

HAGBOURNE C.E. PRIMARY SCHOOL



'Be the best you can be'

CARE - COURAGE - RESPECT - RESPONSIBILITY

Religious Education Policy

March 2026

VISION

In the parable of the Good Samaritan Jesus teaches us to 'Love your neighbour as you love yourself'. It is from this that we get our key Christian values of Care, Courage, Respect and Responsibility. These provide a nurturing environment where we encourage the children to 'Be the best that they can be'.

Following the example of the Good Samaritan we are an inclusive school, serving equally those of all faiths or none through the provision of an education of the highest quality within the context of Christian belief and practice.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Our vision for Hagbourne CE Primary School reflects a commitment to learning and recognition of the uniqueness of individual learners. Religious education at our school, plays an important role in expressing the Christian vision of the school. It reflects the ethos and values that are held and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and worldwide views, whether religious or non-religious. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of pupils from all backgrounds and traditions. As a school we celebrate the diversity of the wider community and are committed to the principles of inclusion and equality of opportunity.

RE explores how individuals and communities make meaning and sense of their lives through the major religions of the world. It enables pupils to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life. Religious education is taught in a way that it inspires pupils to explore, develop and affirm their own faith and values and have respect for the faith, beliefs and values of others. It is not the practice of this school to preach to or seek to convert children.

Aims

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious worldviews that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and worldviews, whether religious or non-religious. This is religious literacy.

RE supports and strengthens the vision and values which are at the heart of what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. The importance placed on the development of the whole child spiritually, morally, socially, culturally (SMSC) and intellectually is reflected in the religious education curriculum and in our SMSC policy.

Specifically, religious education aims to enable pupils of all abilities and stages of development to:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- Engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- Recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- Explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.
- Understand how belief may impact on culture, relationships, values and lifestyle.
- Understand how belief can be expressed in a variety of ways including art, dance, music, ritual celebration and in different cultural settings.
- Be supported in their own search for meaning and purpose in life.
- Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.
- Explore concepts of love, forgiveness and sacrifice.
- Develop skills of reflection, empathy, communication, analysis, investigation, interpretation, evaluation and synthesis.
- Develop attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness and self-esteem.

Legal Framework

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school (including those in the sixth form), except for those withdrawn by their parents (see paragraph below). As a voluntary controlled school, RE is therefore taught in accordance with the [Locally Agreed Syllabus](#), while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate the way that RE contributes to the Christian character of the school as well as the priority, provision and quality of the curriculum.

Right of withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject.

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This provision will be the parents' responsibility. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request.

Should parents take up the offer of a discussion, the school may seek to establish the religious issues about which the parent objects to their child being taught. Discussion may include the practical implications of withdrawal and the circumstances in which it may be reasonable to accommodate their wishes. Practical examples of how a school may reassure a parent who has withdrawn their child may include inviting the parent to observe a RE lesson, discussing curriculum documents and discussing the aims of RE in the school with them.

Teaching and Learning

We aim to create a positive attitude to learning in RE by encouraging our children to:

- Develop an enthusiastic and enquiring approach to RE.
- Have confidence when discussing our own beliefs and the beliefs of others and be able to put forward their comments and views.

With these two attitudes to learning in RE being central, the Agreed Syllabus, which is entitled *Challenging RE*, believes that: “RE is therefore both rigorously academic and personally significant.” (*Challenging RE*, p.7)

RE is taught using an enquiry based approach, that is challenging and robust. Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils will encounter believers and visit places of worship. A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate to enable all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability or background.

The teaching and learning of RE in the Early Years is set out in *Challenging RE* and is focused on the Early Learning Goals and experiences the children have in the EYFS setting. *Challenging Christianity* states: “All registered pupils in maintained schools have a legal entitlement to RE, and thus it must be taught to Reception classes. However, the way learning here is structured is through the Early Years and Foundation Stage curriculum and not through the Agreed Syllabus itself. Teachers should teach to the seven areas of learning and their respective Early Learning Goals (ELGs) as the basis of their planning and assessment. What follows is suggested guidance on what RE can contribute to learning in the Reception year.” (*Challenging RE*, P21) Below is a link to the outline.

