

Religious Education (RE) **Policy**



Adopted: Autumn 2021

Review Date Autumn 2025



1. Introduction

- 1.1** '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 well 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.1 This policy is to be read in conjunction with our mission statement and our policies for assessment, marking and feedback, learning and teaching and special educational needs and disability.' Religious Education in Church of England Schools A Statement of Entitlement 2019.
- 1.2** This policy is to be read in conjunction with our mission statement and our policies for assessment, marking and feedback, learning and teaching and special educational needs and disability.
- 1.3** This policy has been drafted in consultation with staff, Local School Board members and parents.

2. Our trust's policy statement

- 2.1** Religious Education is unique in the academy curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.
- 2.2** Vine's provision of RE must be in accordance with the Trust Deed of each of the Academies. The Vine have decided, following advice from the Diocese to adopt the principles of the Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (Essex /Thurrock and supplement this with material from the Diocese.
- 2.3** Each Vine academy is inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and it will be inspected under its previous designation as a Voluntary Controlled or Voluntary Aided school.

3. Our intent for Religious Education (RE)

- 3.1** At Mistley Norman Church of England Primary School and Nursery our curriculum is tailored to the needs of our pupils, their experiences and the local resources that we have available to enrich their learning experiences.
- 3.2** The broad aims of religious education (RE) are set out within the locally agreed syllabus and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2019). The purpose of religious education in all academies is to promote religious literacy. By this we mean that pupils are able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.

The aims of religious education are to enable pupils to:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldview 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.



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- Recognize 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.
- 3.3** Over the course of their time with us, pupils will experience RE taught in a variety of ways, they will get hands-on in their lessons and will cover all the skills in the Local Agreed Syllabus.

4. Our implementation of RE

4.1 Our curriculum for RE is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and human/social sciences. These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

4.1.1 Theology:

Examining where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

4.1.2 Philosophy:

Finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

4.1.3 Human/Social Sciences:

Explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

4.2 Our school curriculum for Religious Education meets the requirements of the 1998 School Standards and Framework Act (SSFA). This stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children registered at the school.

4.2 In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2019) at least 50% of curriculum time in each year group is allocated to the teaching of Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly or blocked teaching of RE, and through additional RE days which focus on an aspect of the Christian faith.

4.3 Pedagogy

4.3.1 To teach RE we use an enquiry –based approach to learning. This approach enables pupils to focus on an enquiry question, which explores aspects of the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences. A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure learning is challenging and relevant including the use of art, music, drama, thinking skills, artefacts and stories.

4.3.2 Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.



4.4 Special Educational Needs and Disability

Our Special educational provision is underpinned by high quality teaching that is differentiated and personalised to meet the individual needs of children enabling them to achieve their best and become confident individuals living fulfilling lives.

4.5 Assessment, marking and feedback

4.5.1 Pupils are assessed in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within RE. In broad terms the following principles have been applied to each aspect in terms of what it means to become more religiously literate:

- Extending knowledge and understanding from the concrete and familiar to the abstract and complex
- Moving from simple ideas and beliefs/concepts to making connections between them and placing these within a bigger picture
- Demonstrating increasing layers of interpretation of religion, religions, beliefs and worldviews through engagement with a broadening and increasingly complex range of information.
- Showing an increasing ability to critically question and form coherent, logical arguments, including increasing recognition of divergences of opinion about and the controversial nature of religion and belief
- Expressing a broadening understanding of diversity in terms of the nature of religion, religions and worldviews.

4.5.2 Pupils are assessed using age-related expectations which are common across Vine academies. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art work and discussion. Progress is tracked using Pupil Asset (from September 2019).

4.5.3 Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess all pupils in their class. We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject and to plan future work.

4.5.4 In addition, pupils are encouraged to use self-assessment to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding. A comment about their progress is made in the annual report to parents.

4.5.5 As per our marking policy, topic lessons are to be marked at least once a week. The children's understanding should be extended, consolidated or challenged with key next step comments and questions. Teachers keep subject specific learning objectives in mind for these next steps rather than a focus on secretarial skills.



5. The impact of our RE provision

5.1 We monitor and evaluate the implementation of our provision for RE in various ways including:

- Learning observations
- Climate walks
- Work scrutiny
- Pupil perceptions
- Staff perceptions
- Assessment analysis

5.2 The outcomes of our monitoring and evaluation work are used by the subject lead, senior leaders and Local School Board members.

5.3 We summarise the impact of our provision for RE in the following ways.

5.3.1 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78(1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Examining and exploring religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

5.3.2 Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

5.3.3 Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution promoting community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at each of these four levels.

