

Statutory:

Policy provided centrally for adoption by schools with minimal amendment to the core text. Changes are allowed to the text where indicated

ODST Religious Education Policy Statement & Datchet St Mary's Primary Academy Religious Education Policy

Datchet St Mary's Primary Academy

Approved by:	Ethos & Governance
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Introduction

We believe that the teaching of Religious Education (RE) reflects the ethos and values that are held in our school and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and none. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

The Legal Position

Every school in England must provide the National Curriculum, RE, and Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). See paragraph below for the information about the right of parents to withdraw from RE. ODST Trustees have determined that religious education in our school should be based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus – See *School Policy below*, while also, in Church of England schools, reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019.

For Church of England schools, the statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate the quality of RE provision and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the school. *See Appendix for additional note for former Voluntary Aided (VA) schools.

Purpose and Aims of RE

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious world-views that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and none. This is religious literacy.

Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- 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.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Curriculum and Time Allocation

The RE curriculum at our school, has been approved by the Local Governing Body (LGB). In accordance with the law, Christianity predominates across the RE curriculum offer.

In line with the locally agreed syllabus, it is suggested that the total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught in dedicated lessons/blocks/cross-curricular settings as appropriate. **The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship.**

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

RE teaching is challenging and robust, taught using an enquiry-based approach focused on Big Questions, discussion and investigation. 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.

Assessment procedures will be robust and in line with the assessment procedures and feedback policy of the school, meeting the requirements of the previously noted syllabus or scheme that has been adopted. Pupils will engage in a variety of activities which enable teachers to assess what they have learnt. Records kept will include information about pupils' experiences and judgements about their attainment and progress, as well as being used to inform planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteacher and LGB will ensure that effective monitoring takes place according to the school's policies, and that the impact of teaching and learning is assessed. Monitoring activity may include lesson visits, book and planning reviews, and pupil interviews when appropriate.

The Right of Withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school and we encourage discussion with leaders prior to a request to withdraw. Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to this effect, and this will be reviewed on an annual basis. The school will keep pupils safe during RE lessons, but is not required to provide any work or reading material for pupils who have been withdrawn.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed regularly in line with the school's procedures, at least every three years.

Former Voluntary Aided Church of England schools within ODST

The trustees of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) recognise that the Christian character of its Church of England schools is held in the vision, values, curriculum and traditions maintained by each school. These values and traditions are reflected through the outworking by all in each school community and are cherished and celebrated across the trust as a whole.

The ODST aspiration to serve with a 'Common Vision for the Common Good' likewise reflects the inclusive ethos of the trust, also reflected in the admissions policy, providing equality of opportunity and access for all regardless of background and faith. Trustees recognise the importance of providing rich opportunities for exploring spirituality for all ODST pupils (and staff) through the curriculum offer in each school, and within collective worship.

The ODST scheme of delegation makes clear the local responsibility of LGBs (local governing bodies) to monitor the provision, outcomes and impact of RE and collective worship within each school. This mirrors the accountability model for our former VA schools.

Trustees are mindful of the Trust Deed of each former Voluntary Aided school when taking on accountability for the RE curriculum to be taught, and of the importance of equal access for all pupils to high quality teaching and learning. Therefore, following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the Trustees determine that RE in all our schools should be based upon 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. Trustees recognise the right to withdraw from RE and this is made clear in the RE model policy (page 1, above) provided for all schools within ODST.

The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate RE and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the schools and will look for evidence of progress and attainment in Church of England schools. Religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects as may be inspected by Ofsted.

Priority is given to RE curriculum development, support and enhancement provided both by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education RE Adviser, and through the School Improvement offer from the Trust. This includes RE Subject Leader Network meetings, training for LGB members on their monitoring of the effectiveness of RE, specific curriculum training, and induction for RE subject leaders and teachers.



DATCHET ST. MARY'S C OF E PRIMARY ACADEMY

Religious Education Policy

Vision

At Datchet St Mary's our vision is 'We are one, we are strongest working together in unity' 1: Corinthians 12 – 14. This vision is at the heart of everything that we do. In RE pupils use our vision as a lens to understand the world through celebrating differences and different religions. Pupils use this understanding to feel united in the classroom, the school and the wider community.