[Early Years RE teaching and learning outline from *Challenging Christianity* 2023](#)

As mentioned above, the teaching and learning of RE is underpinned by the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus – this document outlines what should be taught and how it should be taught in each Key Stage. As specified in the agreed syllabus. The total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught weekly and in blocks. The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship. In KS1 this will amount to approximately 36 hours per year; in KS2 this rises to 45 hours per year.

Whilst the Agreed Syllabus is not a scheme of work in itself, it provides a structure for approaches to planning, teaching and assessment in each key stage and it provides important outlines that must be followed in order to ensure the teaching and learning of RE are in line with statutory requirements. Using *Challenging RE* as a structural framework, a [whole-school plan](#) for the teaching and learning of RE has been developed, ensuring that the key questions, skills and concepts as set out in *Challenging RE* are the drivers and focuses for each lesson. The whole-school plan sets out what is taught each term in each year group; this includes a focus on Christianity and a balance of other faiths and worldviews as specified in the Syllabus. The document, *Challenging RE*, states that there should be a focus on Christianity with a balance of teaching and learning about other faiths: “RE draws on the major religious traditions in Britain, giving due prominence to Christianity to reflect the fact that these traditions are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the other principal world religions, and non-religious beliefs that may form the family background of many children in our schools.” (*Challenging RE*, p.8) The whole-school plan reflects this balance each term for each year group.

The four main aims of the teaching and learning of RE as set out in *Challenging RE*, are central to the whole-school plan; thus, all lessons have one or more elements of these aims as a focus.

The four main aims are to:

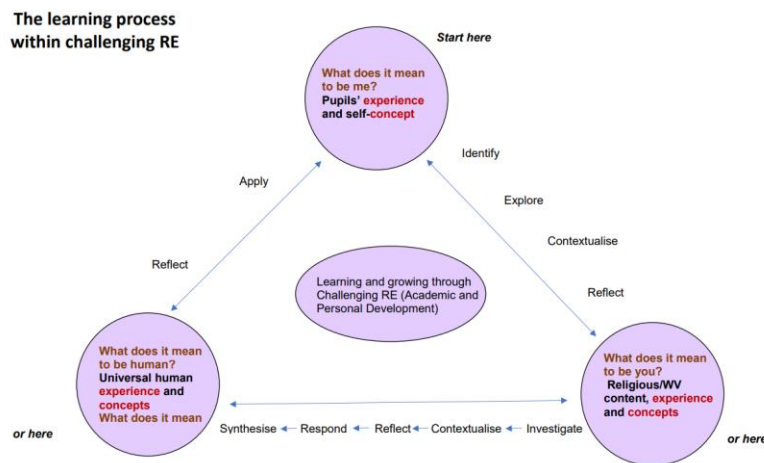
- understand the nature, role and influence of religions and other worldviews, locally, nationally and globally.
- reflect on questions of meaning, purpose and value.
- formulate reasoned opinion and argument.
- enter into meaningful dialogue with people of different beliefs, worldviews, and backgrounds.

These four aims are broken down in greater detail on Pages 10 and 11 of *Challenging RE*.

The whole-school plan takes into consideration the teaching and learning journey as set out in *Challenging RE*. The learning journey has three possible starting points:

1. What does it mean to be me? (Pupils' experience and self-concept)
2. What does it mean to be you? (Religious/Worldview experience and concepts)
3. What does it mean to be human? (Universal human experience and concepts)

Challenging RE provides a diagram to help visualise the ways in which these aims and questions are addressed:



As set out in *Challenging RE* on Pages 16 and 17, there is a focus on Christianity in the teaching and learning across the school, and there is a balance of learning about other faiths. It is also stated that learning about other faiths should not be superficial. With this in mind, the whole-school plan has been developed to ensure that other faiths are taught in more depth across the year groups, with two or three faiths being the focus for one year group. This way, each year group learns about each of the major non-Christian religions of the world during their time at school. The suggested balance of faiths, including Christianity, as set out in *Challenging RE*, are as follows:

At KS1, pupils will explore:

- i) Christianity in depth,
- ii) one other Abrahamic religion in depth (Judaism suggested),
- iii) with reference to one Dharmic tradition and non-religious perspectives (NB not necessarily a specific non-religious worldview)

At LKS2, pupils will explore:

- i. Christianity in depth,
- ii. one other Abrahamic religion in depth (Islam suggested),
- iii. one Dharmic tradition in depth (Hinduism suggested),
- iv. with reference to other religions and perspectives, as appropriate.

At UKS2, pupils will explore:

- i. Christianity in depth,
- ii. one other Abrahamic religion in depth,

- iii. one Dharmic tradition in depth,
- iv. Humanism,
- v. With reference to other religious traditions, as appropriate

For (ii) and (iii), the syllabus recommends Hinduism and Islam, but schools may choose others than those studied at LKS2

The teaching and learning as set out in the whole-school plan, is developed from two schemes of work:

1. **Christianity:** the detail of the teaching and learning about Christianity is developed from the *Understanding Christianity* scheme of work.

Here, the structure of the teaching and learning for each term is around a “Big Question”. These “Big Questions” overarch the units for each term and can be broken down into “smaller” questions which provide the focus for each lesson. At present, the RE lead is developing a set of three “smaller” questions for each unit for each year group to support teachers in developing the lessons, some of which are complex in their subject matter. The long-term structure of the teaching of RE across the school is worked across a seven-year period, making it a spiral approach so that each of the Big Questions are revisited each year in a different, age-appropriate way. There are taught core skills and concepts within each unit, and a set of skills and concepts which encourage deeper thinking as the children gain understanding and competence in the subject. *Challenging RE* states that such a spiral approach develops a deeper understanding and better honed set of skills than if new concepts were being introduced year on year. This approach is delivered by looking at the main aspects of Christianity as being a “Big Story”: The Creation, The Incarnation and Salvation are revisited each year by every year group.

2. **Other faiths:** the detail of the teaching and learning about other faiths is structured around the [Oxford Diocese RE Scheme of Work](#).

Again, the structure of the teaching and learning for each term is around a “Big Question”, however, this is not a spiral approach to teaching and learning as each year group learns about two or three different faiths in depth – as mentioned above. The whole-school plan reflects the balance of faiths as set out above. Each unit from the ODBE scheme of work consists of an outline plan and an assessment sheet. These are used by the class teacher in planning the unit of work and are set out in the whole-school plan. Neither is exhaustive or exclusive but are used as a starting point. There is a unit for each half term, for each year group. The units are not taught weekly but are blocked into special weeks or special days.

Generally, for the teaching and learning of all RE, we recognise the fact that there are children of different abilities and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by:

- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Setting tasks of varying difficulty based on prior assessment.
- Providing a range of challenges using different resources.
- Using teaching assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.
- RE in the Reception Class is taught as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year, relating the Understanding the World aspects of the children’s work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. RE makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a child’s understanding of the world; peoples and communities.

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate. Pupils will engage in activities which will also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt.

Visitors and Visits Artefacts are integral to good religious education teaching and we include as many opportunities as we can to involve children in practical RE research and enquiry. Visits to places of worship are encouraged by all classes and visitors are invited into the school to enrich learning. All visits must meet the requirements of the Health and Safety policies and full risk assessments carried out prior to the visit.

We recognise the fact that there are children of different abilities and we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by:

- Setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses.
- Setting tasks of varying difficulty based on prior assessment.
- Providing a range of challenges using different resources.
- Using teaching assistants to support the work of individual children or groups of children.
- RE in the Reception Class is taught as an integral part of the topic work covered during the year, relating the Understanding the World aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. RE makes a significant contribution to the ELG objectives of developing a child's understanding of the world; peoples and communities.

Assessment

Assessment of a pupil's work and progress is ongoing by the class teacher and informs future planning. At the end of each unit of work, teachers record progress against key milestones using the SOW assessment sheet as mentioned above. These are used by the teacher to identify where concepts need to be revisited. Further assessment can be in the form of discussions, individual closed-tasks and group work. The RE lead teacher intends to develop the use of the Key Stage Progression Statements as part of the assessment process.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE subject leader and SLT will monitor teaching and learning in RE in accordance with school policy. The RE subject leader will observe teaching, conduct book and planning reviews and pupil interviews when appropriate to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors will ensure that adequate monitoring takes place and that the impact of such activity is assessed.

Resources

The RE subject leader will ensure that RE resources are kept up-to-date and that staff are informed when new resources are purchased or made available electronically. Resources will include source materials (e.g. Bibles, visitors, artefacts) where appropriate and be treated with respect by all staff.

RE forms part of pupil's annual report to parents.