



# Religious Education Policy

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## Intent - Introduction

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum as it is neither a core subject, nor a foundation subject. However, the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils.'

We believe all pupils must have their entitlement to RE as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. RE has a key role in the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, which benefits them as individuals and others within their communities. We welcome a syllabus which takes the local area seriously, whilst not ignoring the national and global aspects of religious education. As Heamoor CP School is a Community school, we deliver our RE in line with the locally agreed syllabus for Cornwall, which states:

*"The principal aim of religious education is to explore what people believe and what difference this makes to how they live, so that pupils can gain the knowledge, understanding and skills needed to handle questions raised by religion and worldviews, reflecting on their own ideas and ways of living."*

(Taken from the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus 2025 -2030.)

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. It 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. When teaching Religious Education, we believe it helps pupils to learn about different cultures and to understand how religious beliefs influence individuals, communities, societies and cultures. RE encourages pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging. It enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community. Pupils are encouraged to learn from different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, while also exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning. An important aspect and purpose of the lessons is to develop respect and tolerance for others, alongside speaking and listening skills, thinking skills and questioning. RE supports and prepares our children to become positive citizens in their communities, laying down the foundations for when they become adults, gain employment and to develop the skills needed to be lifelong learners. As such, our RE curriculum plays a crucial role in linking together our British Values, PSHE and SMSC focus areas.

The 3 main aims of RE, taken from the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus, are:

**1. Make sense of a range of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:**

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions, using appropriate vocabulary;
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities;
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation.

**2. Understand the impact and significance of religious and non-religious beliefs, so that they can:**

- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways;
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world;
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

**3. Make connections between religious and non-religious beliefs, concepts, practices and ideas studied, so that they can:**

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses;

- challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response;
- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding.

### Implementation : Curriculum organisation and teaching approaches

The Cornwall Agreed Syllabus is very carefully designed to strongly support pupils' progression, while offering opportunities to study an increasing range of religions and explore worldviews. For example:

- **Individual religions are studied before comparing.** Providing the opportunity for pupils to develop their knowledge and understanding, which they can then use to form their own views and improve the depth and quality of their discussions.
- **Core concepts are introduced and explored.** Pupils need to understand the key facts which come alongside a variety of religions, in order to then discuss them in an informed way and explore similarities and differences between different views and religions.
- **Spiral curriculum.** The design of the syllabus and the units offered in each year/key stage provide the chance to revisit key concepts, through the view of a greater range of religions. In addition, the thematic units are placed during the second half of the Summer Term, enabling the pupils to revisit key themes and views, both across and within year groups.
- **Uses a teaching and learning model**
  - enabling pupils to understand key concepts, presenting information clearly and encouraging appropriate discussion;
  - ensuring pupils embed key concepts in their long-term memory and apply them fluently;
  - learning is sequenced, so new knowledge and skills build on what has previously been taught.

### Resources

NATRE enhanced membership gives the school access to the RE Today Primary Curriculum. The Understanding Christianity resource is also used to enhance this further. Curriculum Kernewek planning is used to help to teach the Cornish units from the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus. Online resources such as RE Quest website/video clips/virtual tours/Census data are also used by teachers, when appropriate.

### Which religions are taught at Heamoor School?

The updated Cornwall Agreed Syllabus (2025 – 2030), requires all pupils to develop an understanding of Christianity in each key stage. In addition, across the age range, pupils will develop understanding of the principal religions represented in the UK, in line with the law. These are Islam, Hinduism, and Judaism (Sikhism and Buddhism are later covered in secondary school as part of the Key Stage 3 curriculum). Furthermore, children from families where non-religious worldviews are held are represented in almost all of our classrooms. These worldviews, including for example Humanism, will also be the focus for study in thematic units.

Here are the religious traditions that are studied at each stage at Heamoor School.

### Reception – ‘Discovering’ stage Christians

Pupils will find out about the beliefs of Christians and other faiths, as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it. Consideration of other religions and non-religious world views can occur at any key stage, as appropriate to the school context.

During EYFS, RE sits very firmly within the areas of personal, social & emotional development & understanding the world. This framework enables pupils to develop a positive sense of themselves and others and to learn how to form positive and respectful relationships. They will

do this through a balance of guided, planned teaching and pursuing their own learning within an enabling environment. The pupils will begin to understand and value the differences of individuals and groups within their own immediate community. Pupils will have the opportunity to develop their emerging moral & cultural awareness.

Pupils will focus on Christmas and Easter, as well as exploring 'what is special' throughout the year (places, stories, events etc).

### **Key Stage 1 – 'Exploring' stage** **Christians, Jews (Year 1) and Muslims (Year 2 and Year 3)**

Pupils will develop their knowledge & understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They will use basic subject-specific vocabulary. They will raise questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

Throughout KS1, pupils will develop their understanding of the importance of Christmas and Easter to the Christian community. In Year 1, they will also begin to learn about another religion in greater depth – Judaism. This knowledge of other religions will further be developed in Year 2 and Year 3 with a study of the beliefs of Muslims.

At the end of Year 2, pupils will also complete the first Curriculum Kernewek unit, a thematic unit specific to the local context.

