



North Star  
**Federation**

guiding your child to a brighter future



# Religious Education Policy

## Introduction:

Religious Education is unique in the curriculum as it is neither a core nor a 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.'

North Star comprises two Church of England Voluntary Aided Schools therefore the provision of Religious Education must be in accordance with the school's Trust Deed. The Governors, in accordance with the Head Teacher, have decided to adopt the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus.

## 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.*

## Religious Education and the School's Christian Vision

### The vision at North Star:

Our vision is one of Hope; hope for our world, hope for our relationships and hope for our learning. It is based on the Bible passage, Hebrews 11, which describes how hope and faith are intertwined and talks about people from the Bible who exemplified these qualities.

**“Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.”**

At our schools, hope drives everything we do. We look beyond today and towards the horizon, knowing that a journey of learning and flourishing takes many steps. We know that we will bring about what we hope for, even though our journey is challenging.

Each aspect of our vision informs, is worked through and is encouraged by our RE curriculum.

By engaging with the Christian faith (on which the school is founded) as well as the other key religions and world views we study, through RE pupils critically engage with the key religious texts and experiences of believers which give them hope for the world around them, their learning about religions. This bigger picture, afforded by the thorough and well-thought out curriculum, allows the children the security to develop an understanding and respect of religions that are different to their own and help them to grow and learn in their own spiritual journey as well as be unhindered by relationships which encompass not only different belief systems but also differences of opinions. RE is a humanities subject which allows pupils to understand the beliefs and practices of the people who inhabit our world, and whom they will encounter.

### **Religious Education Intent**

The intent of Religious Education at North Star is to ensure that all pupils:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people world-wide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- Give a theologically informed, vision-inspired and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Know about and understand other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- Show a well-informed, balanced and respectful attitude to religions and world views
- Engage in meaningful and well-informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.

### **Religious Education Implementation**

#### **Curriculum**

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

The curriculum for RE is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences.

- **Theology:** This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other. For pupils we may describe this as *thinking through believing*.
- **Philosophy:** This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence. For pupils we may describe this as *thinking through thinking*.
- **Human/Social sciences:** This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies. For pupils we may describe this as *thinking through living*.

These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached. Using the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus and the overview from the Diocese of Norwich, North Star has a clear curriculum map for Religious Education that identifies the different disciplines and the enquiry Big Questions. This provides a systematic, sequenced and progressive curriculum that develops in complexity and builds on prior learning experiences in a meaningful way.

- In KS1, pupils study primarily Christianity and Judaism with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and worldviews.

- In KS2, pupils study primarily Christianity, Islam and Hinduism with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and world views.
- Whilst EYFS does not need to provide RE as a subject, as we have chosen to adopt the locally agreed syllabus, there is an expectation that RE is encountered in EYFS through continuous provision. The multi-disciplines will be introduced, and Christianity will primarily be studied. Holly Class may choose to also include festivals from other major religions e.g. Diwali.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2019), at least 51% of curriculum time (the majority) is allocated to the teaching of Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly sessions of RE, and through additional RE days which focus on an aspect of the Christian faith.

### **Teaching:**

Religious education at North Star uses an enquiry-based approach to learning. This is based on the best practice framework in the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus. This approach enables pupils to focus on an enquiry question which explores aspects of one of the lenses: theological, philosophical and human/social sciences. A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure learning is challenging and relevant including the use of art, music, thinking skills, artefacts and stories.

Where possible, we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities. Remote learning will enable the use of online resources to facilitate virtual visits or visitors to ensure high quality RE is still being delivered where not possible in other ways.

As identified in the Statement of Entitlement, 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 concept.
- 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 takes 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.

### **Religious Education Impact (Assessment and Recording)**

In our school, KS1 record their RE lessons in floor books while KS2 record their work in individual books. Pupils are assessed in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within RE. Class teachers use the age-related expectations alongside the assessment questions from the diocese and impact sections of the planning to inform their decision of where each child sits for each enquiry question. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art-work, discussion to ensure that all children can express their understanding for given enquiry question.

In broad terms the following principles have been applied to each aspect in terms of what it means to become more religiously literate:

- Extending knowledge and understanding from the concrete and familiar to the abstract and complex
- Moving from simple ideas and beliefs/concepts to making connections between them and placing these within a bigger picture or meta-narrative

- Demonstrating increasing layers of interpretation of religion, religions, beliefs and worldviews through engagement with a broadening and increasingly complex range of information
- Showing an increasing ability to critically question and form coherent, logical arguments, including increasing recognition of divergences of opinion about and the controversial nature of religion and belief
- Expressing a broadening understanding of diversity in terms of the nature of religion, religions and worldviews

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess all pupils in their class. We assess the children to ensure that they primarily get better at RE, we also want to ensure they are making good progress in this subject and use it to plan future work.

### **Responsibilities for RE in School**

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 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 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 Strand 7
- Undertaking regular subject specific leadership training outside the school from trusted providers (e.g. the Diocese of Norwich, national subject association)

The Head Teacher 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 provided with support offered by the Diocese to enable them 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 in RE and pupils make good progress.

### **The Right of Withdrawal from Religious Education**

At North Star we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents 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 considering this to contact the headteacher to discuss any concerns and anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at our school, with awareness that North Star is at its core a Church of England federation.

### **Managing the Right of Withdrawal**

North Star will ensure that parents 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 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 school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 18 or over), 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 have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- Where parents 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 or 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 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 Diocese 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.

Links to other policies: [Collective Worship Policy](#). [Spirituality Policy](#)