



Religious Education Policy

September 2023

Approved by the Governing Body Strategy Group 28/09/23

**This Policy is due for renewal in Term 1
2025–26**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

OF

GODINTON PRIMARY SCHOOL

SECTION ONE – AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

1.1 Religious Education (RE) enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. At Godinton Primary School, we develop the children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, and we address the fundamental questions in life, for example, the meaning of life and the existence of a divine spirit. 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. We help the children learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

The aims of religious education are to help children: (Taken directly from Kent Agreed Syllabus

1. Know about and understand a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:

- describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals
- identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered, by some of the sources of wisdom found in religious and non-religious worldviews
- appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

2. Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religious and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:

- explain, using reasoned arguments, their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities
- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues
- appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion.

3. Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religious and non-religious worldviews, so that they can:

- investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively
- enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all

- articulate clearly beliefs, values and commitments in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

SECTION TWO – LEGAL POSITION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

2.1 Our school curriculum for religious education meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA). The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children, including those in the reception class who are less than five years old. The ERA allows parents / carers to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although this should only be done once the parents / carers have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The religious education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. Our school RE curriculum is based on the Kent Agreed Syllabus (2022-2027) and it meets all the requirements set out in that document. The ERA states that the RE curriculum drawn up by a SACRE, 'shall reflect 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. The agreed syllabus has a duty 'to take care that information or knowledge included in the curriculum is conveyed in a pluralistic manner' and 'must accord equal respect to different religious convictions, and to non-religious belief'. Note that the term 'religion' encompasses both religious and non-religious beliefs.

SECTION THREE – TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

3.1 We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the key principle that good teaching in RE allows children both to learn about religious traditions and to reflect on what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. Our teaching enables children to extend their own sense of values and promotes their spiritual growth and development. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum.

3.2 Our teaching and learning styles in RE enable children to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs and traditions. We use their experiences at religious festivals such as Easter, Diwali and Passover to develop their religious thinking.

3.3 Children carry out research into religious topics. They study particular religious faiths and also compare the religious views of different faith groups on topics such as rites of passage or festivals. Children discuss religious and moral issues using computers and working individually or in groups. Sometimes they prepare presentations and share these with other members of the school in assemblies.

3.4 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;
- Mixed ability grouping for collaborative working
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- using classroom assistants to support the work of individuals or groups of children.

SECTION FOUR – CURRICLUM PLANNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

4.1 Our Curriculum implementation is below. This information is also provided on our school website:

IMPLEMENTATION

At Godinton Primary School we have adopted The Kent Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2022–2027). The aims of this syllabus, provide our children with a curriculum that engages them in systematic enquiry into significant human questions which religion and worldviews address. It develops their understanding and the skills needed to appreciate and appraise varied responses to these questions, as well as to develop responses of their own. Our RE curriculum helps children to develop their own identity and understand their culture and the culture of others.

During each Key Stage, pupils are taught knowledge, skills and understanding through learning about Christianity, Islam and Judaism throughout KS1, adding Hinduism in KS2. Our children may also learn about other religions and worldviews through our assemblies and in our topics.

RE units of work are taught during our termly STAR (Showing Tolerance and Respect) weeks alongside our PSHE curriculum. During this week, RE is taught in a block unit at the end of each term. By blocking the RE unit, children gain a deeper understanding of the religion studied through the use of high quality resources/artefacts and writing opportunities which are solely linked to work in RE. Showing tolerance and respect to individuals across all cultures and religions form part of our school's key values and are continuously modelled in every day school life.

The following skills are used, in a progressive way to deepen the understanding and knowledge taught: investigating, reflecting, recalling and retelling, exploring, discussing and empathising. Children are provided with plentiful opportunities to discuss and compare the lives of people they have studied from a variety of different religions.

Assemblies take place across the whole school and in classes; senior leaders and class teachers, deliver these. The themes of our assemblies focus on celebrations and festivals

in different faith communities, stories from different faiths and cultures as well as aspects of global citizenship. We also have strong links with our local church. The local vicar leads our harvest festival and our upper school children attend an annual carol service at **Great Chart Church**. Where possible, visits to other places of worship are encouraged such as **Canterbury Cathedral**.

EYFS

The **EYFS** framework is structured very differently to the **National Curriculum** and it is organised across seven areas of learning rather than subject areas. Religious Education appears under the prime area of **Personal, Social and Emotional Development**, and the specific area of **Understanding the World**.

