PATHFINDERS

FEDERATION OF ST MICHAEL'S, ERPINGHAM & NORTHREPPS

Religious Education (RE) Policy

Formally adopted by the Governing Board of:-	**Pathfinders Federation**
On:-	**January 2025**
Chair of Governors:-	**Olivia Corfield**
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Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core nor foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

Religious education enables children to investigate and reflect on some of the most fundamental questions asked by people. In the Pathfinders Federation, we aim to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the major world faiths, addressing the fundamental questions in life. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge not only of Christianity but also of other world religions. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help the children to learn ***from*** religions as well as ***about*** religions.

Aims
The broad aims of RE are set out within the Locally Agreed Syllabus and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2016). The purpose of RE in our schools is to promote religious literacy. By this we mean that pupils are able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief.

The aims of religious education are to enable pupils to:

- Know about and understand Christianity as a living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage
- Give a theologically informed 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 world religions and world views
- Engage in meaningful and well-informed dialogue with those of other faiths and non
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values

Planning and Organisation
We plan our RE curriculum in accordance with Norfolk's Agreed Syllabus. We ensure that the topics studied in RE build upon prior learning and adopt an enquiry-led teaching style, allowing children's questions to lead their learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their skills and knowledge in each unit and we ensure that the planning progression in topic cycles offers the children an increasing challenge as they move through the school.

Curriculum
The curriculum for RE is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at its 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.

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.

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.

These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

In accordance with the structure of the Locally Agreed Syllabus we have agreed that:

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

- at KS2 pupils study primarily Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, with reference made to other

principal religions, beliefs and worldviews

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2016), two thirds of curriculum time in RE is allocated to Christianity. This entitlement is met both through the weekly or block teaching of RE and through additional RE days.

As our schools have mixed age classes, our medium-term planning is on a rotation cycle. This ensures that children have complete coverage of the Agreed Syllabus but do not repeat topics. We use the *Understanding Christianity* resources to help the development of the theological perspective.

Assessment
We assess children's work in RE in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within RE. We mark a piece of work once it has been completed and we comment as necessary according to our marking and assessment policy. On completion of a unit of work, we make a summary judgement about the work of each pupil.

Pupils are assessed using age-related expectations based on the Agreed Syllabus. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art work and discussion. Progress is tracked using Pupil Asset. We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject and to plan future work.

Monitoring and Evaluation
The subject leader for RE will monitor RE provision and standards with the federation through observations, book looks, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff. The named governor responsible for RE meets regularly with the subject leader in order to review progress. As Erpingham is a Voluntarily Controlled Church of England school, this governor is one of our Foundation governors.

The subject leader for RE is also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic led and direction for the subject in the school. It is expected that training in RE teaching will form an important part of teachers' professional development.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Through the teaching of RE in our schools, we provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in doing so, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

British Values
In our schools, British values are promoted in all that we do, including Collective Worship and our RE and PSHE sessions. These values are integral to our vision statement and our ethos. As well as actively promoting British values, the opposite also applies: we actively challenge pupils, staff or parents expressing opinions contrary to fundamental British values, including 'extremist' views.

Schools are subject to a duty (Section 26, Counter-terrorism and Security Act 2015) to have 'due regard to the need to prevent people from being drawn into terrorism'. This duty is known as the *Prevent* duty. All staff receive training in this area and take this duty very seriously. It is hoped that through our teaching in RE we will help children to address thoughts and concerns which they might have, enabling them to be sure of their own belief system in a time of significant change.

Enrichment Opportunities
As we are a federation consisting of three schools, it is important that children should experience first-hand what they learn about in the classroom. Visitors to the school and visits, particularly to places of worship, to enhance RE teaching and learning are strongly encouraged. We aim for all children to make a visit to Norwich Cathedral at least once a year.

Our parish churches are a valuable resource for the teaching of RE and children will spend time in them learning about the Christian tradition and making comparisons with other churches and places

of worship.

Inclusion
In planning for and organising RE activities, teachers take a differentiated approach to ensure equality of opportunity for all children, including those with SEN, EAL and those from all religious and cultural backgrounds.

Right to Withdraw
Our schools are inclusive communities but we recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds of conscience. This right of withdrawal doesn't extend, however, to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

If parents wish to withdraw their children from RE, no reason need to be given. Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected. If pupils are withdrawn from RE, school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost.

We ask any parent or guardian considering withdrawal to contact the Executive Headteacher to discuss any concerns about the policy, provision and practice of RE.