



Religious Education Policy

March 2026

To be reviewed March 2028

Principles (Values)

Wickham Church of England Primary School is a Church of England voluntary controlled school, within the Diocese of Portsmouth. We follow the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Knowledge and understanding of Christianity will always remain central to the ethos and teachings of the school, with religious education contributing significantly to the school's Christian character. As an inclusive community, we will encourage learning about and learning from other religions and will foster respect for other religions and world views.

Definition

The purpose of Religious Education (RE) is to support the development of children's values and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. This entails enabling children to interpret and respond to a variety of concepts, beliefs and practices within religions and to interpret and respond to their own and others' cultural and life experiences.

This takes the form of encountering religious stories, festivals, artefacts, places of worship, rituals and beliefs.

Aims

Religious Education is central to the understanding of education and mission. The aims of Religious Education in our church school are:

- To enable pupils to encounter Christianity as a 'living religion' that has shaped British culture and heritage and influences the lives of millions of people today
- To enable pupils to learn about the other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents
- To develop understanding of religious faith as the search for the expression of truth and a deeper meaning of life
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual / philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own faith and beliefs
- For children to enjoy Religious Education and be enabled to speak about religious ideas and faith
- To be a school where we:
 - Nourish those of the faith
 - Encourage and support those of other faiths
 - Offer an invitation to those who have no faith

Principles of teaching and learning - The RE Curriculum

RE is taught in line with the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus (Living Difference IV) with due regard to the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education and school values. The teaching of RE is supported by the resource, 'Understanding Christianity'.

The RE curriculum is designed to ensure coherent progression of knowledge, concepts and disciplinary skills from EYFS to Year 6, avoiding repetition and ensuring depth of understanding. All pupils are entitled to high-quality RE that reflects diverse worldviews and supports their personal

development, regardless of their religious or non-religious background. Learning activities address both learning about and learning from religion. RE can be taught as either regular sessions or in blocked units. Decisions on which approach works best are made by individual teachers, in consultation with the RE leader, depending on the topic for each half term or whole school topic.

Our curriculum reflects a religion-and-worldviews approach, enabling pupils to understand how diverse religious and non-religious worldviews shape the ways people interpret and live in the world. Christianity is the majority study. However, the children will also be taught about Hinduism in Key Stage 1 and Judaism, Islam at Key Stage 2. Key Stage 2 children will also have the opportunity to explore a Dharmic festival during one of their units of study and to encounter Humanism as an example of a non-religious worldview. Each unit is 'concept' led, making reference to children's own experiences and thoughts.

RE in the Foundation Stage

RE in the Foundation Stage is covered through the teaching of discrete units of work derived from the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus and the Understanding Christianity resource aligned to aspects of the 'Personal, Social and Emotional Development', and 'Understanding of the World' strands of the seven areas of development. Where possible, links are made between RE and other areas of learning, as children work towards the Early Learning Goals. Children encounter simple concepts, which are particularly appropriate for this stage in their development such as 'Specialness'.

Strategies for the teaching of RE

RE stands as an academic subject in line with other such subjects within the school. We use a number of strategies to enable us to cover all styles of learning. These include:

- Exploiting cross-curricular links wherever possible
- Links are made with creative arts such as music, art, dance and drama
- The use of ICT to develop learning and understanding in RE
- A mix of whole-class, group and individual learning experiences
- We provide suitable learning opportunities for *all* children by matching the challenge of the task to the attainment level or needs of the child. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:
 - setting common tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
 - setting tasks of increasing difficulty (we do not expect all children to complete all tasks);
 - strategic grouping and setting of tasks to ensure appropriate access and challenge;
 - providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the needs of the child;
 - using learning support assistants or the teacher to support the work of individuals or groups of children.
- Wherever possible, we use first-hand experience as a stimulus for learning.
- The school has close links with St Nicholas Church in Wickham and we aim to give children the experience of visiting the church and speaking to members of the church community. Other outside visitors from a variety of faiths are also engaged, where appropriate, to contribute to the RE curriculum.
- We encourage children to question stories to deepen their own understanding of the concept being studied.
- We encourage children to form and question their opinions through discussion and debate.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

Religious Education is a key opportunity for children to develop spiritually, morally, socially and culturally. In RE lessons, as well as in PHSE, the wider curriculum and our Collective Worship programme, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses and appreciate that for some people, belief in a spiritual dimension is important. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions and enhance their social development by helping them to develop a sense of identity in a multicultural society.

Religious Education supports the promotion of the basic British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, and mutual respect and tolerance for those of different faiths and beliefs. The teaching of RE also contributes to the Prevent agenda by providing a safe space where pupils can discuss their own ideas and learn to understand other peoples' beliefs.

Progression and standards

The RE leader provides a long-term Subject Progression. Individual teaching staff are responsible for short-term planning of each unit to suit the individual needs of the class. We are committed to developing staff subject knowledge in RE through ongoing professional development, ensuring high-quality, accurate, and confident teaching. Support from the RE leader is always available if needed. Exemplar unit plans from the Living Differences document and Understanding Christianity are often used as the starting point.

Monitoring of RE teaching, discussion with learners, work scrutiny and moderation will take place by the RE Leader and governors. The aim of any monitoring is to ensure that the quality of teaching and learning and use of assessment, leads to an improvement in the performance of learners across the school. Pupil achievement in RE should be equal or better than comparable subjects.

Recording and reporting

An assessment system is in place in line with assessment guidelines from Hampshire linked to the Living Difference syllabus and the 2014 National Curriculum. Pupils' acquisition of key knowledge and skills in RE are assessed at the end of a unit, in order to raise standards, accelerate progress and inform future planning. Attainment in RE is recorded by class teachers. Pupils' achievement in RE is reported to parents in the end of year annual report.

Parental right of withdrawal

In accordance with the Education Reform Act 1988, parents have the right to withdraw their children from the teaching of RE. In order to avoid misunderstanding, any parent wishing to withdraw their child may arrange a meeting with the headteacher in order to discuss any issues. In the event of a child being withdrawn, the child will be provided with alternative supervised activities.

It should be noted that when spontaneous enquiries relating to religion and spiritual issues are raised in other areas of the curriculum, these cannot constitute RE within the meaning of the legislation and a parent could not reasonably insist on a child being withdrawn at such times.