In our Reception classrooms, RE is taught in accordance with the **Kent Agreed Syllabus**. Our play-based and cross-curricular approach to learning enables our children to develop their sense of self, and explore their own community and their place within it. We learn about a variety of celebrations and religious festivals across the year, making links to the children's personal experiences and beliefs by sharing which places, people and stories are special to them and why. Stories, props, videos and songs are often used as a teaching tool and exciting enhancements are added to our existing provision, inviting children to explore all elements of RE in a way that is meaningful to them.

It is our aim that when children at **Godinton Primary School** finish their first year at school and move into Year 1, they will be able to:

- Show sensitivity to their own and others' needs.
- Talk about the lives of the people around them and their roles in society.
- Understand the past through settings, characters and events encountered in books read in class and storytelling.
- 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.

4.2 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 term during each key stage. The RE subject leader works out this plan in consultation with teaching colleagues. Our medium-term plans give details of each unit of work for each term.

4.4 The class teacher creates the flipchart plans for each lesson and lists the specific learning objectives for that lesson alongside visual stimulus, tasks and differentiation as appropriate.

SECTION FIVE– CONTRIBUTION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO THE TEACHING OF OTHER SUBJECTS

5.1 English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. Some of the texts that we use in literacy have religious themes or content, which encourages discussion and this is our way of promoting the skills of speaking and listening. We also encourage the children to write letters and record information in order to develop their writing ability.

5.2 Information technology (IT)

We use IT where appropriate in religious education. The children find, select and analyse information, using the internet. They also use IT to review, modify and evaluate their work and to improve its presentation.

5.3 Personal, social and health education (PSHE) and citizenship

Through our religious education lessons, we teach the children about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. So, for example, we contribute to the discussion of topics such as smoking, drugs and health education. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance, respect and understanding of other people, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

5.4 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Through teaching religious education in our school, we provide opportunities for spiritual development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

SECTION SIX– TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS

6.1 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 matched to the needs of children with learning difficulties. We take into account the targets set for individual children in their provision maps.

SECTION SEVEN – ASSESSMENT

7.1 Teachers provide feedback to the children on a regular basis; this may be verbally, through written feedback in the children’s book or group flip chart feedback (see marking and feedback policy). Effort and attainment in Religious Education is also included in the child’s school reports.

7.2 End point assessments are used to identify children who have met, exceeded or who are working towards the key end points identified for the subject. Subject leaders also keep copies of Foundation assessment sheets produced by the class teacher that may contain photos of pupil work (expected or exceeded) and/or pupil voice. The assessment sheets provide descriptors of expected and exceeding. The assessment sheets are used by subject leader in monitoring the coverage and standards of attainment in Religious Education.

7.3 At Godinton Primary, we issue three pupil reports per academic year. Effort in Religious Education is reported to parents three times per year with pupil attainment shared with parents in the Spring and Summer reports.

SECTION EIGHT – RESOURCES

8.1 We have sufficient 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. The school has a good supply of RE topic books and IT is used to support the children’s individual research.

SECTION NINE – EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES

At Godinton Primary School, we are committed to ensuring equality of opportunity for all members of our school community irrespective of race, religion or belief, gender, gender reassignment, disability, sexual orientation, age, pregnancy or maternity, marriage and civil partnership or socio-economic background. We are determined to develop a culture of inclusion and diversity in which all those connected to the school feel proud of their identity and ability to participate fully in school life.

We tackle discrimination through the positive promotion of equality by challenging stereotypes and by creating an environment that champions respect for all. At Godinton Primary School, we believe that diversity is a strength that should be respected and celebrated by all those who learn, teach and visit us.

All school policies have an explicit aim of promoting equality and will be reviewed in terms of their contribution and effectiveness in achieving this aim.

SECTION TEN – CHILDREN IN CARE As for all our pupils, Godinton Primary School is committed to helping every Child in Care to achieve the highest standards they can. Staff are aware that Children in Care can be at risk of underachieving at school because they have experienced disruption to their family life and education. Some may have low expectations, poor emotional and psychological health and a lack of family support. Godinton Primary School will support Children in Care with their participation RE lessons.

SECTION ELEVEN – MONITORING AND REVIEW

The implementation of this policy is monitored by the Headteacher. This policy is reviewed every two years or sooner if required.