

# **POLICY**

## **Religious Education**

Reviewed Approved by the Governing Body	
Policy Owner	Mrs L Boon – Vice Principal

## **Policy for Religious Education<sup>1</sup> (RE) at The King's Church of England Academy**

In our school our Christian vision shapes all we do. The school's vision is deeply rooted in the Bible and guides how we treat one another and how we respond to one another.

Flourishing through learning and achievements both in school and beyond we want everyone to achieve their God-given potential. When our students and adults discover life in all its fullness, through our vision, they will be able to make a positive impact in the world. This reflects our school values of Thankfulness, Aspiration, Celebration, Justice, Grace and Trust,

### **Rationale**

*'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 life 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<sup>2</sup>) and for the religious freedom of each person.*

**RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office Feb 2019<sup>3</sup>**

Students and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling students to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews. RE has a very high profile within the curriculum and makes a significant contribution to preparing students for life in modern Britain.

Christianity is taught as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teachings of Jesus and the Church, alongside a range of religions and worldviews. We encourage students to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while creating a safe space for them to explore their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

We aim for students to be inspired by the subject and that through their learning in RE they will develop a wide range of skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection, to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion on the world.

### **Legal Requirements**

As a formerly voluntary aided maintained school, the Trust Board delegates the responsibility of the curriculum design for RE to the Local Academy Committee and to school leaders. Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

### **Aims of RE - Curriculum Intent**

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all students: It is our intent for the Religious Education element of our school curriculum to be broad and balance and engage, inspire, challenge and encourage students, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to answer challenging questions, and above all, rooted in developing 'learning experiences that last a lifetime'. Religious Education contributes significantly to the Christian character of the school and enables students to ask deep and often searching questions about their own faiths and beliefs, and the beliefs, faiths and opinions of others regarding pertinent contemporary moral issues. Students will be able to deepen their understanding of God as encountered and taught by Christians. The teaching of RE makes links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of a range of faiths and

<sup>1</sup> Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. The term religious education (RE) is therefore used throughout this document as it is connected to the Section 48 SIAMS inspection and therefore until the law changes schools should continue to use the term.

<sup>2</sup> The term worldviews is used throughout this policy/in our school to refer to a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an 'institutional' worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a 'personal' worldview for an individual's way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from one or many institutionalised worldviews. **Based on Commission on Religious Education, Religion and worldviews: The way forward A national plan for RE (Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018) p4.**

<sup>3</sup> Church of England – Religious Education in Church Schools – A Statement of Entitlement – February 2019

world-views studied. The RE curriculum will help to develop responsibility and respect for all aspects of diversity, whether it be social, cultural and religious, and prepare students well for life in modern Britain.

The overarching concepts for Religious Education at The King's, ties with the vision and the values of the school.

### Curriculum balance

The King's students are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives is given and is committed to the delivery of RE.

The vast majority of our students study GCSE RE and it is offered to all students. In addition to the provision of core RE entitlement for all students at KS5 which continues to develop students' understanding of Christianity and other religions and worldviews, A Level RE is offered for Post 16.

### Curriculum Implementation

RE lessons provide a safe space for students to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. Lessons provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all faiths and worldviews. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all students, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.

Teaching in RE aims to challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views 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 student's own lives. Teaching enables students 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.

- Religious education is taught in a whole class setting but with flexibility to allow for discussion, questioning and reflection in small groups and individually
- Visits to local churches and places of worship and visitors to school are encouraged
- A variety of teaching approaches including teacher presentations, role play, drama art and story-telling as well as quizzes, question and answer sessions, discussions and debates are employed in order that RE learning is active and enjoyable as well as rigorous and challenging.
- Students experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:
  - Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
  - Reading and critically analysing texts.
  - Interpreting information from different sources.
  - Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
  - Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other students.
  - Engaging in pair and group work.
  - Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
  - Experiencing visits and visitors.
  - Taking part in outdoor learning.
  - Taking time for reflection.

In line with the Statement of Entitlement we aim to provide:

- A curriculum that enables students to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice
- A curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide

- The opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of the religion or worldview as lived by people in Britain and in the world
- A pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and in which real dialogue and theological enquiry takes place
- Engaging and varied learning activities that provide for the needs of all students, supported by high quality resources
- The opportunity for students to develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development and also to students' understanding of British values
- An assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts

This means that the RE curriculum:

- Is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all students to flourish. In addition, contributes to British values and to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all students through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews
- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy and human science, to enable students to develop their religious literacy<sup>4</sup>
- enables students 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 students to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews
- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities 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 students' needs
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all students, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it
- ensures that all students' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs

**Cross-curricular links** - RE supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to students' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship (RSHE).

### Managing the right to withdraw<sup>5</sup>

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum and our school will comply with any such request. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school,

<sup>4</sup> *Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.* (Church of England - *Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE.* 2018.)

<sup>555</sup> Religious Education must be provided for all registered students in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over). (*DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28*) The law relating to Religious Education for students who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered students at the school', it includes students in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child arranges to discuss this with the principal and to take up the opportunity to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum in school before making this decision.

*In the event that parents still wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons, The King's will undertake responsibility for their supervision with regard to health and safety.* If a pupil is withdrawn and alternative arrangements cannot be made for the type of RE the parents' desire (see below), for example, due to resources/timetabling etc, it is the parents' responsibility to provide materials for their child which have clear outcomes and are connected to the faith/philosophy/world view of the parents.

The academy will refuse a request that the pupil study other aspects of the National Curriculum during times they have been withdrawn from RE as time is already given over to these subjects within the school's basic curriculum. It is important to bear in mind that the parental right to withdraw a child from RE was intended by Parliament to be a 'conscience clause' and not to be used as a general opt-out clause.

## Resources

Religious education is funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, students and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition.

## Assessment and reporting

Assessment in religious education will:

- Be directly related to the expectations of the school Assessment policy
- Be carried out through suitable opportunities identified in resources used in teaching, such as Understanding Christianity
- Seek to identify students' 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 school'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 school areas for development
- Enable effective reporting to parents

## Monitoring and Evaluation

In our school, governors have responsibility for monitoring the effectiveness of RE and how the RE in the school reflects our Christian vision. Key questions include:

- i. How well does RE help students to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith through the exploration of core theological concepts using an approach that critically engages with text? And how well does RE help students consider the impact and connection that Christianity has on Britain's cultural heritage and the lives of people worldwide?
- ii. How well does RE enable all students to develop knowledge and understanding of major world religions and worldviews and their impact on society and culture?
- iii. How well does RE give students a safe space to critically reflect on their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions?

The principal has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The Humanities Head of Department alongside the lead teacher for RE, will assist the principal and governors by:

- monitoring long term and medium-term plans to ensure that all students receive their legal entitlement to religious education and that RE provision reflects the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#)

- monitoring RE through work scrutiny and observation of teaching, carrying out pupil conferencing/pupil voice sessions; reviewing the learning environment/lesson visits
- Liaise with the trust's Christian Distinctiveness advisor from the Diocese of Lichfield and with the academy/trusts own Christian Distinctiveness lead