



# CHARSFIELD C of E PRIMARY SCHOOL

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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# **Religious Education Policy**

## **Charsfield C of E Primary School**

**Agreed date:** - May 2025

**Review date:-** May 2028

### **Introduction**

Religious Education is a compulsory subject and forms part of the National Curriculum to which every pupil should have access. It can provide the foundation for many people's lives and promote acceptance and understanding of other beliefs. Through the teaching of RE we aim to promote the spiritual, moral and cultural development of all pupils. The RE syllabus that we are currently following at Charsfield Primary School is the 'Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2012'. At Charsfield Primary School, we enable children to develop a sound knowledge for the following major religions; Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism, as well as Humanists who follow no religion. Both religious and non-religious world views are studied. It is also an acknowledgement that religious beliefs and practices play a key part in the lives of many people worldwide today as they have done throughout history. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help children learn from religions as well as about religions

Charsfield Primary School is a Church of England school and religious education is provided in line with the requirements of the relevant Education Acts.

*These are that:*

- The basic curriculum must include religious education provision for all pupils on the school roll
- The content of religious education must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain
- Religious education must be provided according to the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus – 2012.

We recognise that our pupils come from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds and welcome this diversity. The religious education programme seeks to be sensitive to the home background of each child; it is not the function of religious education to promote or disparage particular religious views. A close link with the church community is encouraged so pupils can see Christian life, worship and commitments at first hand and we make a point of marking the celebrations of the Christian year.

### **Contribution to spiritual, moral, social, cultural development**

These are the areas of a pupil's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. At Charsfield, religious education should play a part in:

- Developing an awareness of a 'spiritual' dimension to life (personal beliefs, the search for meaning and purpose, the sense of awe and wonder) and in offering opportunities to discuss this area in a structured way (spiritual)
- Providing a forum for pupils to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by (moral)
- Encouraging interest in and an understanding of others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of 'community' (social)
- Evaluation the influence of Christianity on daily life in Britain, on the pattern of the year, on public occasions, festivals and ceremonies, architecture, laws, art, music, drama and literature and in considering other cultural and religious expressions in British society, evaluating the riches that diversity offers (cultural).

## **The Importance of Religious Education**

Religious education should:

- provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human
- develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and world-views, which offer answers to such questions
- develop pupils' awareness and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practices, forms of expression and the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures
- encourage pupils to learn from the diversity of different religions, beliefs, values and traditions whilst affirming their own faith or search for meaning
- challenge pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses
- encourage pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging and enable them to flourish individually within their communities, as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community
- play an important role in preparing pupils for adult life and employment, enabling them to develop respect and sensitivity to others, in particular those with different faiths and beliefs, and to combat prejudice and negative discrimination.

## **Religious Education and the School Curriculum**

Religious education supports the **values** of the school curriculum

Religious education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, and respect for all and care of the environment. It places specific emphasis on pupils valuing themselves and others, on the role of the family and the community in religious belief and activity, on the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences, and on human stewardship of the earth.

Religious education also recognises the changing nature of society, including changes in religious practice and expression and the influence of religion, in the local, national and global community.

## **The aims**

*Within the framework of the Education Acts and Agreed Syllabus, our aims in religions education are:*

- To enable each child to explore the human experiences people share and the questions of meaning and purpose which arose from those experiences
- To enable pupils to know about and understand the beliefs and practices of some of the great religions of the world, particularly those represented in Suffolk and the UK. Among these, Christianity has a particular place, and is taught in each year of the primary phase
- To promote respect, sensitivity and cultural awareness by teaching about the different religions
- To affirm each child in his/her own family tradition, religious or secular
- To provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

## **Attitudes in Religious Education**

While knowledge, skills and understanding are central to religious education, it is also vital that pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following four attitudes are essential for good learning in religious education and need to be consistently developed at each key stage:

**Self-awareness** in religious education, this includes pupils:

- feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- developing a realistic, positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth
- becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people.

**Respect** for all in religious education, this includes pupils:

- developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even where the views of others are different from their own
- being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- appreciating that some views are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and for society
- being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias
- being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.

**Open-mindedness** in religious education, this includes pupils:

- being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- engaging in argument about religious, moral or spiritual questions, while being able to disagree reasonably and respectfully and without belittling or abusing others
- being willing to go beyond surface impressions
- distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.

**Appreciation and wonder** in religious education, this includes pupils:

- developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose
- appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- developing their imagination and curiosity.

### **Time allocation**

The time allocated at Charsfield is 30 minutes per week for Early Years, 36 hours per year at Key Stage 1 and 45 hours per year at Key Stage 2 in line with recommendations.

