

Abbey Academies Trust



Every Child Matters

POLICY

For

Religious Education

Amended

September 2016		
February 2020		
April 2021		

**Every Child Matters
within a loving and caring Christian environment**

Our Vision

We have a vision of a community in which each person is offered the opportunity to fulfil their potential and to understand themselves to be valued for who they are. Through a stimulating and challenging learning environment, we pursue academic excellence and seek the flourishing of all members of the school community. As inclusive and caring church schools, our commitment is to help pupils become thoughtful, open-minded and compassionate human beings who have the knowledge, skills and motivation they need to bring about positive transformation in the world.

“Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as you ever can.”

John Wesley

Our work and vision is based on five core values of:

- Integrity
- Equality
- Respect
- Care
- Inclusion

We recognise that children are created in the image of God but also value their individuality as they explore their own God given talents and are treated with respect and dignity at all times. We are committed to giving all of our children every opportunity to achieve the highest of standards. We do this by taking account of pupils' varied life experiences and needs. We believe that our broad and balanced curriculum, underpinned by British and Christian values, plays a major part in delivering excellence which permeates through every element of school life. The achievements, attitudes and well-being of all our children matter and we have high expectations for everyone in the school community.

Our Trust aims to be inclusive. “I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” Jeremiah 29:11. We actively seek to overcome the barriers to learning and participation that can hinder or exclude individual pupils, or groups of pupils. This means that equality of opportunity must be a reality for our children. We make this a reality through the attention we pay to the different individuals, and groups of children within our schools.

Our mission statement reflects this aim ‘Striving for excellence, caring for all’ within a loving and caring Christian environment.

The Context of our Academy Trust

- As Church of England Schools, we recognise the core place that RE occupies in relation to our Church school distinctiveness
- Within our Academies Trusts we believe in a Christian ethos whilst welcoming **all**. We understand that as Church Schools that we are in a unique position to develop a clearer understanding of the ways in which Christian Values can be reflected within the whole curriculum of the school. We not only encourage our pupils to strive for excellence in the core subjects, but to broaden their education, to embrace and develop the concepts of faith and spirituality, of hope and charity and to enable them to make more informed decisions later in life as broad-minded and knowledgeable world citizens
- We actively seek to prepare our pupils for life in modern Britain. As such, we promote key British Values, including respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs. We challenge all forms of prejudice and we seek RE as one curriculum area in which our pupils can encounter and critically reflect on a range of worldviews
- We identify RE as one of the core subjects through which our pupils can develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally, but we do not limit the delivery of SMSC to this subject alone
- We have close links with our Parish Church and the other Churches in our localities. Our school is inclusive and accepts children regardless of background or special need and our intake of pupils is representative of all sections of the Bourne community. We recognise that we are in a unique position to develop a clearer understanding and identification of ways in which Christian, British, moral and other faith values can motivate relationships between all members of our community
- We believe that the enduring and renewing values that underpin the Christian story may be considered to be even more relevant within our fast-changing society. The concepts of respect and care are central to the way we live our lives
- We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds from which our pupils come. We welcome diversity, and we intend to be sensitive to the home background of each child. RE does not seek to urge religious beliefs on children nor to compromise the integrity of their own beliefs by promoting one religion over another
- The communal life of our schools, and the role of every teacher within them, continue to be highly significant. Unless the Trust supplies examples of personal maturity, good human relationships, successful communications, and interest in one's surroundings, achievement of the broader aims of religious education becomes impossible. Similarly, an atmosphere in which it is accepted that religion can be a genuine and important dimension of human life will

foster the achievement of the more specific aim of a tolerant understanding of religious believers and institutions

- The Trust recognises that Religious Education is not the same as Collective Worship, which has its own place within our Trust (see Collective Worship policy)
- Abbey Academies Trust (AAT) recognises the individual contexts of the academies/schools within the Trust. The RE curriculum is tailored to the needs of the children at individual schools
- RE within the AAT is provided within legal requirements:
 1. The Basic Curriculum includes provision for RE for all pupils registered on the school roll, including those in Reception classes who are less than five years old
 2. The content of RE reflects that the religious traditions of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland are, in the main, Christian. It also reflects the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in the Kingdom
 3. The RE curriculum provided is in accordance with the Lincolnshire Locally Agreed Syllabus