Intent: At Datchet St Mary's Primary School we have designed our RE curriculum with the intent that our children are prepared for their future in multi-cultural Britain. The children will develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions within the world that we live. They will begin to appreciate the way that religious beliefs shape life and behaviour and to develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues and enhance their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Implementation: At Datchet St Mary's our RE syllabus reflects 'the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.' According to the Education Act, 1996. Our RE subject leader drives the development of the subject through out the whole school. Well planned and sequenced lesson using our schemes of RE today and Understanding Christianity ensure that Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam and Non-Religious Worldviews are taught by using a spiral curriculum that builds on prior knowledge and skills to ensure progression and a deeper knowledge and understanding of religion. Effective teaching ensures regular assessment and various forms of feedback to check understanding, provide further challenge or address misconceptions. RE is taught on a weekly basis with a yearly RE day which is chosen according to feedback from our pupils. To promote an interest in RE we have invested in artefacts and have budgeted for children to experience celebrations of different religious festivals in order to have real life experiences involving the religions and cultures of the people in our multi-cultural society. We also keep our RE board up to date for children to see the purpose of their work as well as promote interest in the RE curriculum to children throughout the school. This also supports long term memory of knowledge and skills which children can transfer to other areas of the curriculum.

Impact: Our RE curriculum is high quality, well thought out, and planned to demonstrate progress.

We measure the impact of our curriculum through the following methods:

- Monitored by subject leaders following the timetable throughout the year in many forms. Including book scrutiny, pupil conferencing to discuss their learning and understanding, lesson observations, working with and reporting to governors.
- Teachers completing foundation trackers at the end of every long term, this data is collated, analysed by the subject leader reporting to the governors and SLT.

Datchet St. Mary's Church of England Primary Academy's RE Policy Introduction

This policy is to inform Governors, staff and parents of Datchet St. Mary's Primary Academy about the Religious Education provided for pupils in the statutory years of education.

Our school is Voluntary Aided Church of England Academy. After due consideration and debate regarding the available options, the Governing Body welcomes Diocesan advice to work within the Terms of Union with the National Society.

Right to Withdraw

Parents have the right to withdraw their children from Religious Education lessons, as stated in the Education Act of 1944. They must provide written notification to this effect.

All prospective teachers will be asked at interview whether or not they are prepared to teach Religious Education as they will be expected to do so.

Aims

RE should help pupils to:

Learn about religion by

- ☐ acquiring and developing knowledge and understanding of Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain

- ☐ developing an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and religious traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. Learn from religion by

- ☐ developing a positive attitude towards other people, respecting their right to hold beliefs different from their own and towards living in a society of diverse religions in Britain today.

- ☐ developing the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues with reference to the teachings of the principal religions represented in Great Britain

- ☐ enhancing their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:

developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and how religious teachings can relate to them

responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions and to their understanding and experience

reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

These aims are achieved through a focus on two key aspects of RE as below:

□ Learning about religion includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation.

Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. Learning about religion covers pupils' knowledge and understanding of individual religions and how they relate to each other as well as the study of the nature and characteristics of religion and its impact on the lives of believers.

□ Learning from religion is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on and response to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion.

Pupils learn to develop and communicate their own ideas, particularly in relation to questions of identity and belonging, purpose and truth, and values and commitments.

(ODBE Agreed Policy 2012)

Approach

Religious Education must be religious. It must involve the study and the way in which they are practised – their beliefs, traditions, rituals and symbol. Religious education should offer explicit opportunities for pupils to consider the response of religion to fundamental questions and to develop their own responses. At least 50% of the time must be spent on Christianity but it is important that pupils develop knowledge and understanding of other world faiths.

The importance of RE

□ 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.

□ RE develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these.

□ RE enhances pupils' awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

□ RE offers opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development.

□ RE encourages pupils to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning.

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

□ RE encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging.

□ RE enables pupils to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community.

□ RE has an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.

- RE enables pupils to develop respect for and sensitivity to others, in particular those whose faiths and beliefs are different from their own.
- RE promotes discernment and enables pupils to combat prejudice.
- RE promotes education for Citizenship in a democracy (focusing on our British Values).
- RE promotes the development of skills in comparing and contrasting pupils knowledge and understanding of RE and in others aspects of the curriculum.

The syllabus

The RE today Primary RE curriculum is used for teaching RE and uses the Understanding Christianity scheme of work, which has been commended by Revd Nigel Genders, the Chief Education Officer for the Church of England.