### **Agreed Syllabus**

At Charsfield our religious education is based on the Diocese of Saint Edmundsbury Emmanuel Project Syllabus which is also the Suffolk agreed syllabus. The Agreed Syllabus sets out programmes of study for the Early Years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, beginning each with a focus statement summarising what religious education will look like at that key stage.

The programmes of study develop continuity and progression in religious education. They detail requirements for 'learning about religion and beliefs' and 'learning from religion and beliefs' for each key stage. The breadth of study section explains which religions and areas of study should be covered and outlines a wide range of experiences and opportunities which should characterise teaching and learning.

The Agreed Syllabus also sets out attainment targets for religious education and gives level descriptions by which pupils' progress may be assessed.

### **Teaching and learning styles**

At Charsfield we are using increasingly varied and active ways of working which include art and drama, debating, visits, posters, photos, videos, interactive displays and ICT. In particular, we recognise the importance of teaching the two attainment targets of the Agreed Syllabus (learning about religion and beliefs and learning from religion and beliefs) in a balanced way, and our schemes of work have been written to encourage this. We also encourage cross-curricular work.

## **Resources**

Good resources are essential to fulfil the teaching requirements of the Agreed Syllabus. At Charsfield we acknowledge that going out on visits and having visitors are powerful learning experience. Whenever possible we encourage the use of this as a resource to help gain knowledge of different faiths. Resources are stored in the RE cupboard located in the ICT room, in faith boxes.

## **Professional development for staff**

Charsfield is committed to ensuring all staff are well equipped to teach religious education through continuous CPD.

## **Teaching RE to children with special educational needs**

The statutory inclusion statement of the national curriculum requires staff to modify programmes of study to give all pupils relevant and appropriately challenging work at each key stage. Staff teaching religious education are encouraged to note this and teach knowledge, skills and understanding in ways that match and challenge pupils' abilities.

Staff can modify the curriculum for religious education by:

- choosing material from earlier key stages, while being aware of age, appropriateness and progression
- maintaining, consolidating, reinforcing and generalising, as well as introducing new knowledge, skills and understanding
- using the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus or other guidance as a resource, or to provide a context, in planning learning appropriate to the age and needs of pupils
- focusing on one aspect, or a limited number of aspects, in depth or in outline integrating, for pupils at the early stages of learning, religious education with other subjects and as part of their everyday activities, including routines and shared events
- accessing religious education through personal exploration and contact with a range of people
- providing a variety of learning environments/contexts in which content can be delivered.

Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

## **Assessment, recording and reporting**

The Agreed Syllabus provides descriptions of levels of attainment to use as a basis for assessment and reporting using the 'I can' statements. Colleagues are encouraged to refer to The Suffolk Agreed Syllabus which contains attainment targets and level descriptions. Level descriptions are on page 39/40 of the statutory syllabus.

The two attainment targets are; -

Attainment target 1 'Learning about religion and beliefs'

Attainment target 2 'Learning from religion and beliefs'

## **Monitoring, evaluation and review**

The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice and, in particular, monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom.

## **Provision for withdrawal from religious education**

*Two provisions of law need to be noted:*

Pupils – a parent of a pupil may request:

- that their child be wholly or partly excused from receiving religious education given in accordance with the agreed syllabus.
- that a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving religious education provided by the school may receive religious education of the kind desired by the parent elsewhere, provided that it will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil on any day except at the beginning or end of a school session.
- that a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving religious education provided by the school may receive religious education of the kind desired by the parent on the school premises provided that it does not entail any expenditure by the responsible authority.
- The school brochure advised parents of the current provision for religious education. They are asked to contact the Headteacher if they wish to withdraw their child. It is hoped that, in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached and arrangements for alternative religious education or supervision made.

Teachers – a teacher may not be:

- required to teach religious education (although this may not be the case in a school with a religious foundation).
- discriminated against for their religious opinions or practices.

Teachers (other than those in voluntary aided schools) may withdraw from religious education. Their classes, however, are legally entitled to religious education. The Headteacher is responsible for alternative provision for pupils. Staff are not required to give reasons for withdrawal. Currently no member of staff exercises this right. Were this to happen, the subject leader would probably cover the affected class. The other member of staff would teach an appropriate area of the national curriculum for the subject leader.

### **Religious education and its relationship to collective worship**

In law, religious education and collective worship are distinct. Religious education is part of the school curriculum; it has to be delivered appropriately for pupils of different ages and abilities. It cannot be delivered during collective worship. However, during collective worship at Charsfield, stories from the Bible, Christian and other traditions are told and enjoyed, festival days and celebrations are often mentioned, and we enjoy assemblies led by members of religious communities. These complement and bring depth to our religious education programme. A separate policy is available for collective worship