Remote Learning

These challenging and unprecedented Covid times, have encouraged the development of exciting and innovative ways to approach remote learning. Abbey Academies Trust recognise remote education as 'a means not an end,' the aim of education is to deliver a high-quality curriculum so that pupils know more and remember more. Abbey Academies Trust is committed to ensuring that the remote education offered follows our normal school curriculum as far as is possible via these means, enabling pupils to obtain the building blocks they need to move onto the next step in their learning at all times. For further information on our approach to remote learning please reference Abbey Academies Trust Remote Education Plan.

After our return to school in March 2021, the RE curriculum has been refined to best support the development of our children's skills and knowledge, providing them with solid foundations and enabling them to 'fly high' as they continue their journey through school.

Our INTENT - What are the aims and principles of Religious Education?

In a world of confusion and shifting values, children need accurate information and a helpful environment in which they can explore and form their own values and develop skills to deal with life's joys, sorrows and questions.

Religious Education provides opportunities for our pupils:

1. To develop their religious literacy. We understand religious literacy to be the ability to hold a balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief
2. To develop children's knowledge and understanding of, and their ability to respond to, Christianity and other principal religions represented in Great Britain
3. To explore issues within and between faiths to help children understand and respect different religions, beliefs, values and traditions (including ethical life stories), and understand the influence of these on individual, societies, communities and cultures

4. To consider questions of meaning and purpose in life
5. To learn about religious and ethical teaching, enabling children to make reasoned and informed judgements on religious and moral issues
6. To develop children's sense of identity and belonging, preparing them for life as citizens in a multicultural society
7. To develop enquiry and response skills through the use of distinctive language, listening and empathy
8. To reflect on, analyse and evaluate their beliefs, values and practices and communicate their responses

Implementation - How do we do this?

TEACHING AND LEARNING STYLES

1. Wherever possible, pupils are actively engaged in exploratory and experimental learning including opportunities to:
 - observe religious artefacts, paintings, books, photos, pictures etc
 - gain first-hand knowledge through direct questioning
 - studying sacred texts and stories
 - visit places of worship in a planned and structured way
 - meet and talk to believers of various faiths in a planned and controlled situation
2. Learning is geared to more than the accumulation of factual knowledge and personal experiences. Opportunities for analysis are especially important and must be given to enable the child to develop those insights and deeper perceptions that lead to understanding
3. RE is equally concerned with understanding the feelings and attitudes of others. This requires both openness and sensitivity, and a degree of imagination in order to empathize with and see the world through the eyes of another person
4. During RE in the Foundation Stage, Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils have the opportunity to know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews and gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews
5. The children acquire and apply knowledge and understanding of: Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Atheism and Humanist and how these religions and faith beliefs influence individuals, communities, society and the world around them

VALUES AND ATTITUDES

We embed Christian Values to ensure they permeate through our policies and every aspect of the children's learning and lives. Made in the image of God, we all deserve to be the best they can be regardless of

background, faith and ability.

Children are given opportunities to:

- work with others, listening to each other's ideas, and treat others with respect
- consider their own experiences, attitudes and values, and those of other people
- develop respect for evidence and critically evaluate ideas that may or may not fit the evidence available
- identify puzzling questions and suggest answers
- develop their understanding of why certain things are held to be right or wrong
- relate to moral and religious issues
- explore and express personal values, feelings and choices
- experience stillness and periods of quietness, silence or being alone
- evaluate their experiences and discoveries
- express themselves through movement, dance, poetry, music or in other creative media
- develop appropriate behaviour and responses when dealing with what is special, important, precious or sacred to themselves and others

SKILLS

Pupils will develop key skills in RE in order to enhance learning and this is evident across key stages:

