



A School Partnership In Rural England

Motto : ‘ **We Aspire to Inspire**’

Our Values – using the initials of the names of the schools.

K – Kindness

U – Understanding

P – Patience

H – Honesty

L – Love

B – Boldness

Policy Statement for Religious Education/Understanding Beliefs

The term ‘school’ refers to the schools in the ASPIRE Federation: Kingswood Primary, Ulcombe CE Primary, Platts Heath Primary and Leeds and Broomfield CE Primary. The term may refer to them jointly or individually.

Documentation History

Policy written September 2018

Policy reviewed and approved by EHT October 2018. Noted by Fed GB 20 November 2018

Reviewed and approved for ASPIRE-wide use by EHT Nov 19, noted by Fed GB 19 Nov 19

Reviewed and updated by F Steer, approved by EHT Nov 20, noted by Fed GB 26 Nov 2020

Reviewed and approved by EHT Nov 21, noted by Fed GB 30 Nov 2021

At our two Church of England schools this policy will be delivered through strong links made to our Christian values:

Leeds and Broomfield Church of England Primary School

“As many hands build a house, so many hearts make a school.”

(Matthew Ch 7 24-27)

RESPECT RESILIENCE EMPATHY CURIOSITY HONESTY

At Leeds and Broomfield we build strong foundations for the children, staff and all stakeholders to learn, flourish and fill their hearts with God’s love. Everyone is important valued and needed to make Leeds and Broomfield grow. We give a quality all round education which develops the whole child; If the rain came, we would not fall down. Our school Christian Values support the development of the children and all within the school and local community. In the spirit of our vision and values all pupils are included, valued and respected. We support the pupils in talking about their feelings and giving them strategies in order to cope and survive in life today.

Ulcombe Church of England Primary School

“Unity and diversity in the body – one body, many members.”

(Corinthians Ch 12 12-27)

HOPE RESPECT ENDURANCE TRUST

At Ulcombe Church of England Primary School endurance plays an important role in both our social learning and cultural ethos, where children aspire to be the best they can be. Diversity is the key to our curriculum and opportunities to progress and succeed both academically and as individuals are provided – many members working in unity with respect for each other. Hope is at the heart of our school community and is explicitly shown by both children and adults in our school, regardless of where the path of life leads them. Through God’s love and trust each individual learns the skills important for them but also adds value to the community as a whole.

We are Ulcombe Church of England Primary School and each one of us is a part of it!

Understanding Beliefs (RE)

At Leeds and Broomfield and Ulcombe Church of England Primary Schools we have renamed the subject Religious Education to Understanding Beliefs. This was done through discussion with all stakeholders to reflect the historical negativity around the subject in our schools and to support each member of the community in recognising the importance of learning about others and what they believe. Pupils and staff felt that Understanding Beliefs name better reflected their feelings towards what they learnt and discussed in the lessons.

The Understanding Beliefs curriculum follows the Diocese suggested plans and meets statutory obligations set out in the Kent Agreed Syllabus.

Religious Education is lead across the Aspire Federation by Fiona Seer, who ensures that at both schools, Understanding Beliefs reflects the school's Christian vision and the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for RE to enable every child to develop their religious literacy through high quality, creative teaching and learning.

Policy Statement for Religious Education/Understand Beliefs

Religious education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness.
It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together

(John 10:10).

This RE policy is written to support all four schools in the ASPIRE Federation.

As of September 2019 this includes

- *Ulcombe Church of England Primary School*
- *Leeds and Broomfield Church of England Primary School*
- *Kingswood Community Primary School*
- *Platts Heath Community Primary School*

The policy will develop and embed RE teaching in all four schools. However aspects of the policy will focus on key elements of the requirements specifically for Church of England primary schools and the statement of entitlement where aspects may be more relevant for the two church schools within the federation.*

The policy encompasses and reflects both the ASPIRE Mission statement alongside the individual Christian values for the two church schools within the federation:

Leeds and Broomfield: Respect	Resilience	Empathy	Curiosity	Honesty
Ulcombe: Hope	Respect	Endurance	Trust	

It is recognised that other ASPIRE policies and Canterbury Diocese publications also form a key part of the policy and these should be referred to in conjunction with the RE policy as necessary and appropriate.

(*) Appendix 1: Statement of entitlement overview

Introduction

In all four schools that form part of the ASPIRE federation, 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.

At both the community and church schools within the ASPIRE federation, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. The main focus for RE teaching is through the Understanding Christianity resource which encompasses the use of an enquiry approach which engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy*. This is supplemented with planning from the Kent Locally Agreed Syllabus and the Canterbury Diocese so the children learn about other religions and world views, fostering clear respect for them.

Links with both the ASPIRE federation mission statement and individual schools values and visions, alongside 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.

Aims and objectives

All ASPIRE schools follow RE teaching recommendations from the DfE and those stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education (1)

These form the basis of our school aims for all ASPIRE pupils:

- 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 of living, believing and thinking.

**Religious Literacy: Helping children and young people hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. (Key Principles of a balanced curriculum in RE.)*

Curriculum for Religious Education

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 all our ASPIRE schools and clearly supports our distinctive values and 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
- 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

Curriculum balance and time

Reflecting DfE requirements RE in the community schools within the ASPIRE federation fulfils the expectations of RE teaching according to local and national guidelines.

Reflecting the school's trust deed agreement parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. Within the community schools in the ASPIRE federation, both Christianity and other world faiths will be taught but with a greater flexibility over the academic year.

Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This should aim to be close to 10% but must be no less than 5% in key stages 1-4.

Schools must take note that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship and assemblies. Collective worship and assemblies must not be considered curriculum time for RE or the teaching of RE. This also applies to times when religious festivals or celebrations (Christmas, Easter, for example) are being prepared and practised in class or church, for example.

A curriculum overview of RE teaching will be available in school and on the school website to show coverage and time allowance for each class and key stage.

Teaching and learning

Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons provide a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
- Reading and critically analysing texts.
- Interpreting information from different sources.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
- Engaging in pair and group work.
- Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Experiencing visits and visitors.
- Taking part in outdoor learning.
- Taking time for reflection.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

Cross-curricular links

Religious education supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It addresses issues which arise in

a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship.

Health and Safety

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 in these circumstances. Risk assessments will also be completed when deemed appropriate.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

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 Understanding Christianity units and supplement programmes of study from Canterbury Diocese and the Kent agreed syllabus
- 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 federations 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.

Resources

It is anticipated that religious education funding will be available but this will be subject to yearly budget projections. This will enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school, when available will also makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

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
- Produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.

- 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 rigorous 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.

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.

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, for those attending our church schools and in view of their distinctive Christian character and, 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.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated. This will usually consist of working on other curriculum work in a separate part/classroom within the school.

Once a child has been withdrawn they cannot take part in the RE programme until the request for withdrawal has been removed.

Other Information

It is recognised that there are clear links between RE and the following policies and staff are aware of the need to refer to these policies when appropriate:

- Collective Worship where appropriate
- Teaching and Learning Policy
- Equal Opportunities Policy
- Child Protection Policy
- SMSC Policy
- Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

Key Church of England/Diocese publications provide key information to enhance and embed key aspects of the RE Policy:

- [Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement](#)
- [Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good](#)
- [Mental Health and Wellbeing: Towards a Whole School Approach](#)
- [Valuing All God's Children](#)