

Religious Education (RE) Policy

FROM ALPHA TO OMEGA



‘Life in all its fullness’

(JOHN 10:10)

At Emmanuel Church of England School, broad opportunities are provided for individuals to develop their full potential and allow them to be healthy, happy and secure.

Building on our Christian ethos and in partnership with the whole school community, we provide a stimulating and caring environment where individuals are valued and nurtured morally, spiritually and academically.

It is a primary aim of our school that every member of the school community feels cared for, valued, respected, and that each person is treated fairly and well. This is promoted through our school values; where children learn to be respectful, to forgive and to move on so that they can experience:

‘Life in all its fullness’ – John 10:10

Aims and Objectives

The purpose of Religious Education at Emmanuel School is to nurture the spiritual and moral development in our children through learning *about* and *from* religion.

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions, especially those that are the main faiths of children within our school. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding while addressing the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit.

Taken from the Religious Education in Church of England Schools - A Statement of Entitlement, the Aims and Objectives of Religious Education in Church schools 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.

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- 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 of living, believing, and thinking.

The legal position of religious education

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 One 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.

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 distinctively Christian vision of the school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making this decision.

Teaching and learning

At Emmanuel, the teaching of RE is central to our curriculum and it has an equal status to the core subjects. Pupils at Emmanuel receive a balanced RE curriculum, which enables learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, as well as other world religions including Judaism, Hinduism, Islam, Buddhism and Sikhism.

The intent of the LDBS syllabus

If your school uses another syllabus then insert the intent of the syllabus here.

- To enable all children to become religiously literate.
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – vision for Education (Church of England)
- To offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
 - i. Ability to be critical thinkers
 - ii. Ability to engage critically with texts
 - iii. Ability to ask deep and meaningful questions
 - iv. Ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews
 - v. Ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/ or philosophical convictions

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- vi. Ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices

To offer units of learning that:

- Are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content
- Offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences
- Offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range.
- Offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children
- Provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own

The London Diocesan Board of Schools curriculum provides a systematic approach to the teaching of RE and for all faiths, it is taught through six key areas of enquiry:

- Beliefs, teachings, sources of wisdom and authority
- Ways of living
- Ways of expressing meaning
- Questions of identity, diversity and belonging
- Questions of meaning, purpose and truth
- Questions of values and commitments

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

Enquire: Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, philosophy or human/social science

Investigate/explore: What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This 'explore' stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to 'deepen' learning:

- Interpreting and analysing sacred texts
- Using challenging and controversial questions
- Extended pieces of writing
- Discussion which continually asks 'Have we gone deep enough yet?'
- Children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc)
- Grapple with complex theological concepts, questions and issues

Evaluate/communicate: What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/practice make? The aim of

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this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

Reflect on/express: What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children to both learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the spiritual and religious ideas and concepts mean to them.

We recognise the fact that all classes in our school have children of widely differing abilities, and so we provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
- grouping the children by ability in the room and setting different tasks for each ability group;
- children also working in mixed ability partners to facilitate good role models and a positive learning attitude;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using teaching assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

As a school, we attend a weekly church service at Emmanuel Church where children worship and celebrate key events in the Christian calendar.

Curriculum Planning in Religious Education

We plan our Religious Education curriculum in accordance with the London Diocese Board of Schools' scheme of study. We ensure that the topics studied in Religious Education build upon prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit, and we ensure that the planned progression built into the scheme of work offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

We carry out the curriculum planning in Religious Education in three phases (long-term, medium-term and short-term). The long-term plan maps the religious education topics studied in each half term at each key stage. Where possible, we teach religious education topics in conjunction with other subjects. In Key Stage 2, we place an increasing emphasis on independent study of spiritual and religious themes and topics.

Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each half term. The curriculum co-ordinator keeps and reviews these plans on a regular basis.

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Early Years Foundation Stage

We teach Religious Education to all children in the school, including those in the Reception and Nursery years.

In the Early Years, religious education is an integral part of the 'Understanding of the World' strand of the foundation stage curriculum. We relate the religious education aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the 'Development Matters' document which underpins the curriculum planning for children aged three to five.

Teaching Religious Education to children with special needs

In our school, we teach RE to all children, whatever their ability. The teaching of RE is a vital part of our school curriculum policy, which states that we provide a broad and balanced education for all our children. When teaching RE, we ensure that we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. We do this by setting suitable learning challenges and responding to each child's different needs. Assessment against learning objectives allows us to consider each child's attainment and progress.

When progress falls significantly outside the expected range, the child may have special educational needs. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, and differentiation – so that we can take some additional or different action to enable the child to learn more effectively. This ensures that our teaching is matched to the child's needs.

We enable pupils to have access to the full range of activities involved in learning RE. Where children are to participate in activities outside the classroom, for example, a trip to a place of worship, we carry out a risk assessment prior to the activity, to ensure that the activity is safe and appropriate for all pupils.

Assessment and recording

We assess children's work in Religious Education by making informal judgements as we observe them during lessons. We give verbal feedback and question children. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil in relation to the curriculum unit objectives. We record the attainment in our assessment files, which we use as a basis for assessing the progress of each child, for passing information on to the next teacher at the end of the year. This information is also used to decide if interventions are needed to challenge or support certain children.

When RE is highlighted on our monitoring programme, we collect samples of children's work for moderation purposes. These samples of work inform us of the level of work that are expected

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from each year group and to ensure that the school is maintaining high standards of progress and attainment.

Resources

We have appropriate resources in our school to be able to teach all our Religious Education teaching units. We keep resources for religious education in a central store where there is a box of equipment for each unit of work. There is a set of bibles for both key stages and a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. Classes will also undertake visits or have visitors come into school. We are continually developing the supply of RE resources to support the children's learning.

Each class has a 'Reflection Space' where children can find a cross, a Bible and other religious books. The RE topic of that class will also be displayed in that area with relevant resources.

Monitoring and review

The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of religious education, for being informed about current developments in the subject, and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school. The leader reviews samples of the children's work, monitors planning and objectives coverage and visits classes to observe teaching in the subject.

Policy reviewed	March 2024
Agreed review schedule	3 yearly
Next review due	March 2027