



# The Forest CE Federation

'Small enough to care. Large enough to inspire

Valuing all God's children '

*All things are possible for one who believes' Mark 9 v 23*

## RE Policy

Stoke Bruerne CEVC Primary School

Reviewed October 2021



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## Introduction

"Religious Education in a Church School 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 together. Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person".

(Taken from the Statement of Entitlement – Church of England Education Office 2019).

The Diocese of Peterborough's Board of Education Vision Statement aims to "provide all the children and young people with an excellent education in every area of the curriculum and in every aspect of their personal development, so that they are able to lead a fulfilling life and are equipped to make the world a better place. We want pupils to leave school with a rich experience and understanding of Christianity and other world faiths... We aim to make sure our pupils appreciate the biblical basis and Christian beliefs that underpin Christian values".

(Taken from 'Education for Life, deeply Christian, serving the common good' – DBE 2019)

At The Forest CE Federation pupils and their families can expect a high quality RE curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling learners to acquire a thorough knowledge and understanding of a range of faiths and worldviews. As church schools, the teaching of Christianity is at the heart of our RE curriculum. Through the 'Understanding Christianity' resource, the use of an enquiry approach engages with significant theological concepts and the pupil's own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Using the Locally Agreed RE syllabus we learn about other religions and worldviews, fostering respect for them. Links with our Christian values and vision, and 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 pupils to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

## Our Vision

The Forest CE Federation aims to provide children with an exciting, broad and balanced curriculum that will instil a love of learning. Our approach enables all children to become lifelong learners by developing transferable skills to equip them to succeed in a competitive world. A strong **Christian** ethos permeates through our daily lives ensuring our pupils are cared for in a safe, nurturing environment within our small **community**.

Everyone is valued as an individual and helped to develop and progress in their own unique way within a Christian environment. Our vision, '**Small enough to care , Large enough to inspire , Valuing All God's children**' is at the core of everything we do. The curriculum we offer is not merely academic, but embraces the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of all pupils and is deeply rooted in our vision that:



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We believe in the "whole child" and are committed to children's wider well-being through our **creative** inclusive curriculum, which is driven by our spiritual values.

Our curriculum is designed to spark **curiosity** in young minds through carefully planned opportunities for pupils to acquire, apply and master their knowledge and skills in a unique learning environment.

We know that a child who feels happy, safe and secure will have the **confidence** to try their best and achieve in all that they do. We endeavour to provide all children with the knowledge, skills and environment in which to thrive.

As Church Schools we enjoy and value close links with our local Churches. We have a strong Christian Ethos throughout the federation which is evident when visiting our schools.

We define progress as the widening and deepening of essential knowledge, skills, understanding and behaviours. This is done through how we deliver our curriculum; Continuous Provision

## **Aims and Purposes**

The principal aim for Religious Education is **"to enable pupils to hold balanced and informed conversations about religion and belief"**.

(Taken from the Diocese of Peterborough RE Syllabus and based on continuing Diocesan Adviser work on the Purpose of RE – [www.reonline.org.uk/news/revision-rethinking-re-a-conversation-about-religious-and-theological-literacy/](http://www.reonline.org.uk/news/revision-rethinking-re-a-conversation-about-religious-and-theological-literacy/))

This principal aim incorporates the following aims of Religious Education in Church Schools as taken from the "Church of England Statement of Entitlement 2019". For 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;
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied;
- Engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience;
- 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;
- Explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.

Appropriate to their age at the end of their education in Church schools, the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and, as a minimum, pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith;



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- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and non-religious worldviews in their search for God and meaning;
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none;
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.

## Legal Requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request.

*(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 playgroups.

## Right of Withdrawal

In keeping with the law, parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education provided they give written notification to the school. Parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. The school must ensure that suitable supervision is provided for the pupil. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all pupils admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the Headteacher before making such a decision

Staff always refer to the Subject Leader or Headteacher any questions from parents about withdrawals.

No pupils are withdrawn from RE at present.