### **Key Stage 2 – 'Connecting' stage** **Christians (Years 3-4), Jews and Muslims (both taught in Year 3 and revisited in 5), Hindus (Years 4 and 6) and non-religions world views, ie Humanist (Year 5/6).**

Pupils will extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They will be introduced to an extended range of sources and subject-specific vocabulary. They will be encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils will learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

Pupils will continue to extend and build on their knowledge of Christians, Jews and Muslims, as well as learning about Hindus in Year 4, which will be revisited in Year 6.

During the end of year thematic units, pupils will have the chance to compare and contrast the different religions covered, as well as develop and explore their own personal views through the 'big questions' used. In Years 4 and 6, these will take the form of two further units taken from Curriculum Kernewek and in Year 5, pupils will have the chance to learn about Humanism and other non-religious views.

Throughout the Key Stages, each unit starts with a 'big question' for the pupils. This key question approach opens up the content to be studied, providing a discussion starting point for the pupils to easily access the learning. It also provides a framework for assessment of the pupils understanding at the start and end of a unit. For further information, please refer to the curriculum overview document to see the coverage of the different religions across our school and the associated 'big questions' for each unit (both available on our school website).

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning. They experience a range of teaching and learning approaches and work independently, in pairs and in groups at various times. Pupils will experience the reality of lived religion by going on visits and meeting visitors, to connect with diverse religious and non-religious worldviews. These are the different types of knowledge in RE:

1. **Substantive knowledge** refers to the knowledge and understanding of various religious and non-religious traditions,
2. **Disciplinary knowledge** or "**ways of knowing**" refers to pupils learning how to know about these religious and non-religious traditions. Some of the different "ways of knowing" that the children will use in the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus include:
  - Asking and answering questions
  - Listening to different opinions and constructing arguments

- Looking at data and creating surveys
  - Examining texts and stories from different faiths, cultures and beliefs
  - Evaluating arguments
  - Exploring case studies
  - Ethical thinking
  - Interpreting art and images
  - Looking at interviews
  - Observation
  - Expressing ideas and personal opinions
  - Reflecting on their own positionality and world view
  - Coming to conclusions
3. **Personal knowledge** is where pupils build an awareness of their own presuppositions and values about the religious and non-religious traditions that they study.

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. Questions, views and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect. 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.

Learning about the views of Christians is the majority religion studied and forms at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, is given to RE. This amounts to at least one hour of RE per week.

### **Worldviews and Religious Education and inclusion**

At our school, we teach Religious Education to all pupils, whatever their ability and/or background. Religious Education forms part of the school curriculum policy to provide a broad and balanced education to all pupils. Through our Religious Education teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress. Our assessment process looks at a range of factors – classroom organisation, teaching materials, teaching style, 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.

Teachers will have regard to PLPs and the pupils targets when designing activities for Religious Education lessons. In addition, please refer to the RE-specific SEND document, available through our website, which outlines the steps and considerations made to support a range of specific learning requirements.

### **Impact – Assessment and Monitoring**

In addition to the direct impact of an effective RE provision on pupils, there is a range of indirect links and benefits for other curriculum areas, especially in terms of PSHE, SMSC and supporting British Values. For example:

#### **Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE, within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

## **Personal development and well-being**

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment, and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals, and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

## **Preparing pupils for life in modern Britain**

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to prepare pupils for life in modern Britain and to combat extremism. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to hold difficult conversations about religion and belief and to give pupils the skills to challenge racism and extremism. Effective RE will promote social cohesion. RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

## **Evidence and Marking**

There will always be evidence of the taught lesson in the pupils' topic books. This may take a variety of forms, such as written pieces, art work, photographic evidence of group work/discussions/music/drama etc. Marking will be completed, following the school's Marking Policy.

## **Assessment**

In RE, by the end of each Key Stage, pupils are expected to know, understand and apply the concepts, skills and processes specified in the relevant Programme of Study, as in all curriculum subjects. We assess the pupils in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject, both within and across year groups. Assessment will take place through a variety of forms, such as knowledge 'harvests' at the start and end of a unit, completion of 'I can....' statements (by pupils and teachers), observations during lessons, discussions etc. These will then form the basis of overall teacher assessments for each unit, following the unit outcomes outlined in the Cornwall Agreed Syllabus, to inform teachers if a pupil is working towards the expected standard, at the expected standard, or working at greater depth. Support and further challenge will then be put into place as appropriate.

## **Monitoring and review**

We monitor teaching and learning in the same way as we do all other subjects we teach in the school. The coordination of the Religious Education curriculum is the responsibility of the subject leader, who also keeps the headteacher informed about the strengths and weaknesses in Religious Education and areas for further improvement.

The quality of teaching and learning in RE is monitored and evaluated by the Subject Leader and the Headteacher as part of the school's agreed cycle of monitoring and evaluation. The Headteacher reports to the governing body on the progress of children in Religious Education, in the same way as for progress in any other subject. The governors' curriculum committee has the responsibility of monitoring the success of our Religious Education teaching. The Year 6 teacher also liaises with the local secondary schools, so that they are aware of the Religious Education experience of our children when they move to the next phase of their education.

## **The Right of Withdrawal from RE**

At Heamoor CP School, we are an inclusive community, but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects, such as History or English. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns, or anxieties, about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at Heamoor School.

- The school will ensure parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs;
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- The school may review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- 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.
- Parents have the right to choose whether to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- 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.
- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching, or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises. Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient. If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period to allow them to attend this external RE. Outside arrangements for RE are allowed if the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start, or end of a school session.