

Offenham C.E. First School

Growing deep roots. Producing good fruit



Religious Education Policy

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Legal Position of Religious Education in School:

Religious Education (RE) is unique in the curriculum as it is neither a core or 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'.

Offenham CE First School is a Church of England Academy, therefore Religious Education is provided in-line with the funding agreement and the academy follows the Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020 – 2025

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement:

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement (February 2019) 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 and 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'.

Religious Education and the school's Christian Vision:

We are building a school community where everyone is committed to the ongoing pursuit of excellence – a place where, through the joy and hope of the resurrection there is transformation, growth and progress in children's social, moral, spiritual, cultural and academic lives.

Our School Values:

Roots - Friendship, Perseverance, Respect, Responsibility and Truth.

Fruits - Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Gentleness, Faithfulness and Self-control.

Our Root values can be seen in action across our school life together. We desire for all of our children to develop deep roots so that they are resilient, able to flourish and produce abundant fruit in their own lives and to serve the common good. Galatians 5:22 refers to the fruits as the visible signs of growth and transformation.

Building on these themes, RE in this school contributes to the outworking of our vision by encouraging respect for others and what they believe and hold dear. It is our desire that through high quality RE, children learn about and from

other beliefs and world views. We seek for our school community, both individually and collectively, to gain a deeper understanding of religion and its purpose and how it is worked out and put into practice in society. We want our children to learn how, through understanding the nature of faith, philosophy and different world views, they themselves might find ways to serve the common good.

Religious Education Intent:

The intent of Religious Education at Offenham CE First School is to:

- Engage, inspire, challenge and encourage pupils, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to explore diverse moral and religious questions.
- To consider and study different religious beliefs, values and traditions and develop and more rigorous understanding of different faiths that are followed in our multi – cultural society
- To equip children with skills in order to prepare them for adult life, by promoting tolerance and enabling them to combat prejudice

Religious Education seeks to enable children to acquire a knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of other principal religions. Through systematic enquiry, it aims to develop a range of appropriate skills and an understanding of religious concepts. The content is concerned with the beliefs of those faiths, the ways in which those beliefs are expressed and celebrated, and the implications of those beliefs for life-styles and behaviour. This allows pupils to gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and belief, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living. Religious Education is also concerned with the spiritual dimension of life and the search for meaning and purpose.

School Approach to Religious Education:

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

A wide range of imaginative teaching methods and pupil groupings ensure effective RE sessions. We appreciate the positive impact that local faith communities can have on pupils' experience in RE. Therefore, this school encourages visits to places of worship and welcomes visitors from different faith communities. We recognise it is 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:

- a challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework
- an assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts
- a curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide
- a pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place
- the opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers.
- a positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

Organisation & Time Allocation:

In accordance with 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, Judaism and 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.

The RE curriculum at Offenham enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice. The study of Christianity makes up at least 50% of the units taught. The other principal religions studied are: Judaism, Islam and Hinduism. Reference is also made to the belief system of Jehovah's Witnesses, this is because they are reflective of the religious spectrum in our school community.

Assessment / Recording & Reporting:

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2020-2025 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.

Assessment in R.E. forms an integral part of teaching and learning. It is not possible or appropriate to assess all aspects of pupils' work in R.E and judgments about pupils' personal beliefs, opinions and reflections are not made.

Progress is assessed in terms of the development of knowledge, understanding and skills. Assessment enables teachers to gather information about pupil learning and progress. The RE lead and class teachers where appropriate, will assess children against the learning outcomes for lessons and this informs future planning.

These activities use a wide range of methods, e.g. observation, listening to pupils, questioning, setting tasks which require the use of key R.E. skills, written tasks, discussion, self and peer assessment activities.

School reports are sent home in the Summer term of each year and the RE attainment is identified 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. At Offenham CE First School some of the responsibilities for RE may be delegated to other members of staff.

The RE Lead 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
- ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as Understanding Christianity
- supporting and clarifying approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- 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 Strand 7.

The Headteacher and Governors must ensure:

- RE has a high profile within the curriculum
- that the legal framework for RE is upheld within the 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
- 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
- appropriate support is in place to ensure the effective provision of RE.

The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

At Offenham CE First School 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.

Where parents make a request to withdraw their child(ren) from the teaching of RE, the school will, as a matter of courtesy, ensure that the parents are aware of the following:

- the learning objectives covered in RE so that parents can make an informed decision
- what supervision arrangements will be in place for child(ren).

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of RE at our school.

Review

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

- a change in Agreed Syllabus
- a change in legal position framework for RE

Date of next review: Autumn 2025 Date: Autumn 2024