



# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Date of last review	July 2024
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Date of next review	July 2026
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Policy type	Statutory
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Review period	Two Years
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Committee	School Improvement
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## INTRODUCTION

Religious education 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 worldviews), and for the religious freedom of each person.

*Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education*, February 2019

At Bayford CofE Primary School, pupils and their families can expect a high-quality religious education (RE) curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and world views. We teach according to the *Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2023 - 2028*. As a church school, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Links with our school vision, and support for pupil's spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development are intrinsic to our RE curriculum and have a significant impact on learners. We provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand, and to make links between, the beliefs, practices, and value systems of the range of faiths and world views studied.

### **Religious Education at Bayford CofE (VC) Primary School**

Religious Education (RE) is not a National Curriculum subject but must be provided for all registered pupils in state-funded schools in England, unless withdrawn by their parents. It is a necessary part of a broad and balanced curriculum. As RE is not nationally determined, a locally agreed syllabus of RE is prepared by a local Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and adopted by a local authority. As a Hertfordshire school, it is the *Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2023-2028* which we have used as the basis for our planning and delivery of RE.

RE is concerned with "learning about religions" and "learning from religion" and it is not the practice of this school to preach to, or attempt to convert, the children. The faith background of both the staff and the child's family is respected at all times. Our school is committed to valuing the opinions, beliefs, and practices of all, and to showing sensitivity to minority groups.

### **Right of withdrawal**

Parents of a pupil at a community, foundation, or voluntary school have a right to withdraw their children from religious education. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE. At Bayford CofE Primary School it is our practice to talk to parents to ensure that they understand

the aims and value of the RE curriculum before honouring the right of withdrawal from RE. Please see further the legal requirements section towards the end of this policy.

## **Faith traditions and world views**

The principal religious traditions taught are, in accordance with guidance from the DfE, Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. Humanism and Atheism are world views which are also appropriate to include as part of the RE curriculum and are discussed more during cross faith topics. Where we have pupils who are members of other world faiths (e.g. Baha'i or Jain) then, in line with our inclusion policy and valuing of the individual, we will include aspects of that religion in RE.

## **PURPOSE OF STUDY AND AIMS**

As stated in the *Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education*, Bayford CofE Primary School seeks to provide all pupils with opportunities:

- 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.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity, and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To 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. This is mostly covered in cross-curricular topics in subjects such as history.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual, and philosophical ways of living, believing, and thinking.

At Bayford School we believe that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. Our caring ethos, and the value which we place on the development of the whole child, spiritually, morally, socially, culturally, and intellectually, is reflected in the RE curriculum.

RE provokes 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. It challenges pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret, and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith, and ethics, and to communicate their responses.

RE teaching provides pupils with a systematic knowledge and understanding about Christianity, principal religions, and worldviews which give life value. RE aims to enable pupils to become religiously and theologically literate so that they can engage in life in an increasingly diverse society. It is never about telling pupils what religious views they should have, but rather assists

them in gaining shared human understanding, developing personal identity, and searching for meaning in the context of evaluating different viewpoints.

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## THE RE CURRICULUM

The curriculum for Religious Education aims to ensure that all pupils develop knowledge and understanding of sources of wisdom (i.e. sacred texts, psalms, hymns, prayers, poems, letters, paintings, icons, artefacts, and people) and their impact, whilst exploring personal and critical responses.

### Sources of wisdom and their impact

All pupils should:

- know, understand and explore the significance and impact of sacred texts, other sources of wisdom and ways of expressing meaning
- express ideas and insights about the nature of beliefs, values, and practices and their impact upon the identity of individuals and communities
- recognise and explore the diversity which exists within and between religious traditions

### Personal and critical responses

All pupils should:

- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections, critical responses, and connections to faith and belief, enquiring into philosophical, moral, and ethical issues
- engage with the questions and answers offered by religions and worldviews concerning ultimate questions and human responsibility
- develop the skills required to engage with others in dialogue and to cooperate in society with respect and compassion

RE is an academic subject that has a high profile in our school curriculum. It is a priority for senior leaders, who ensure that the teaching, learning, and resourcing of RE is comparable with other curriculum subjects. This means that the RE curriculum:

- is intrinsic to the outworking of our distinctive Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, it contributes to British values and to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development.
- is delivered in an objective, critical, and pluralistic manner to engage and challenge all pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions.
- Lessons provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.

