

April 2023



Holly Hill  
Church School

## Religious Education Policy

*As a Christian school our vision is to promote 'Life in All its Fullness.' Our ethos is based on our 12 Christian values of hope, honesty, patience, joy, forgiveness, tolerance, thankfulness, respect, kindness, friendship, gentleness and love. It is within the vision and the ethos that this policy is written and will be implemented.*

Date Issued: April 2023

Review Date: April 2025

Approved at FGB on 15<sup>th</sup> May 2023

Signed: ..... (Chair)

This policy has been adopted by the Governors in consultation with the RE subject leader and teaching staff.

### **Our Vision**

As a Christian school, based in the traditions of the Methodist Church and the Church of England our vision is to promote 'Life in All its Fullness.' (John 10:10).

By this we mean we are committed to all round development and flourishing of all members of our school community. We are passionate about providing meaningful, life-enriching and life-affirming experiences that raise aspirations through education, so that all members of our community are well placed to "use our gifts in accordance with the grace that God has given us" (Romans 12:6) to improve all aspects of life for all in our community.

### **The Importance of Religious Education**

A high-quality sequential religious education programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, *focused* on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews fostering respect for others.

*Church of England Statement of Entitlement of RE, 2019*

### **Statutory requirements**

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils;
- and prepares pupils at the school for opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

All state schools must teach religious education and publish their curriculum by subject and academic year online.

### **The aims and purpose of RE**

As a church school, the aims of Religious Education at Holly Hill Methodist and Church of England Infant and Nursery School are:

- to enable pupils to encounter Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage;
- to enable pupils to learn about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, facilitating pupils' expression of responses and insights;
- to contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs

By the end of their **KS1** education in our Church school the expectation is that pupils should be able to:

- talk about ideas about God and important aspects of Christian belief, and explain why they are important for Christians;
- show awareness that Christianity is followed by people of many churches and in other parts of the world;
- respect the faith of others, and value the journey of faith;
- talk with, and listen to, each other and people of other faiths and none about belief;
- speak comfortably about their understandings of faith and life choices.
- identify some similarities in features of religions and beliefs;
- retell some religious, spiritual and moral stories;
- identify possible meanings for stories, symbols and other forms of religious expression;
- identify how religion and belief is expressed in different ways;
- respond sensitively and imaginatively to questions about their own and others' ideas, experiences and feelings;
- ask questions about their own and others' ideas, feelings and experiences;
- give a reason why something may be valued by themselves and others;
- recognise that some questions about life are difficult to answer.

### **The distinctive contribution RE makes to the life of the school and other curriculum aims (and community cohesion)**

Our school ethos is based on our 12 Christian values of hope, honesty, patience, joy, forgiveness, tolerance, thankfulness, respect, kindness, friendship, gentleness and love. Religious Education at Holly Hill Methodist and Church of England Infant and Nursery School provides opportunities for pupils to make links between our school's Christian values and Biblical teaching and to recognise that these values are also important to those of other traditions and those of none.

As a church school, we are called to find ways to work towards every pupil having a life enhancing encounter with the Christian faith and with the person of Jesus Christ. In Birmingham Diocese, this means that we will endeavour to ensure that encounters with the Christian faith will be positive for the pupils and that they will hear of the story of Jesus. Such encounters will show to the pupils the treasures of the Christian faith in a way that invites, but does not coerce. The values and character of the school will also be shown in the way that attention is paid to the teaching of world faiths particularly those represented in the school community and local neighbourhood.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Learning about and from religious traditions helps pupils to appreciate which aspects of life have been significant for most of humanity throughout the ages. 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. It also helps to show them what shapes people's behaviour and motivations, and points pupils towards positive models for their own lives.

### **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.

### **Approaches to teaching RE**

As a VA church school, we have taken into account the need to offer breadth of content in Religious Education and sought Diocesan advice to inform our decision to adopt the Guildford Agreed Syllabus supplemented with material from the Methodist Church publication RE Today. This provides a framework which supports our planning for high quality learning experiences in RE.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection. We want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship. We use a variety of approaches of helping pupils to appreciate, and to begin to develop critical thinking about, religious life and teachings, including enquiry based and philosophical approaches.

### **How RE is organised**

The nominated person with subject leadership responsibility for Religious Education in our school is Kate O'Neill, Assistant Headteacher.

In our part-time Nursery Class RE is delivered in a small group, adult-led focussed activity each week.

In Reception, Year 1 and Year 2, RE is delivered every Monday in a 1 hour RE lesson. This equates to approximately 5% of curriculum learning time.

**In the Foundation Stage, learning in RE is linked to learning in the EYFS curriculum. Children have opportunities to**

- explore the world of religion in terms of special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship, starting with Christianity as the foundational faith of their Church school;
- listen to and talk about Bible stories and stories from other religious traditions, where appropriate;
- use religious words and use their senses in exploring religions and beliefs, practices and forms of expression;
- reflect on their own feelings and experiences;
- use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation and wonder of the world in which they live.

**In KS1 children have opportunities to**

- learn what Christians believe about God and the world around them, and be introduced to what Muslims, Jews and Buddhists believe;
- encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials, such as art & music;
- learn to recognise that peoples' beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use subject specific vocabulary;
- begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief, especially for other children, their families and the communities they belong to;
- ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder about the world, using their imagination;
- ask questions and express their own views about what is important to themselves and to others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

Medium term planning is available to support teaching and learning in RE.

Knowledge organisers and assessment materials have been produced for Key Stage 1 and these should be included in children's books at the beginning and end of each Unit.

Teachers also use a range of books, resources and artefacts to enhance children's learning in RE. RE big books are stored in the 'Big Book Room' and RE resources and artefacts are stored in the RE resources cupboard. Digital resources are saved in the school's Planning Drive.

In addition to weekly RE lessons, learning in RE is enhanced through RE educational visits to local places of worship. These include:

<b>RE Educational Visits</b>		
<b>Year Group</b>	<b>Venue</b>	<b>Theme</b>
Reception	St John's Church	Epiphany and Why do we visit church?
Year 1	Pagoda and St John's Church	Why do we Pray?
Year 2	Mosque and St John's Church	What's important for Muslim Families

### **Special Educational Needs and Inclusion**

We teach RE to all pupils, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of our commitment to provide a broad and balanced education to all children. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of all pupils and we take reasonable steps to achieve this. For further details, see separate school policies.

### **Assessment (include marking)**

Assessment and recording in RE is in accordance with the school's Assessment Policy.

### **Evaluation and Monitoring**

The RE subject leader will monitor teaching and learning in RE within the school through analysis of assessment data, observations, pupil conferencing and 'Book Looks.'

The RE subject leader will use the monitoring of RE to inform and evaluate the development of RE and the relevant section of the School Improvement Plan.

The RE subject leader will report on progress and attainment in RE to Governors at termly Full Governing Board Meetings.

The RE subject leader will use monitoring of RE to contribute to the Church school self-evaluation process.

### **Responsibilities for RE within the school (Head teachers and Governors)**

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher should also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives 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;

- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD;
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives;
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw;
- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so;
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress;
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the head teacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to RE.

### **Withdrawal from RE lessons**

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 would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Holly Hill Methodist and Church of England Infant and Nursery School.