Planning and Delivery

In accordance with the RE statement of Entitlement published by the Church of England Education Office (2019), RE should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. It will educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together. At the heart of RE 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 high quality sequential and ordered learning about a range of religions and world views fostering respect for others. RE has a very high profile within the church school curriculum and learning activities provide fully for the needs of all learners. At Datchet St Mary's we aim for 1 hour of RE a week.

Pupils will be taught in the foundation stage to:

- a sense of curiosity and to talk about the differences they notice between people, whilst also drawing their attention to similarities between families and communities.
- respect for themselves and others
- interest and enjoyment in discovery
- empathy and open-mindedness
- commenting and asking questions
- expressing feelings and preferences
- to talk about the differences they notice between people, whilst also drawing their attention to similarities between families and communities.
- To know some similarities and differences between different religious and cultural communities in this country, drawing on their experiences and what has been read in class.
- To explain some similarities and differences between life in this country and life in other countries, drawing on knowledge from stories, non-fiction texts and where appropriate -maps.

Pupils will be taught in Key Stage 1 to:

- ☐ explore a range of religious and moral stories and sacred writings and talk about their meaning
- ☐ name and explore a range of celebrations, worship and rituals in religion or beliefs, recognising the difference they make to individuals, families and the local community
- ☐ identify and suggest meanings for religious symbols, using a range of religious and moral words and exploring how they express meaning
- ☐ recognise the importance for some people of belonging to a religion or holding special beliefs, in diverse ways, exploring the difference this makes to their lives
- ☐ to communicate their ideas about what matters most, and what puzzles them most, in relation to spiritual feelings and concepts
- ☐ reflect on how spiritual qualities and moral values relate to their own behaviour
- ☐ recognise that religious teachings and ideas make a difference to individuals, families and the local community.

In Key Stage 2 in Years 3 and 4 pupils will be taught to:

- ☐ explore and discuss some religious and moral stories, sacred writings and sources, placing them in the context of the belief system
- ☐ investigate and suggest meanings for celebration, worship and rituals, thinking about similarities and differences
- ☐ describe and interpret how symbols and actions are used to express beliefs
- ☐ recognise that people can have different identities, beliefs and practices, and different ways of belonging, expressing their interpretations, ideas and feelings
- ☐ reflect on questions of meaning and purpose in life, expressing questions and opinions
- ☐ investigate questions of right and wrong in life, expressing questions and opinions.

In Key Stage 2 in Years 5 and 6 pupils will be taught to:

- ☐ describe and discuss some key aspects of the nature of religion and belief
- ☐ investigate the significance and impact of religion and belief in some local, national and global communities
- ☐ consider the meaning of a range of forms of religious expression, identifying why they are important in religious practice and noting links between them
- ☐ reflect on the challenges of belonging and commitment both in their own lives and within traditions, recognising how commitment to a religion or personal belief is shown in a variety of ways
- ☐ describe and begin to develop arguments about religious and other responses to ultimate and ethical questions
- ☐ reflect on ideas of right and wrong and apply their own and others' responses to them.

There are two main strands to RE: learning about religion and learning from religion. Learning about religion: This syllabus sets out areas for exploration in terms of key questions interpreted in relation to each of the principal religions which represent the required minimum for an RE course in each key stage. These questions need to be 'chunked' into focused areas of exploration and may be combined to create coherent units of study.

Learning from religion: It is important to say that learning from religion is not something to be tacked on to learning about religion. This aspect of RE is about pupils both

- interpreting their personal experiences in the light of their knowledge and understanding of religion. (This helps them in their attempts to make sense of life, themselves and issues of right and wrong)
- evaluating critically the truth claims made by religions and belief systems.

RE today: Primary Inspiring RE

RE today Primary RE curriculum was expert classroom teachers and RE advisers to give teachers the knowledge as well as practical step-by-step lesson plans and resources to teach high-quality RE.. It is designed to be a curriculum for classroom teachers and subject leaders to help them improve the teaching of RE in their classroom and across the school, and to improve pupils' subject knowledge as well as their own. The curriculum provides knowledge organisers and key vocabulary to ensure that key vocabulary and disciplinary skills are taught effectively with confidence.

Understanding Christianity

The Understanding Christianity scheme of work builds on work done in previous years in order to show clear progression in Religious Education and builds an in-depth understanding of Christianity.