- reflects a good balance between the disciplines of theology, philosophy, and human science, to enable pupils to develop their religious literacy, the ability to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.
- enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, including the ways in which it is unique and diverse, whilst engaging with biblical texts and theological ideas.
- provides opportunities for pupils to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help to form identity in a range of religions and worldviews.
- supports the development of other curriculum areas and other general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy, and the ability to express thoughts, feelings, and personal beliefs.
- encompasses the full range of abilities to ensure that all flourish academically, using a wide range of teaching and learning strategies which consider the task, outcome, resource, support, and pupil grouping as appropriate to pupils' needs.
- offers tasks that are age appropriate, challenging, and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils, whilst extending the most able and providing support for those who need it.
- ensures that all pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs.

## Content and approach

From Reception class to Year 6 pupils must:

- follow a coherent and systematic study of the principal religion of Christianity across each key stage and
- be introduced to the other five principal religions represented in Great Britain by the end of key stage 2

Outline of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus	
EYFS	Children will encounter Christianity and religions and beliefs represented in the class, school or local community. Religious Education will support a growing sense of the child's awareness of self, their own community, and their place within this.
Years 1 and 2	A minimum of two religions are studied. Christianity and at least one other religion. Our focus is on Islam and Judaism. Pupils also learn from other religions in thematic units.
Years 3 and 4	A minimum of four religions are studied. Christianity and at least three principal religions chosen from Buddhism, Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Sikhism will be studied in depth. Pupils also learn from other religions and worldviews in thematic units.
Years 5	

and 6

**Lower KS2** – Christianity (Judaism, Sikhism).

**Upper KS2** – Christianity (Sikhism, Hinduism, Islam). All six principal religions are introduced or revisited by the end of key stage 2.

## Teaching

Teaching the programmes of study contributes to developing religious and theological literacy through religions and worldviews. We explore eight key areas of learning throughout each key stage to meet the aims of our curriculum (in no particular order):

- Beliefs and practices
- Sources of wisdom
- Symbols and actions
- Prayer, worship and reflection
- Identity and belonging
- Ultimate questions
- Human responsibility and values
- Justice and fairness

The teaching of RE will involve some direct teaching and whole class, group, paired, or individual activities. Through a range of strategies (such as enquiry, exploration, discussion, asking and answering questions, artefacts, visits, and visitors of faith and belief) pupils are actively engaged in learning.

## TIME ALLOCATION FOR RE

In line with the requirements of the *Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017-2022*:

- At EYFS RE is delivered flexibly according to the statutory requirements of the EYFS
- At Key Stage 1 pupils spend 60 hours over 2 years (approximately 10 hours per term)
- At Key Stage 2 pupils spend 156 hours over 4 years (approximately 13 hours per term)

These minimum time requirements include visits and RE curriculum days, but not school productions related to festivals, assembly or collective worship time.

## ASSESSMENT, RECORDING AND REPORTING

The *Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023-2028* sets out a structure for recognising pupil achievements, and each pupil can work progressively towards achieving the

expected end of key stage learning outcomes as a requirement outlined in the syllabus. Assessment in RE is seen in its broadest sense and is not limited to measurement and testing.

Through activities such as discussion with pupils, group activities, marking and guiding their work, observing, displaying work, and asking and answering questions, teachers are continually finding out about their pupils' achievements. This information is then recorded against expected learning outcomes, wheels for assessment, and in line with other areas of the curriculum. At Bayford CofE Primary School we appreciate that a vital aid to learning is for pupils to be actively involved in their own assessment.

