

Newington Community Primary School



Religious Education Policy

2023-2024

Amended:	Term 1 2023
Updated by:	Rhiannon Todd
Approved by the Governing Body:	
Signed:	(Chair of Governors)
Review:	Term 1 2024

Intent

Religious Education (RE) is taught to engage pupils in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address, so that they can develop the understanding and skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as develop responses of their own. RE is in place to support pupils to: engage in meaningful, informed and academic dialogue with those of other faiths and none, and; develop evaluative responses of their own to the questions and issues addressed in RE. The school's RE lessons will be relevant to all pupils, regardless of their religious (or non-religious) background; inextricably linked with learning about religions; about the concepts in religions; concerned with the active response of pupils to what they are learning about; helping pupils to apply the meaning and significance of religious ideas to their own lives; give value to pupil's own ideas and concern, sometimes challenging pupil's own ideas and putting alternative views forward for consideration.

Religious Education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully. Teaching therefore should equip pupils with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society, with its diverse religions and worldviews. Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They should learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

The Kent Agreed Syllabus for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Know about and understand a range of -religions and worldviews, so that they can: describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals; identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom² found in religions and worldviews; appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can: explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities; express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues; appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.
- Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can: find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and

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truth, responding creatively; enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all; articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives. Throughout schooling, teachers should consider how their teaching contributes towards the principal aim of RE in the local area, and how they help pupils to achieve.

Implementation

The current legal requirements for RE provision is for all pupils. RE must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, it is a necessary part of a 'broad and balanced curriculum'. This requirement does not apply for children below compulsory school age. A locally agreed syllabus is a statutory syllabus for RE recommended by an Agreed Syllabus Conference for adoption by a local authority. Religious Education is also compulsory in faith and non-faith academies and free schools, as set out in their funding agreements. RE is multi-faith the school, 'shall reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. RE is an entitlement for all pupils, unless they have been withdrawn by their parents from some or all of the RE curriculum.

Right of withdrawal this was first granted when RE was actually religious instruction and carried with it connotations of induction into the Christian faith. RE is very different now – open, broad, exploring a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. However, in the UK, parents still have the right to withdraw their children from RE/RME on the grounds that they wish to provide their own religious education. (School Standards and Framework Act 1998 S71 (3)). This will be the parents' responsibility. Any parents wishing to withdraw their child from RE/RME must ask for a meeting with the headteacher and RE lead to ensure that they understand the aims and values of RE before honouring this right.

The agreed syllabus requires that all pupils learn from Christianity in each key stage. In addition, pupils will learn from the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Judaism. Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study.

Religious traditions are to be studied in depth as follows: Schools should consider the pupils they serve in deciding whether to go beyond the minimum entitlements to learning about religions, which are that pupils should learn from:

Early Years Foundation Stage – discovery focus - will encounter Christianity and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.

Key Stage 1 – exploratory focus - Christians and Muslims and Jewish people, what are these faiths and what makes them special to people.

Key Stage 2 – connecting focus- Christians, Muslims, Hindus and Jewish people – what about these religious stories inspires people in the world today and how has religion shaped our world.

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The language used in these requirements (Christians rather than Christianity; Hindus rather than Hinduism) reflects the fact that RE starts with encounters with living faiths rather than the history and belief structures of traditions. This also recognises the diversity within and between people of the same and different religions.

Non-religious worldviews: Good practice in RE, as well as European and domestic legislation, has established the principle that RE in schools without a religious character should be inclusive of both religions and non-religious worldviews. Schools should ensure that the content and delivery of the RE curriculum are inclusive in this respect. The followed syllabus requires that, in addition to the religions required for study at each key stage, non-religious worldviews should also be explored in such a way as to ensure that pupils develop mutual respect and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs. The key questions offered in this syllabus provide opportunity for the school to draw in different traditions, where they fit a theme and question, and where there are representatives of those traditions in the school and local community.

Impact

Through RE provision the school will ensure that the pupils to have developed the of the following:

- **Curiosity and wonder** –pupils will have spent their time at school: developing imagination and curiosity; recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery; appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live; deepening their interest in and capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose; exploring the nature of religious practices and teachings; being willing to look carefully at ‘the other’ and be open to learning from it; following mysterious and profound lines of thinking through, to see where they lead.
- **Commitment** – by the end of Year 6 pupils will have an understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values by which to live one's life and a willingness to develop a positive approach to life and the ability to learn, while living with certainty and uncertainty.
- **Fairness** – pupils will have spent RE lessons: listening to the views of others without prejudging one's response; giving careful consideration of other view; showing willingness to consider evidence, experience and argument; developing readiness to look beyond surface impressions and evolving the courage to pursue fairness.
- **Respect** – children will be able to: be sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others; demonstrate skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even when others’ views are different from their own; be ready to value difference and diversity for the common good; appreciate that some beliefs are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and society; be prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias; recognise the rights of others to hold their

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own views; know that they need to demonstrate an avoidance of ridicule; discern between what is worthy of respect and what is not and appreciation that religious convictions are often deeply felt.

- **Self-understanding** – pupils will: feel confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule; develop a realistic and positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas and a mature sense of self-worth; recognise their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth; become increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people; develop the capacity to discern the personal relevance of religious questions; deepen their awareness of the role of belief and tradition in identity and culture.
- **Open mindedness** – pupils will demonstrate: being willing to learn and gain new understanding; engaging in argument or disagreeing reasonably and respectfully (without belittling or abusing others) about religious, moral and spiritual questions; developing the confidence in one's own identity to appreciate the identity of others; willingness to seek new truth through learning and openness to points of view different from one's own.
- **Critical mindedness** – pupils will have a willingness to examine ideas, questions and disputes about religious and spiritual questions; be able to distinguish between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith; the development of attitudes that distinguish between such things as superstition or prejudice and such things as conviction, personal commitment and faith; the ability to argue respectfully, reasonably and evidentially about religious and spiritual questions
- **Enquiry** – pupils will have developed: a desire to seek after the truth; a personal interest in ultimate or metaphysical questions; an ability to live with ambiguities and paradox; the desire to search for the meaning of life; being prepared to reconsider existing views critically; the ability to be prepared to acknowledge bias and prejudice in oneself and a willingness to value insight and imagination as ways of perceiving reality.