



Rooted in the community – growing for the future

Religious Education (RE) Policy

Written May 2020. Reviewed October 2023
This policy is due for review October 2026

This policy is based on the model policy that accompanies the Leeds Agreed Syllabus but adapted to reflect the approach at Shire Oak and our status as a Church of England school.

All our policies should be read in conjunction with our Shire Oak Values and the principles and practices detailed in our Equalities Policy.

Policy for Religious Education

Purpose of RE

Our vision for RE is based on the national guidance issued by the RE Council in 2013 and the local agreed syllabus, 2019.

Our world is enriched by a wide and profound diversity of cultures and beliefs. Human beings are strengthened and empowered by learning from each other. Engaging and stimulating RE helps to nurture informed and resilient responses to misunderstanding, stereotyping and division. It offers a place of integrity and security within which difficult or 'risky' questions can be tackled within a safe but challenging context. Religious education contributes dynamically to children and young people's education in schools by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

In RE pupils discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions, in local, national and global contexts, through learning about and from religions and other world views. They learn to appraise the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully.

Teaching should equip pupils with knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and other world views, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities. It should develop in pupils an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in society with its diverse understanding of life from religious and other world views.

Pupils should gain and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences while respecting the right of others to differ.

As a voluntary controlled church school we are encouraged to develop religious education that 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. <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/RE%20Statement%20of%20Entitlement%20for%20Church%20Schools.pdf>

The RE curriculum

The RE curriculum is based on the Local Agreed Syllabus for Calderdale, Kirklees and Leeds produced by SACRE for teaching from September 2019. This can be accessed via LeedsforLearning on Resources/Religious Education.

The aims of RE in our school reflect the three aims of the syllabus for pupils:

A. To investigate the beliefs and practices of religions and other world views, including:

- Beliefs and authority: core beliefs and concepts; sources of authority including written traditions and leaders;
- Worship and Spirituality: how individuals and communities express belief, commitment and emotion.

B. To investigate how religions and other world views address questions of meaning, purpose and value, including:

- The nature of religion and belief and its key concepts;
- Ultimate Questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth.

C. To investigate how religions and other world views influence morality, identity and diversity, including:

- Moral decisions: teachings of religions and other world views on moral and ethical questions; evaluation, reflection and critical responses;
- Identity and Diversity: diversity among and within religions and other world views; individual and community responses to difference and shared human values.

At Key Stage 1, teaching and learning is focused around Christianity and Islam, alongside understanding of non-religious approaches to life. At Key Stage 2, teaching and learning is extended to include Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, alongside understanding of non-religious approaches to life. Other faiths will be studied alongside the core religions and pupils will additionally study Hinduism and Buddhism systematically at secondary level. RE also recognises that there is wide diversity within faiths and in our local community.

Through the rhythm of the year children also encounter additional opportunities to mark, learn about and learn from key seasons and festivals in the church. These include, but are not limited to: Advent, Christmas, Epiphany, Easter and harvest (some in conjunction with our Foundation Church, St Michael's Church in Headingley.) Events in school such as parent assemblies ensure that we also mark key festivals for the faiths represented in school. These often include the Birthday of Guru Nanak, Eid, Hanukkah and either Diwali or Holi.

The knowledge entitlement for pupils has been based on the detailed subject content tables in the syllabus (from page 23 onwards).

To support delivery of informed and interesting RE, teaching is based on a sequence of units of work. These are organised in a long term plan to ensure a progression of learning in the areas of study as well as time to explore our class values. We use the RE Resources Hub for additional materials to support the teaching of these units.

Our Multicultural Arts and Faith Week held every other year in the summer term has provided additional opportunities for children to visit places of worship, meet faith leaders and ask questions. (See long term plan.) This is under review, but if altered the experiences will still be mapped onto the long term plan.)

Achievement and Progress

We assess progress of pupils against the end of key stage statements in the syllabus. The units of work specify age-related expectations within the key stages. Teachers use assessment diagnostically to inform future teaching and learning.

Schools are required to report on progress in RE in line with the core principles of assessment outlined by the DfE. We will report to parents on individual pupils' achievement relative to the end of key stage statements in at least years 2 and 6 or when a pupil leaves school. In year groups 1, 3, 4 and 5 we will additionally report to parents on achievement in line with expectations in the end of year report.

RE lessons

RE is timetabled so that pupils are provided with 39 hours of RE each year. Lessons will be delivered in a mixture of regular, timetabled class lessons, blocked time to work on a particular theme, time for trips and visitors and time allocated to the learning opportunities detailed above.

Lessons are normally taught by the class teacher. The school has a subject leader who supports and monitors the subject.

We encourage and promote teaching and learning through engaging experiences, where possible. We encourage teachers to plan opportunities for children to respond to their learning in a variety of ways including art, drama, music and discussion (i.e. not just writing) so that all children can share their learning and feel proud of their contribution.

The place of RE in our school

RE has a key part in our curriculum. It also makes an important contribution to pupils' wider development, wellbeing and understanding.

We have a particularly strong link with St Michael's Church that helps us learn about the place of the Christian church and worship in our community.

As part of enriching pupils' experiences, we ensure that children visit different places of worship in the local area throughout their time at Shire Oak. Children in the younger years often take their learning about and from religions into the areas of provision in self-directed learning and this is celebrated by teachers to encourage others to do the same.

RE makes a substantial contribution to pupils' SMSC development and Fundamental British Values by, for example, learning about their class value each year. (Sharing, kindness, love, trust, respect, forgiveness and compassion.)

The subject links to PSHE education by supporting children to learn tolerance and respect for diversity. Our work in philosophy encourages children to engage with big questions and find ways to politely and respectfully disagree and challenge others.

RE supports our commitment to equality through learning about the diversity of our local and British community. We are mindful to choose non-stereotypical representatives from the community when inviting visitors to share their faith in school.

We value the support given to RE through links with the local and wider community.

Withdrawal from RE

Parents have a statutory right to withdraw a child from religious education. This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. If a parent is considering withdrawal from RE, we will listen to their concerns, inviting them to do so with the head teacher or other representative of the school. We work hard to ensure that any reservations or doubts may be accommodated to avoid withdrawal but recognise that a parent has this right if reservations cannot be

resolved. Any formal decision to withdraw should be made in writing to the head teacher. We will ask parents if they wish to continue the withdrawal each year.

If a pupil is withdrawn, the school has a duty of care to look after the pupil, but not to provide alternative education. Any arrangements made must not incur extra cost for the school or the local authority.

Further details on withdrawal from RE can be found in the document *Managing Withdrawal from RE* produced by SACRE and available on Leeds for Learning or at www.penninelearning.com

Useful guidance has been produced by NAHT and NATRE on withdrawal from RE and can be found here <https://www.naht.org.uk/advice-and-support/curriculum-and-assessment/dealing-with-requests-to-withdraw-from-religious-education/>

Enquiries and questions

The school welcomes enquiries or questions about RE. In the first instance parents should contact their child's class teacher.