



## **POLICY STATEMENT**

### **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN OUR CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS**

**“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 for the religious freedom of each person.’”

*Religious Education in Church of England Schools A Statement of Entitlement,  
The Church of England Education Office, 2019*

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education’s Religious Education (RE) policy aligns with Religious Education in Church of England Schools, A Statement of Entitlement, (*The Church of England Education Office, 2019*).

It is also based upon ‘Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good,’ Church of England Vision for Education, (*The Church of England Education Office, 2016*).

We also have due regard for ‘A Review of Religious Education in England’ (*The Religious Education Council of England and Wales, 2013*); ‘Religious Education The Non-Statutory National Framework’ (*Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency, 2004*) and ‘Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010’ (*Department for Children, Schools and Families*).

In all Diocesan C of E schools it is expected that the RE is seen at the heart of Christian distinctiveness of the C of E school and central to school effectiveness. RE should contribute to the outworking of the church school’s Christian vision. As such, RE must be given the priority that it deserves as a core subject in the curriculum and must aim to be an excellent specialism of the school. It is intended that the RE provided will be of the highest quality, aiming for excellence in teaching and learning and developing strong religious literacy. The RE should be progressive, sequential, innovative, creative, exciting and engaging and its relevance made clear for all. The subject should receive adequate time allocation in the curriculum which should be close to 10% and must be no less than 5% in Key Stages 1–4. There needs to be proper budget allocation whilst all teaching staff should receive appropriate professional development to enable them to achieve this expectation. Ideally secondary schools should employ specialist RE teachers.

The SDBE advocates that every school appoints an RE Subject Leader / Head of RE who will be the key person with the responsibility for leading and developing the subject in the school. This person should be someone who cares passionately about the subject, is well supported by the leadership of the school and is appropriately trained and resourced to fulfil this role. Similarly the SDBE encourages all schools to develop a Faith Group which can oversee the implementation of and monitor and evaluate the impact of the RE provision in the school, having regard for the RE Statement of Entitlement and the Evaluation Schedule of the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools through which the school’s effectiveness of RE will be inspected.

The RE provided should enable pupils to:

- ✓ develop a strong foundation of the Christian faith through knowledge and understanding. This should be through beginning to grow an understanding of Christian theological concepts that underpin Christian Beliefs. It should include learning about and from The Bible, Old Testament characters, the life, teachings and actions of Jesus, Christian festivals, creation, wisdom, saints,

liturgy, the local Church, the Christian community, rites of passage, living out the faith and values rooted in Christianity;

- ✓ apply an understanding of Christianity to make reasoned and informed responses to life issues and moral choices;
- ✓ recognise that there are a number of different branches of Christianity who may share common beliefs but interpret and practise their faith in different ways;
- ✓ develop some knowledge and understanding of the other principal world faiths, applying an understanding of religion to develop informed respect, empathy and sensitivity towards all people and help build bridges of understanding leading to community cohesion;
- ✓ grow and deepen their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- ✓ develop the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences and communicate issues of faith and truth;
- ✓ develop skills of critical analysis and evaluation and the promotion of understanding of people from different faith backgrounds, and none, and of diversity within faiths.

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education has produced a syllabus for RE for teaching in its primary schools. It is highly recommended for use by each school; with due regard to its Trust Deed. The syllabus comprises units of study, exploring religious concepts, for the teaching of Christianity at Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2 and the study of the other principal world religions, specifically beginning from KS1. It clearly identifies opportunities for pupils to both learn about religion and learn from religion. This meets the requirement of a priority study of Christianity whilst integrally exploring the principal other world faiths.

Assessment should be an integral part of RE to inform planning and teaching and learning; Pupils should be assessed within both learning about religion and learning from religion, formatively and summatively. The school's assessment system in RE should be meaningful to support RE in the school whilst being manageable.

It is expected that in our C of E schools, all pupils in Key Stages 4 will study Religious Studies (RS) to the accredited level of GCSE whatever their need or ability. Furthermore, pupils in Key Stage 5 will have the opportunity to study a RS A' Level, whilst those who do not, continue to have the opportunity to develop their understanding of Christianity and other religions and worldviews.

Schools are encouraged to undertake the training being offered by the diocese on the 'Understanding Christianity' resource to then be able to use this programme in school to supplement the syllabus, helping pupils to further engage with biblical text and theological ideas.

Although legally parents have the option of withdrawing their children from the teaching of RE / RS, it is expected that, by applying to a church school, parents understand the school's distinctive Christian character and recognise that RE is central to the life of the school and will therefore not feel it is necessary to withdraw their child from RE / RS. For these reasons, it is vital that the purpose of RE is properly understood by the whole school community and that the RE is inclusive and taught in such a way that it is seen as highly relevant for all pupils in our diocesan church schools, "preparing them for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain."

*To Be Approved: November 2019 (Schools Committee)*

Date of next review: October 2022