

**Church of England and Methodist Schools**  
Diocese of Blackburn and North Lancashire Methodist District

**Religious Education Policy – Policy Guidance**  
(A Suggested Structure for Church Schools)

**RE in a Church School should be of the highest standard, always striving for excellence, reflecting the school's distinctive Christian character.**

**Your Policy Should:**

**Include the**

Mission Statement of the School, **followed by a 'Mission' Statement** for Religious Education. Create a Statement that clearly emphasises the distinctive nature of Religious Education in your Church School and the contribution it makes to the ethos and spiritual dimension of school life.

**Emphasise that**

in Voluntary Aided Schools the management of RE is a distinctive role of the governors and headteacher. RE has to be in accordance with the Trust Deed and in accordance with the rites, practices and doctrines of the Church of England and/or Methodist Church. The Governing Body as a whole is responsible for determining the nature of Religious Education provided in its school.

OR

a Voluntary Controlled School is required in law (unless parents request otherwise) to provide RE in accordance with their Locally Agreed Syllabus. However, as a Church School RE in a Voluntary Controlled School should still have a distinctive approach.

**Make it clear that**

although RE and Collective Worship naturally compliment and enrich one another they should be managed separately.

**RE in a Church School lies at the very heart of the curriculum**

**State clearly the content of and time allocation for RE**

**It is recommended**

- that Governors adopt the Blackburn Diocesan Board of Education Syllabus for RE which reflects the National Framework for RE
- that at least 5% of curriculum time is devoted to RE
- that Christianity plays a central role in RE, taking up between two thirds and three quarters of the time available
- that appropriate teaching about other faiths and world views is included.

**It is essential that the RE curriculum maintains a balanced approach of Learning about Religion (Attainment Target 1 QCA) and Learning from Religion (Attainment Target 2 QCA).**

This can be expressed distinctively as

**Learning about Religion**

We learn about

- God who reveals the truth about himself and humanity through creation, the giving of the law, his action in history and through the prophets
- God who reveals himself ultimately in Jesus his Son, living among us and dying and rising for us
- God who reveals himself in his Spirit working in the living faith of the Church experienced through scripture, tradition and reason.

**Learning from Religion**

We learn from

- an empathetic response to the Christian faith and a critical engagement with it
- responding personally to the transforming power of Jesus Christ
- developing a vision for life that transcends a dull materialism and recognises the reality of the spiritual realm
- understanding ourselves and others, celebrating our shared humanity and the breadth of human achievement
- examples of Christian living which give priority to the claims of justice, mercy, holiness and love.

**You may wish to include that RE in Church Schools should help pupils to:**

- think theologically and explore the great questions of life and death, meaning and purpose
- reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief
- see how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenge of Jesus' teaching in a pluralist and post modern society
- develop the skills to handle the Bible text
- recognise that faith is not based on a positive balance of probabilities but on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world
- respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and traditions
- become active citizens, serving their neighbour
- find a reason for hope in a troubled world
- understand how religious faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

**It is essential that your RE Policy reflects that RE should equip pupils to recognise the common search of all humanity for ultimate truth and relationship with the divine. It is entirely appropriate and necessary in today's world, therefore, that respect for the great world faiths is fostered in RE within a Church School. This respect must be based on an accurate and sympathetic understanding of the other faiths which is consistent with the school's loyalty to its Christian foundation.**

**Therefore RE in Church Schools should also help pupils to:**

- learn *about* other faiths, their beliefs, traditions and practices and *from* them through encounter and dialogue
- recognise and respect those of all faiths in their search for God
- recognise areas of common belief and practice between different faiths
- enrich and expand their understanding of truth while remaining faithful to their own tradition
- enrich their own faith through examples of holy living in other traditions
- recognise the common human quest for justice, peace and love and the common goal of the survival of life on this planet.

**You may wish to include some or all of this distinctive content of the RE Curriculum in a Church School:**

- opportunities to explore the experience of the Church's year
- study of the story of the local Christian community with its saints and martyrs
- visits to places of worship, especially the local parish Church and the Cathedral, to develop the understanding of the Church as a living community
- welcoming visitors from the local parish to share their experience of Christian belief and life
- liaison with the local parish to enable these visits and links to occur
- support for the pupils: confident use of religious language
- a well-used set of Bibles in language that can be understood by the learners and examples of Bibles and prayer books from a variety of contexts
- the facility to listen to Christian 'psalms and hymns and spiritual songs' from a wide variety of traditions
- access to Christian artefacts that are used with care, respect and confidence
- a sacred space that can be used as a focus for prayer and silent reflection
- encouragement of mutual respect based on Christian values, where pupils and teachers are able to talk openly and freely about their own personal beliefs and practice without fear of ridicule
- pupils to make excellent and appropriate progress in their knowledge and understanding of Christianity
- pupils from Christian families to talk openly about their beliefs and values in lessons and to grow in their faith
- pupils from other faith backgrounds to understand and be encouraged in their faith
- pupils with no religious background to face the challenge of the Christian faith
- pupils of all backgrounds to have a safe place to explore the place of doubt and certainty in a maturing faith.

## **Your RE Policy needs to emphasise the significant contribution RE makes to pupils'**

### **Spiritual, Moral Social and Cultural development.**

Spiritual development within RE in a Church School enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of *God the creator*, of their 'inmost being' and of the wonder of the environment. Moral development is based on the teachings of *Jesus Christ*, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

Social development enriches pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a *Christian community* where *Jesus' command to love one another* is put into practice. Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of *Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith* that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

**A more detailed breakdown of the distinctive nature of SMSC in a Church School can be found in the SMSC policy document guidance.**

### **In your RE policy reference should be made to:**

- SEN provision
- resources
- Assessment and record keeping.

### **Finally it is vital that your RE Policy includes the Parental Rights of Withdrawal in a Voluntary Aided School.**

Parents may request the governing body to provide Religious Education for their children according to the *Agreed Syllabus*. This can only be requested when parents cannot, with reasonable convenience, arrange for their children to attend another school where Religious Education is provided according to the *Agreed Syllabus*. The governing body **should** make provision unless the circumstances make it unreasonable to do so.

Should the governing body be unable to make such arrangements for Religious Education to be delivered according to the *Agreed Syllabus*, the responsibility for doing so then falls on the Local Authority. The Local Authority may decide that such a request for separate Religious Education is unreasonable and the parental request then fails.

Parents may withdraw their children from Religious Education as they may in any school and this opportunity **must** be described in the school brochure. The Church of England Board of Education and the Methodist Church suggests an appropriate form of words might be:

' The Worship and Religious Education provided by the school is in accordance with the Church of England or Methodist Church Foundation. This foundation is also reflected in the curriculum and the whole life of the school community. Since the conduct of the school as a whole reflects the Church of England or Methodist Church ethos, removal of pupils from Worship and/or Religious Education (as parents are legally entitled to do) cannot insulate them from the religious life of the school.'

If such a request for withdrawal is made, the Headteacher should explore the reasons for the request and seek to arrive at an accommodation. It may be that only some elements of Religious Education or Worship are objected to.