Three elements run through all of the units from EYFS to KS2:

- Making sense of the text
- Understanding the impact
- Making connections

Children will learn core Christian concepts which tell the 'salvation narrative' or 'big story' of the Bible. The scheme using 'building blocks' which set out the core learning.

The key aims of the scheme are to enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a living world faith by exploring core theological concepts. To enable pupils to develop knowledge and skills in making sense of biblical texts and understanding their impact in the lives of Christians. To develop pupils' abilities to connect, critically reflect upon, evaluate and apply their learning to their own growing understanding of religion and belief of themselves, the world and human experience.

The core concepts and the 'big story' of the Bible children will learn are:

- God
- Creation
- Fall
- People of God

- Incarnation
- Gospel
- Salvation
- Kingdom of God

Attitudes

Attitudes such as respect, care and concern should be promoted through all areas of school life. Attitudes which are fundamental to learning and understanding in Religious Education include:

- Commitment - understanding the importance of commitment to a set of values and developing a positive approach to life.
- Fairness - listening to and considering the views of others, being willing to consider evidence;
- Respect - recognising the right of others to hold their own beliefs and views, avoidance of ridicule, and discerning what is worthy of respect and celebrate diversity in society.
- Self-understanding - developing a sense of self-worth and value, and recognising the personal relevance of religious issues.
- Enquiry - curiosity and desire to seek after the truth, to consider existing views and to value insight and imagination as ways of perceiving reality.

Spiritual Development

In this Aided Church school we are concerned for those aspects of R.E. that go beyond the areas of formal knowledge and understanding. We encourage children to reflect on their own experiences and feelings, and to think about events that raise questions about the meaning of life.

Teaching occasions should encourage and enable younger pupils to:

- become aware of feelings of awe, wonder, delight, mystery, sadness and loneliness;
- reflect on their relationships at home, at school and in the wider community;
- develop an awareness of the richness and mystery of the natural world.

Older pupils should be encouraged and enabled to:

- reflect on feelings of joy, sadness, loneliness, anger, friendship and loss;
- become more aware of the importance of personal relationships;
- use some key teachings of Jesus as a means of reflecting on their own beliefs and values: love of God, loving your neighbour as yourself, and forgiveness and reconciliation.
- learn that for Christians life has a purpose and a goal;
- learn the importance of caring for God's world.

Religious Education is a complex subject and in a Church school its aims should permeate the whole curriculum. Evidence that this has occurred will be qualitative rather than quantitative and will be

visible in such things as differences being solved amicably, people feeling valued whatever their status and ability, no discrimination on grounds of race, gender or faith, equal opportunities for all, and the creation of a calm and peaceful workplace.

Continuity and Progression

In Key Stage 1 the emphasis of learning is on experience and awareness, and this is built on as the pupil progresses through Key Stage 2. Learning to gather and organise information plays an important role at this stage. By revisiting themes and concepts pupils should be able to bring their increasing maturity to bear on questions of a spiritual, moral and cultural nature. The appropriate intervention of the adult members of the school community and the quality of teaching provided will be crucial in determining the development of pupils.

Assessment and Record keeping

We assess the children using the assessment criteria from both Discovery and Understanding Christianity. These statements are in a foundation tracker document in which teachers will assign each student a 1, 2 or 3 depending on their responses in class. These documents will be monitored to see progress throughout the school in Religious Education.

Cross Curricular Themes and Dimensions

Religious Education provides many opportunities to contribute to cross curricular themes and dimensions.

Resources

ICT supports RE & may be used in a variety of ways e.g. research, paint software.

Resources available in school include books for teachers and pupils, library books, posters, videos, DVD's and artefacts. Parents are also an important source of information and support. External resources include the Diocesan team, The National Society, outings to places of worship and visits by people from the local faith communities.

Monitoring and Review

The head teacher with the subject leader, are responsible for monitoring the standard of children's work and quality of teaching. Subject leader will complete learning walks and book looks throughout the year with the help of the Link Governor.

Subject leader will create a report using the foundation tracker data to monitor progress and an annual report is presented to the governors evaluating the strengths and weaknesses and areas for further development.

Training and Support for staff

Questionnaires are sent to staff at the start of Autumn Term 1 to assess what support and training is needed. The Subject Leader will regularly attend any suitable training and RE network meetings and report back relevant information to teachers. Teachers have all completed RE CPD this academic year.