## Cross-curricular Links

RE supports the development of a wide range of educational skills 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 RE on different occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts;
- Consume food;
- Visit places of worship.



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Teachers will conform to the guidelines set out in the school's Health and Safety Policy in these circumstances.

## **National and Local Context**

We provide a range of opportunities for pupils to make links between beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

Our teaching and learning pedagogy uses an enquiry-based approach that engages with text and beliefs and helps to develop religious and theological literacy.

Stoke Bruerne primary is a small rural school, part of The Forest CE Federation of small schools, catering for pupils across the primary age range.

- Many of our parents travel to come to this school although we welcome pupils from the village of Stoke Bruerne and the surrounding villages and the market town of Towcester.
- We have close links with St Mary the Virgin Church and the vicar and members of the congregation support RE and Collective Worship through weekly visits into school and/ or visits to the church.
- We welcome visitors to the school from a variety of religious and non - religious backgrounds to support RE lessons and talk to the pupils such as Jo Elijah to discuss the Jewish faith.
- Pupils also experience visits to diverse places of worship. All such visits are fully educational in nature and no confessional religious practice takes place.
- Pupils also have the opportunity to experience the celebration of different cultures and festivals other than their own, within RE and other areas of the curriculum and Collective Worship.

## **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:

- Contributes to British Values (mutual tolerance, respectful attitudes, democracy, the rule of law and individual liberty) 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;
- Enables 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 a wide range of skills such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs;



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- 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 the school's trust deed, 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. In order to deliver the aims and expected standards of the syllabus, the Diocese of Peterborough Board of Education strongly recommend a minimum allocation of curriculum time for RE based upon the law and the *Statement of Entitlement* from the Church of England Education Office. **Schools should aim to be close to 10% of curriculum for teaching RE, but must be no less than 5%.**

At the Forest CE Federation, (Stoke Bruerne School) we organise our RE in units of work, with weekly RE lessons. In addition, at times, we provide RE opportunities within our daily continuous provision. Every term we also have a full week where, as a whole school/ federation, we immerse ourselves in one particular religious area, incorporating visits and visitors wherever possible.

## Teaching and Learning Styles

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.

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and worldviews 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.



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The Diocese of Peterborough RE Syllabus has been designed as a resource to support schools/academies in developing and delivering excellence in RE. It sets out an approach to teaching and learning, supporting teachers to help pupils encounter core concepts in religions and beliefs in a coherent way, developing their understanding and their ability to hold balanced and informed conversations about religions and beliefs.

The Syllabus is underpinned by three core elements (Text/Beliefs, Impact and Connections) which are woven together to provide breadth and balance within teaching and learning about religions and beliefs, thus supporting the aims of RE. (Further details are found in Section A3 of the Diocese of Peterborough RE Syllabus).

Teachers adopt a variety of teaching and learning styles. This variety enables pupils to encounter their preferred learning style as well as to develop a broad repertoire. The teaching and learning styles used promote a range of skills such as thinking skills, reasoning, enquiry and research.

Examples of active learning strategies and activities, which we use, are:

- Dramatic conventions;
- Group work;
- Individual reflection;
- Use of music and art;
- Artefact handling;
- Multi - sensory approaches;
- Visits and visitors;
- Use of ICT and Multi Media;
- Use of photos, posters, DVDs.

## **Subject Leadership**

RE is a core subject in all Church of England schools. RE has equal status with other core subjects in staffing, responsibility and resourcing.

**The RE subject leaders is are Mrs Doreen Howie ( Whittlebury) and Ms Sarah Munday (Tiffield) overseen and supported by Mrs Eliza Hollis, Executive Headteacher**

The Subject Leaders for Religious Education have the following roles.

## **Policy, knowledge and development**

- Reviews the School/Federation RE Policy annually;
- Devises a whole school/academy Long Term Plan and Schemes of Work which cater for progression;
- Decides which religions are to be included at which key stage, based on the syllabus requirements;
- Ensures that curriculum time is sufficient across the school/academy;



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- Devises appropriate procedures for planning, assessment, recording and reporting pupils' work in line with whole school/federation policy;
- Ensures that SEN, EAL and gifted and talented school/federation policies are promoted in RE;
- Promotes RE with staff, pupils, parents and governors;
- Promotes displays of pupils' work in RE;
- Audits available resources, buy new ones and deploys appropriately;
- Keeps up-to-date with local and national developments.