Therefore, assessment in religious education will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work such as *Understanding Christianity*.
- Be directly related to the expectations of the *Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2023-2028*
- Seek to identify development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's wider assessment and marking policy.
- Include pupil self-assessment.
- Enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.

## PLANNING

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each Key Stage in Christianity, Bayford School follows Understanding Christianity which builds in coverage of and progression in both the content and concepts outlined in the Agreed Syllabus. All of the other faiths are taught as two units taught in different year groups. The first unit is an introduction to the faith and the next is a going deeper unit. Children will also have the opportunity to study some thematic units which incorporate faiths we have learnt about as well as atheism. We have used a combination of teaching RE through the creative curriculum, RE days and as a separate subject, depending on the material which has to be covered.

Our long term whole school overview gives details of each unit of work for each term. The RE subject leader monitors and reviews these plans on a regular basis. As we have mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year rotation cycle. By so doing, we

ensure that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus and do not have to repeat topics.

Teachers do their own short term individual lesson plans and organise what to teach based on the learning objectives of the unit. Resources used for planning are: Understanding Christianity for Christian units and The Emmanuel Project plans for most other religions. Thematic units are planned by the teacher, with the support of the RE co-ordinator if necessary.

## **CROSS CURRICULAR APPROACHES**

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions. Children's skills in oracy and literacy will be enhanced. Problem-solving, decision-making, and interpersonal skills will be developed.

RE presents many opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues, and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised, and pupils will develop a sense of citizenship through many aspects of the explicit RE curriculum. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

The RE curriculum makes a significant contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural (SMSC) development, knowledge and awareness of Prevent, British values, keeping children safe, and the diversity, equality, and cohesion agendas: these are all essential contributing factors in providing outstanding RE teaching and learning for all children.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The RE Subject Leader manages this area of the curriculum and will annually assess and review the subject's strengths and areas for development.

This will be in line with SIAMS and OFSTED guidance about self-evaluation and review.

When needed there is a staff meeting on RE, led by the subject leader, in which areas for development can be discussed.

### **Role of the RE subject leader**

The subject leader will:

- Ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- Ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- Ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- Monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.



- Monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- Ensure there are assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE.
- Monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff.
- Liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- Support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- Seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- Oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- Ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

## **Resources**

We have a range of resources to support our RE teaching that we continue to develop. Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as resource books for teachers, borrowing from HFL library services, posters, online resources and physical artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Hertfordshire SACRE and the Diocese of St. Albans. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All staff have access to RE CPD in line with the subject leader's identified areas for development.

## **Monitoring, evaluation, and review**

We intend that this policy should operate for the next two years, and then be fully reviewed by staff and governors. To ensure that our RE policy is in practice, and to help teachers keep track of their own work and needs for support or training, the RE co-ordinator will monitor teaching and learning in RE through lesson observations, books looks, pupil voice and individual discussions with teachers. The subject leader's role is to monitor and evaluate this policy in practice.

## **LEGAL REQUIREMENTS**

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over). (DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28) The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

## **Right of withdrawal**

We note the Human Right of parents to withdraw their children from RE. The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the importance placed on RE as a core subject in a church school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE. We aim to provide an open curriculum which can be taught to all pupils, by all staff.

Teachers are asked to refer to the head teacher any questions from parents about withdrawals. We ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making a final decision. Requests for full or partial withdrawal from RE should be made in writing to the head teacher and a record kept of them.

Pupils who have been withdrawn from RE will be cared for and supervised by school staff during the teaching of RE in school and during school trips and other activities which are directly related to RE. Pupils who have been withdrawn will be treated with great respect and provided with activities which are stimulating, educational, and rewarding. Every effort will be made to ensure that they do not feel marginal, devalued, punished, or a nuisance.

## **Health and Safety**

We note that health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions: for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy, and school visits policy, in these circumstances.