

SODBURY VALE FEDERATION

Religious Education Policy

In line with our schools' visions, Religious Education at our schools develops knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and its beliefs and values.

Teaching about other world religions develops attitudes of respect, self-worth and empathy. In RE pupils will explore how religious belief supports moral development and helps individuals and communities to find meaning in their lives. It enables pupils to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life. By making RE relevant through creative and stimulating teaching, pupils will be encouraged to deepen their thinking and understanding in an atmosphere of love and respect.

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1. VERSION HISTORY

Version Number	Reason for Issue	Date of Issue
01	Initial Issue for Federation	May 2022
02	Review and updated in line with Gloucester Diocesan guidance	Nov 2025

2. Legal Position of Religious Education

Religious Education is unique in the curriculum, as it is neither a core or foundation subject. In the 1988 Education Act it states, 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all pupils.'

Sodbury Vale Federation comprises of a Voluntary Controlled and Voluntary Aided Primary Schools.

St John's Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled School and therefore follows South Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022 – 2027.

Horton Primary School is a Church of England Voluntary Aided School therefore the provision of Religious Education must be in accordance with the school's Trust Deed. The Governors, in accordance with the Executive Headteacher, have decided to adopt the South Gloucestershire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2022 – 2027.

3. The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement

The Church of England's Statement of Entitlement outlines the aims and expectations for Religious Education in Church of England Schools and guides this school's approach to RE.

It begins by stating: *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 to educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together.* Quoting from the Church of England's Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good, it continues *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.*

4. INTRODUCTION

Our vision at St John's Mead is that every child should grow in wisdom, knowledge and skills so that they may flourish as unique human beings created in God's likeness, knowing that they are loved and valued with the potential to make a difference in the world. *'Valuing Effort, Valuing Others, Valuing Self.'*

Our vision at Horton Church of England Primary School is that everyone knows that they are loved by God and learns all that they need to flourish, contributing to the good of others in the school community and the wider world. Happy children is at the heart of all we do. By promoting respect, fostering resilience and encouraging independence, our children can reach their full potential and be fully equipped to take on life's challenges *knowing they are loved and valued. 'Loving, learning and flourishing together'*

Religious Education at our schools develops knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith and values and teaching about world religions and world views developing attitudes of respect, self-worth and empathy. In RE pupils will explore how religious belief supports moral development and helps individuals and communities to find meaning in their lives. It enables pupils to know about, understand and respond to the important and ultimate questions of life. By making RE relevant through creative and stimulating teaching pupils will be encouraged to deepen their thinking and understanding in an atmosphere of love and respect.

5. Aims

- To explore 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,
- To develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other religions and world views that offer answers to these challenging questions,
- To learn from different religions, beliefs and values and traditions while exploring their own beliefs and questions of meaning and purpose,
- To develop their sense of identity and belonging as citizens in a diverse society and global community,
- To understand how belief may impact on culture, relationships, values and lifestyle.
- To understand how belief can be expressed in a variety of ways including art, dance, music, ritual celebration and in different cultural settings,
- To enable pupils to develop spiritually, morally, culturally and socially by helping them to reflect upon personal feelings and relationships, develop important skills of empathy, communication, analysis and evaluation and attitudes of respect, sensitivity, open mindedness and self-esteem,
- To help pupils develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery.

6. Approach

In line with all church schools, this federation has a duty to provide accurate knowledge and understanding of religions and world views.

A wide range of imaginative teaching methods and pupil groupings ensure effective RE sessions. We appreciate the positive impact that local faith communities can have on pupils' experience in RE. Therefore, this school encourages visits to places of worship and welcomes visitors from different faith communities. We recognise it is vitally important that teachers demonstrate respectful attitudes towards all faiths, modelling the attitudes and responses we would expect from our pupils.

Teaching and learning in RE in this school will provide:

- a challenging and robust curriculum based on an accurate theological framework
- an assessment process which has rigour and demonstrates progression based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts
- a curriculum that draws on the richness and diversity of religious experience worldwide
- a pedagogy that instils respect for different views and interpretations; and, in which real dialogue and theological enquiry take place
- the opportunity for pupils to deepen their understanding of the religion and world views as lived by believers
- RE that makes a positive contribution to SMSC development.

RE will be given at least 5% of curriculum time. Within this federation the Locally Agreed South Gloucestershire Syllabus is the statutory document for the teaching of RE. This is supplemented by "Understanding Christianity".

7. Legal Requirements

At Sodbury Vale Federation we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents/cares 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 occasions, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history and citizenship.

We would ask any parent/carer considering this to contact the executive headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at our school.

The federation will ensure that parents/carers 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/carers 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 federation may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents/carers.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents/carers 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/carers have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although our federation should ensure that parents/carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents/carers can make an informed decision.
- Where parents/carers 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/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/carer wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.

- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA SACRE (VC schools) or diocese (VA schools) 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.

8. Key Principles

- The scheme of work for RE will maintain a balance between the three strands of believing, expressing and living.
- The pupils will gain an understanding that within each religion, there are variations in what believers agree or do.
- There will be Key Questions for each unit of work.
- The scheme of work will ensure there is continuity and progression for pupils and opportunities for assessment in all three strands.
- A range of teaching and learning activities will ensure that pupils learn effectively and with interest.
- A range of visitors will be invited to support the teaching of RE and, where possible, there will be planned visits to places of worship.
- The RE coordinator will support and monitor the subject and the resources available.
- Within this federation, the faiths taught are:
 - EYFS / Key Stage One: Christianity, Islam, Judaism
 - Key Stage Two: Christianity, Islam, Judaism and Hindu Dharma alongside non- religious worldviews such as humanism.
- Promotion of the subject through enrichment days.

9. Assessment

- Monitoring of year and medium/short- term planning and curriculum coverage
- Lesson observations
- Work sampling (pupil outcomes, pupil feedback)
- Floor Books
- Pupil Voice
- Learning walks
- End of unit assessments showing attainment for each child,
- Comparing attainment in RE with other key subjects
- Review of curriculum plan

On an annual basis the school end of year reports to parents/carers on achievement in RE based on teacher assessment.

10. Responsibilities

The subject leader is responsible for overseeing the teaching and learning of religious education in the school. The role includes:

- Ensuring personal subject knowledge and expertise are kept up to date by participating in CPD for RE and share good practice
- Providing and sourcing in-service training for staff as necessary
- Ensuring the staff are familiar with the syllabus and supporting resources such as Understanding Christianity
- Supporting and clarifying the school's approach to planning, delivery and assessment being clear about the subject's intent, implementation and impact
- Acquiring and organising appropriate resources, managing a budget when necessary
- Monitoring the teaching and learning of RE through regular lesson observations, work scrutiny, learning walks, analysis of data and pupil voice and be able to discuss impact and standards
- Contributing to the SIAMS self-evaluation process particularly around IQ 6 (and IQ 7 for Horton).

The executive headteacher and governors make sure:

- RE has a high profile within the curriculum
- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning outcomes of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have effective and regular opportunities for CPD
- teachers newly appointed to Church schools are given support to become effective teachers of RE
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw.
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils make good progress.