## Monitoring

- Reviews, monitors and evaluates the provision and the practice of RE;
- Identifies trends, makes comparisons and knows about different groups within the school/federation;
- Monitors planning, checking for clarity of outcomes and aspects of differentiation;
- Provides observation feedback and report on findings;
- Samples pupil's work;
- Evaluates outcomes for pupils in RE for progress and attainment;
- Sets overall school/federation targets for improvement.

## Supporting and Advising

- Prepares a subject action plan, including short and long-term targets and a funding policy, which builds on existing practice and strives for continuous improvement;
- Leads curriculum development and ensures staff development through courses, in-house meetings and training;
- Keeps up-to-date with new developments and resources, including accessing the Diocese of Peterborough termly RE Newsletter;
- Supports non-specialist teachers and staff;
- Works alongside colleagues to demonstrate good practice;
- Prepares statements about RE for parents and governors, as required;
- Ensures parents and pupils are involved in the process.

## Quality Assurance

We ensure that there is external verification of standards in RE in a variety of ways.

- Monitoring by a Diocesan Schools Consultant or the RE Adviser;
- Executive Headteacher is also a DSC for the diocese
- Moderation of pupil RE work with other RE Subject Leads within the cluster
- Moderation within schools and across the federation
- RE Link Governor monitoring;
- Completing a SIAMS/RE self-evaluation and applying for REQM status awards).

## Resources





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A wide range of resources are in place for each theme/unit within Religious Education. These are all individually boxed according to religion and a list of contents for each resource box is displayed on the front of each box. Resources are also shared across the federation. The Federation also uses resources and artefacts from Learning resources for education.

Staff across the Federation plan together and share resources.

Subject leaders identify during monitoring if other resources are required.

## **Matching Work to Pupils' Needs**

The Federation policy with regard to special educational needs, the gifted and talented and differentiation applies to RE. Teachers should be alert to the fact that some children have special and deep experience of a religion through family practice. This, of course, may not relate to their general educational 'ability'.

## **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Assessment in RE will:

- Involve identifying suitable opportunities in schemes of work/resources used such as "Understanding Christianity";
- Be directly related to the expectations of the Locally 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 school's 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.

An annual report for RE informs parents of their child's progress and attainment, as required by law. We will make specific, individual, accurate comments on each child's progress in RE in this report, based on regular monitoring of work and with regard to the end of phase outcomes. We will transfer this information to new schools when pupils leave us.

## **Monitoring, Evaluation and Review**

We intend that all staff and governors will review this policy annually. The Subject Leader's role includes monitoring and evaluation of this policy in practice. We maintain a 'self-evaluation' of our RE work in readiness for inspection.



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## **Self-Evaluation, RE and Inspection**

The Subject Leader will maintain an active awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject, in line with guidance about self-evaluation and review.

## **Transition to Secondary Education**

We use the final term in Year 6 to review learning in RE. We provide the schools our pupils move on to with a simple statement of the religions and topics they have been studying as part of their transition information.

## **Striving for Excellence**

We know that RE makes a powerful contribution to children and young people's learning. It provides them with the chance to explore the big ideas of religion and belief and to think about what matters in their own lives. We look at the continuing role of religion in contemporary British and global society.

We aim to make our school a challenging but safe space for pupils to explore their own and others' religious, spiritual and philosophical convictions critically and responsibly. We give opportunities to engage in dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews.

High quality RE supports the development of the whole child. It also has a significant contribution to make to whole school improvement.

We continuously strive for excellence for all our pupils in Religious Education.

**Named RE Subject Leader: Mrs D Howie. Ms S Munday**

Headteacher: Mrs E Hollis

**Link Governors: J Brough, Rev Karen Jongman, M Koniewienko**



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