan of the theme with RE highlighted, to the Subject Leader each term. The Subject Leader’s role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. Academies maintain a ‘self-evaluation’ of their RE work in readiness for inspection.

18. Self-Evaluation, RE and Inspection

The Subject Leader will maintain an active awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, in line with guidance about self-evaluation and review.

19. Transition to Secondary Education

Our academies use the final term in Year 6 to review learning in RE. They provide the schools / academies our pupils move on to with a simple statement of the religions and topics they have been studying as part of their transition information.

20. Striving for Excellence

We know that RE makes a powerful contribution to children and young people's learning. It provides them with the chance to explore the big ideas of religion and belief and to think about what matters in their own lives. We look at the continuing role of religion in contemporary British and global society.

We aim to make our academies challenging but safe spaces for pupils to explore their own and others' religious, spiritual and philosophical convictions critically and responsibly. We give opportunities to engage in dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.

High quality RE supports the development of the whole child. It also has a significant contribution to make to whole academy improvement.

We continuously strive for excellence for all our pupils in RE.