5.3.4 Preparation for the next stage of education and for life as an adult:

- Children are prepared to move on to each new year group, through phases and eventually on to secondary school.
- Children will develop a respect for diversity and appreciate the way in which the world thrives on its similarities and differences now and in the past.
- Children have a deeper engagement with world views and develop an ever increasing curiosity about the wider world.
- Children will develop enquiry skills to pursue their own interests within a topic and answer further questions.
- Children will be knowledgeable about Christianity and other world views.



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- Children will become increasingly critical and analytical within their thinking. Making informed and balanced judgements based on their knowledge, awareness and understanding.

6. Our roles and responsibilities for RE

- 6.1** Our RE subject lead is accountable for the strategic development of subject/s or phase developing and implementing plans, policies and targets and practices within the context of the school and trust's aims, policies and circumstances. Specifically, through directed time and other time:
- To monitor and evaluate the standards of teaching.
 - To monitor and evaluate the standards of learning.
 - To contribute to whole school self-evaluation.
 - To plan, including writing subject/ or phase priority/improvement plan, and implement improvement plan and work.
 - To review priority/improvement plans and work, at least termly.
 - To write and implement policies.
 - To write and communicate progression documentation.
 - To support and challenge colleagues, including through being active team members of leadership teams and participation in 'deep dive' weeks.
 - To be a model of best practice.
 - To keep up to date with latest developments in education especially in relation to the subject/phase.
 - To report to and/or meet with governors when required.
 - To communicate and work effectively with colleagues.
- 6.2** Our children are supported to have a positive attitude to learning, in school and on trips, so that they can learn as well as they possibly can.
- 6.3** As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, our Local School Board and Head Teacher / Head of School work to ensure sure that:
- All pupils make progress in achieving the aims of the RE curriculum
 - The subject is well led and effectively managed
 - 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, having regular opportunities for CPD
 - Clear information is provided on the school website about the RE curriculum
 - RE is resourced, staffed and timetables so that the academy can fulfill its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress
- 6.4** RE is taught by all class teachers except where they exercise their right under the SSFA. The SSFA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors.
- 6.5** Our parents are responsible for supporting their children's education, this includes enabling them to access high quality RE. Parents usually support our teaching of RE but we



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do recognise the legal entitlement, that parents have, to withdraw their children from our RE. Details about this are set out below.

6.6 Our community is encouraged to support the teaching of RE through visits and visitors, e.g.: the children visit the church to learn about concepts such as salvation.

7. Parental right to withdraw

7.1 We are an inclusive community but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However,

the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship. We ask any parent / carer considering this to contact our headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision, and practice of religious education.

7.2 The use of the right to withdraw is at the instigation of parents, and parents must make clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need to be given.

7.3 Parents should make or confirm the withdrawal of their child/ren, from all/some of RE, in writing.

7.4 When we are aware that parents are considering withdrawing their child/ren from some/all RE then we will offer them:

- information about the learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum
- an opportunity to discuss RE and their considerations about withdrawal from it.

7.5 When a child is withdrawn from RE then we will:

- respect the decision made
- fulfill our duty to supervise the child/ren concerned, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. To do this, pupils usually remain on academy premises.
- RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient. In keeping with the law, we aim for our alternative arrangements for RE to be of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided in our school, or the pupil maybe sent to another school.
- For practical reasons, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupils with the kind of RE the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from site for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE. Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that an interference with the pupil's attendance at academy resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of an academy session.
- Review the request on an annual basis. This review may not involve a meeting with parents.



8. Our resources for humanities

8.1 Physical resources

In school we have a range of resources which can be used in RE lessons. These include but are not limited to:

- Artefacts
- Clothing
- Models

8.2 Online resources

RE really lends itself to the use of the internet and online resources. The children are taught to research online safely and evaluate the reliability of sources. Classes have access to the computer suite and mobile devices to enable them to access online resources. Staff also have access to the school subscription to such resources as Classroom Secrets and Hamilton Trust. They can also access REonline.

8.3 Local resources

These include, but are not limited to:

- Our parish church
- Local places of Christian worship
- Local places of worship for the world faiths we study.

8.4

Resourcing is reviewed regularly and is subject to change as a result of staff feedback and monitoring of the children's learning.

9. Our professional development for RE

9.1 Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through our self-evaluation process and our performance management. Our aspiration is to achieve the RE Quality Mark (REQM) or equivalent and the Vine strategic plan and professional development supports this aim.