

Offenham C.E. First School

Growing deep roots. Producing good fruit



Religious Education Policy

Introduction

This policy has been written in the light of the [Church of England's Vision for Education](#) (Autumn 2016), [Flourishing for All](#) (September 2024) and through reflection on the 2023 [SIAMS Evaluation Framework](#) for schools.

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 2025-2030.

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's [Statement of Entitlement](#) (September 2026) 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 everyone in our school community 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 a 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:

- Engage meaningfully and critically with learning which helps them to make sense of the multi-religious and multi-secular world in which they live.
- Know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of beliefs and practices, using approaches which engage with biblical text and key sources of authority.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, appreciating the complexity, diversity, continuity and change that exists within those worldviews being studied.
- Grapple with questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- Understand the concept of religion and recognise its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals, communities and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- Develop disciplinary knowledge which equips pupils to be religiously literate.
- Explore their personal worldviews; their own religious or non-religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

RE that makes a positive contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development.

Organisation & Time Allocation

The Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education specifies that Christianity is to be the main religious worldview studied in and through RE in each year group/phase equating to at least 50% of curriculum time. It also states that, in a Church school there should be sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages (KS) 1-4.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement and 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 and Judaism or 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.

Assessment / Recording & Reporting:

The Worcestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2025-2030 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 RE forms an integral part of teaching and learning. It is not possible or appropriate to assess all aspects of pupils' work in RE 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 RE 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 **Subject Leader** 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
- all teaching staff and those responsible for governance understand the distinctive role and purpose of RE within a Church school
- ensure that Christianity is the main religion taught in and through RE in each year group/phase equating to at least 50% of curriculum time
- ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as *Understanding Christianity*

- ensure that the teaching of RE enquires into religious and non-religious worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences
- supporting and clarifying approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- engage with their diocese when developing the school's RE curriculum and adapting schemes and frameworks, such as a locally agreed syllabus, to the school's context
- 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 Inspection Question 6

The **Headteacher and Governors** must ensure:

- RE's high priority within the curriculum and status as an academic subject are clearly articulated.
- that the legal framework for RE is upheld within the school
- that the Statement of Entitlement for RE is adhered to within 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
- all teaching staff and those responsible for governance understand the distinctive role and purpose of RE within a Church school
- 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
- engage with the diocese when developing the school's RE curriculum and adapting schemes and frameworks, such as a locally agreed syllabus, to the school's context
- appropriate support is in place to ensure the effective provision of RE
- monitor RE effectively in accordance with the Statement of Entitlement.

The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education

In the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This provision will be the parents' responsibility. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

At Offenham CE First School we believe that Religious Education helps all children, irrespective of their own religious beliefs, understand the world around them and the communities in our world. 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.

Any request from a parent for the withdrawal from RE must be made to the Headteacher. All requests will be granted, and parents are under no obligation to provide a reason for their decision. Once a request has been received and granted by the headteacher, parents may be offered an opportunity to discuss the nature of RE within school, to support the school's understanding of the parents' decision. We would welcome the opportunity to talk with parents about Religious Education in the school; however, parents are under no obligation to take up this offer and it is not conditional on a request for withdrawal being granted. Should parents take up the offer of a discussion, the school may seek to establish the religious issues about which the parent objects to their child being taught.

If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.

Review

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

- Change in Agreed Syllabus
- Change in Church of England Statement of Entitlement
- Change in legal position framework for RE

Approval / review by Governing Body:

Headteacher signed: Jayne Nicol

Date: March 2026

Chair of Governors signed:

Date:

Date of next review:

Date: