



Religious Education Policy

Policy Formally Approved	November 2023
Policy to be Reviewed	November 2026

It is the responsibility of the **Standards Committee** to review this policy and bring it forward to the full Governing Body for approval.

Signed by

Headteacher:Date:.....

Chair of Committee:Date:.....

Chair of Governors Date

Fressingfield CofE Primary School

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

‘Learning to bring out the best in everyone’

‘I have come that you may have life in all its fullness’ (John 10:10)

He calls us to a full life in mind, body, heart and spirit. Consequently, our vision is ‘learning to bring out the best in everyone’ – our children, our staff and the members of our whole-school community – through ‘living life in all its fullness’. Our aim is to develop happy, healthy, confident, responsible and respectful children who delight in learning and to enable each child reach his or her full, God-given potential.

INTRODUCTION

Religious Education is an entitlement for all pupils and its place in the school curriculum is an acknowledgement of the important role which beliefs and values play in people’s lives, regardless of particular religious commitments. 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. As a curriculum area, RE offers pupils an opportunity to develop a better understanding of themselves, the people around them and the world in which they live.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Fressingfield is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary 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 2023
- Parents/carers have a legal right to withdraw their children from religious education lessons but, as RE is central to the identity of Fressingfield Primary, we would ask parents/carers to discuss with the headteacher any reasons they might have for doing this.

AIMS

Within the framework of the Education Acts and Agreed Syllabus, our aims in Religious Education are:

- To enable each child to explore the human experiences people share and the questions of meaning and purpose which arise from those experiences.
- To develop attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open-mindedness and self-esteem.

- To enable pupils to know about and understand the world views of the world's peoples. These include some of the great religions of the world, particularly those represented in Suffolk and the UK, as well as other non-religious beliefs or views. Being a Christian school, Christianity has a pivotal place, and is taught in each year of the primary phase.
- To promote respect, sensitivity and cultural awareness by teaching about the religions and world views represented in the region and the country.
- To give children the tools to affirm their own world view, be it religious or non-religious.
- To provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. The scheme of work, the Emmanuel Project, develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, and other principal religions, together with other religious traditions and world views all of which can provide questions and stimulate discussion to consider answers to such questions.

The scheme of work also gives more details of the importance of Religious Education in the curriculum and promotes a line of enquiry throughout the scheme. It uses the pathway of Engage, Enquire, Explore, Evaluate, Extend and Express. It ensures there is continuity and progression throughout, with a range of opportunities for assessment. Pupil progress is recorded, and reported to parents/carers annually.

TIME ALLOCATION

The time allocated at Fressingfield CEVC Primary School is 36 hours per year at Key Stage 1 and 45 hours per year at Key Stage 2 in line with recommendations. Approximately 30 minutes a week of teacher-directed time is provided for Early Years Foundation Stage pupils in accordance with the Agreed Syllabus.

THE REQUIREMENTS OF THE SUFFOLK SYLLABUS

At Fressingfield CEVC Primary School our RE is based on the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus. The Agreed Syllabus sets out programmes of study for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, each beginning 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, by looking at Christianity in the main, then at comparative religions including Islam and Judaism in some depth, with additional blocks including Hinduism, Buddhism and Humanism. When teachers begin a block, they will familiarise themselves with the content of the block, then draw up 3 key questions to run through the block. These will include a theology question, related to religion, a philosophical question, related to knowledge (literally, 'love of knowledge') and a social sciences question, related to people in action in the world. For instance, for a KS2 block on Christian Salvation, the Theology question was 'Why was Zaccheus 'saved' by Jesus?' The Philosophy question was 'Is it possible to save others?' The social science question was 'Are rescuers/saviours needed in everyday life?' Children will begin each block with a knowledge organiser. This will exemplify the three key questions, and will also include relevant vocabulary, prior knowledge and key facts and concepts. The Overview of each block 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. Specific examples are given which are outward looking, and include international examples, eg organisations or artwork which might be used as part of the block.

SCHEME OF WORK

RE is based around half-termly themes in Early Years and Key Stage 1 where Christianity and Judaism are the principle religions studied. Other religions are touched on as appropriate. Key Stage 2 pupils learn about Christianity throughout the Key Stage, and study Islam and Hinduism as principal religions. They also touch on the other principal religions or world views by the end of Key Stage 2. Topics may focus on a single religion or be based around a life experience theme, drawing on children's own thoughts and ideas as well as those of several world views.