1. **Investigation and enquiry:** asking relevant and increasingly deep questions; using a range of sources and evidence, including sacred texts; identifying and talking about key concepts
2. **Critical thinking and reflection:** analysing information to form a judgement; reflecting on beliefs and practices, ultimate questions and experiences
3. **Empathy:** considering the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others; seeing the world through the eyes of others
4. **Interpretation:** interpreting religious language and the meaning of sacred texts; drawing meaning from, for example, artefacts and symbols
5. **Analysis:** distinguishing between opinion, belief and fact; distinguishing between the features of different religions
6. **Evaluation:** enquiring into religious issues and drawing conclusions with reference to experience, reason, evidence and dialogue

TIME ALLOCATION

It is the expectation of the Church of England Education Office that RE should constitute a minimum of 5% curriculum time. This in line with the recommendations made by the Dearing Report 1994. We meet this expectation by providing the minimum time of 36 hours per year for KS1 and 45 hours per year for KS2. This time is arranged in a range of ways, including discrete weekly/fortnightly lessons and RE Enrichment days.

RESOURCES

We take advice from the Diocesan RE Adviser and other RE professionals on the best resources to support the delivery of high-quality RE. Our wide range of resources are stored in an appropriate and sensitive manner.

Impact

- Pupils make the best possible outcomes and progress
- Pupils show a positive attitude to all aspects of the RE curriculum and their learning in all areas
- Pupils attainment and achievement is monitored through the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus End of Phase Expectations. These end-of-phase expectations primarily focus on the **skills** associated with the three key disciplinary fields of theology (**Believing**), the human/social sciences (**Living**) and philosophy (**Thinking**) contextualized for the classroom:
 1. **Believing**: Engaging with key beliefs/concepts through analysis of texts
 2. **Believing**: Making connections between key beliefs/concepts within and between belief traditions
 3. **Living**: Showing understanding of core concepts relating to the human/social scientific study of religion and belief
 4. **Living**: Showing understanding of the connection between religious practice and context
 5. **Living**: Showing understanding of the way in which beliefs impact on the individual
 6. **Living**: Showing understanding of the way in which community can impact on religious practice
 7. **Thinking**: Articulating how and whether things make sense
 8. **Thinking**: Showing awareness of different approaches to understanding the world
 9. **Thinking**: Showing evidence of a process of reasoning

Religious Education is monitored through:

- Work and planning monitoring (including monitoring of statutory requirements for RE) by the RE team, Senior Leadership Team, Governors/Trustees and the Diocesan RE Advisor
- Drop-ins by the RE team
- Pupil Interviews
- Summative and formative assessment
- Moderation within the Trust

Other Relevant Documents

Policies:

- Teaching, learning and curriculum policy
- SMSC Policy

Curriculum Maps:

- Whole school RE overview
- Whole school Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus and Understanding Christianity Syllabus Spiral Curriculum
- Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus for RE: End-of-Phase Expectations

WITHDRAWAL FROM RE

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from RE lessons and of teachers to withdraw from teaching the subject. Parents/guardians/teachers do not need to provide a reason why they wish to withdraw from the subject. Should a parent/guardian wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons or a teacher wish to refuse to teach RE, it is required that written notice be sent to the Executive Headteacher.

Should a parent/guardian request that their child be withdrawn from RE, endeavours will be made to communicate clearly the place of RE within a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that they are in possession of all the necessary information before confirming their decision. However, there will be no attempt to persuade them to alter their decision. If a pupil is withdrawn from RE lessons, the school is required to provide supervision, *but should not incur any additional cost in doing and is not obliged to provide alternative work.*

Any queries regarding withdrawal from RE should be directed to the Executive Headteacher in the first instance.

As RRSs (Rights Respecting Schools– UNICEF) this policy upholds the following Articles from the UNCRC (United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child):

Article 2: Everyone has equal rights whatever their race, religion, ability, whatever they think or say or whatever their family.

Article 14: Every child has the right to follow their own religion. Article 28: Every child has the right to an education.

Article 29: Every child has the right to be the best they can.