INCLUSION

At Fressingfield CEVC Primary School we use varied and active ways of working which include Art and Drama, debating, visits, posters, photos, videos and interactive displays. In particular, we recognise the importance of teaching an enquiry-based curriculum in a balanced way. Our schemes of work have been written and updated regularly to encourage this, and to encompass inclusion and diversity. This means that we will adapt the teaching block for all the children in our classes. Some children may use a laptop for recording, and some may have a scribe to note down their ideas. An example of a response to a theme may be that children look at a piece of artwork, eg The Last Supper, and are asked to create speech and thought bubbles to show what characters might be saying and thinking. Additionally, children may be asked to research an international organisation, eg Tear Fund, and look for evidence of the Kingdom of God in action in developing countries.

RESOURCES

We use a wide range of resources to support RE teaching, including appropriate online bible stories and songs, and also images of artwork. Children, especially in key stage 2, may use laptops individually or in pairs, eg to find and respond to Bible quotes.

SUBJECT LEADERSHIP

The RE lead:

- Supports and monitors the subject and receives an adequate budget to do this
- Ensures that their subject knowledge and expertise are kept up-to-date by means of regular training
- Ensures that staff receive adequate training in the teaching and assessment of RE
- Regularly monitors the quality of RE teaching across the school
- Liaises with the governor who holds responsibility for RE, and they will report regularly to the governing body on progress and attainment in RE
- Attends regular governor Ethos meetings
- Ensures that the principles set out in the Statement for RE are implemented.

REVIEW

This policy will be reviewed regularly. Its effectiveness will be monitored by the RE lead and will be based upon discussions with other members of staff, observation of children's work, pupil perception questionnaires and learning walks. The outcome of the review will influence the future school development plan.

Professional Development for staff

The school acknowledges that no teacher can be an instant expert in many religions. The subject leader has developed strategies for supporting staff who need to develop subject knowledge, skills and personal confidence in teaching Religious Education. As an example, we have access to some short videos to help new teachers feel more confident teaching our Emmanuel scheme of work. We also have access to some fantastic resources collated by our Suffolk RE advisor.

Visits and Visitors

Visits and visitors can provide powerful learning experiences for both teacher and pupils. All visits and visitors are organised through the subject leader. The subject leader organises an annual RE trip to a place of worship, which may be in a local city or further afield, eg a gurdwara in Ipswich or a mosque in Cambridge. On returning to school, the children organise a whole school assembly to share what they have learned, then create a display area for photographs of the event. We also visit our local Christian church many times during the year and involve all classes in this. Clergy and other members of the community meet with children. Activities and discussions are always focused on specific areas of the curriculum. For instance, with the key stage 2 Journey of Life and Death – Christianity, we had a local vicar to talk with the children, in an age-appropriate and sensitive way, about organising a funeral.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We assess pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding and believe that it is important that progress is acknowledged. We are required by law to report to parents on pupils' progress and attainment in Religious Education. The Agreed Syllabus provides descriptions of levels of attainment to use as a basis for reporting. In addition, for each lesson, we assess children by highlighting Good, Better or Best success criteria (Better meaning objective reached) – see marking policy. Children understand this, and also know that, eg, orange is Good, green is Better and blue is Best. As part of our marking policy, children are expected to read and respond to teachers' comments, answer any questions a teacher may ask or improve something they have written. Spelling errors will also be picked up by a teacher.

At the end of the school year we make accurate comments on a child's progress, based on the monitoring of work in relation to the Religious Education attainment targets, and report these to parents/carers. We transfer this information to the receiving school when pupils leave.

Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

The subject leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy and monitoring of teaching and learning in the classroom. Lesson observations, book looks and pupil perception information are used. The subject leader may also look at children's books in an informal capacity throughout the year, eg to take pictures of good work and display it on the school website.

Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

These are areas of a pupil's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. At Fressingfield CEVC Primary School, Religious Education plays a part in:

- Developing an awareness of what a 'world view' is (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). Pupils are reminded that 'everyone has a world view'.

- Encouraging interest in and an understanding of others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of 'community' (social).
- Evaluating 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).

Provision for Withdrawal from Religious Education

Two provisions of law need to be noted:

- Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from Religious Education in accordance with the Education Act 1944, sections 25(4) and 30, which was re-enacted in 1988. Reasons for withdrawal do not have to be given and the school must enable parents to exercise this legal entitlement. The school brochure advises 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 made for alternative Religious Education or other supervised learning.
- Teachers 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 Fressingfield CEVC Primary School, stories from the Bible as well as other stories from 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.