

# **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

**Reviewed by Governing Body: Autumn 2025**

**Policy Review Date: Autumn 2027**



## **HAMPSTEAD PAROCHIAL**

**Church of England Primary School**

**Educating for life in all its fullness.**

To enable everyone within our community to flourish and enjoy a life filled with love, meaning and purpose, underpinned by Christian values, a love of learning and an eagerness to make the world a better place together.

## **School Context**

Hampstead Parochial School is a Church of England Voluntary-Aided primary school that offers a distinctly Christian education in an inclusive environment where we encourage all children and young people to learn, enquire and grow. We deliver a curriculum that is rich and varied, enabling children to become religiously literate within an inclusive and safe space that promotes critical thinking and celebrates and respects difference.

The distinctive nature of our approach to education can be found in our explicit Christian values which permeate and shape the life of the school and guide all of our actions. They are carefully woven into our Collective worship and Religious Education which together form a deeply Christian school ethos.

Children and staff of all faiths and none are welcome at our school and our aims are to promote understanding and tolerance between those of different faith traditions.

The position of a Church of England school such as ours was well phrased by Robert Runcie, the Archbishop of Canterbury from 1980-1991 when he stated that,

*'Church schools should nourish Christians in their faith, encourage those of other faiths and challenge those of no faith'*

As a community, we have identified six Christian values that are woven into the very fabric of the school which we expect all members of the school community – students, staff, governors and clergy – to model:

- Koinonia
- Respect
- Compassion
- Forgiveness
- Friendship
- Responsibility

Koinonia may be a word you don't instantly recognise. It is a Greek word that occurs 20 times in the Bible (first occurring in Acts 2:42) and it means 'communion, joint participation and contribution'. It identifies the idealised state of fellowship and unity that should exist within the Christian Church.

We take full advantage of living in the centre of cosmopolitan London, by exposing the children to a variety of visits to different places of worship. This includes visits to the Synagogue, Temples, Mosques, Churches and the Gurdwara. We also offer opportunities for visitors to come in and talk to the children about their faith. This combined with trips to galleries, music and dance workshops intrinsically link RE across the wider curriculum.

## **What is RE?**

RE is a core academic subject in church schools that enables pupils to deepen their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. The subject provides all pupils with the opportunity to ask questions and begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about and in response to questions about their ideas.

## **The aims of RE**

In teaching RE we follow the London Diocesan Board for Schools' syllabus which has the following overarching aims:

- To teach the children about Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places
- To explore their own religious, spiritual, and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking
- To foster spiritual awareness by developing a sense of awe, wonder, mystery, joy and sorrow at the created world

## **Curriculum balance and time**

Reflecting the school's trust deed or academy articles of association and funding agreement, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that, in Church schools, Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and is at least 50% of curriculum time. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, is given and committed to the delivery of RE.

## **Legal requirements**

It is a legal requirement that Religious Education be taught to all pupils.

In voluntary aided schools the Governing Body is responsible for the syllabus for RE. The Head teacher and staff work with and under the direction of the Governors. It is the Governors' responsibility to ensure that RE is provided for all pupils in accordance with the Trust Deeds. Where these are missing, the religious education provided should be in harmony with the teachings and practices of the Church of England.

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning. The law contains a "conscience clause" which gives parents the right to withdraw their children from religious education. This applies to both community and voluntary aided schools. We do encourage parents to contact the Head teacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school.

## **RE and the School Curriculum**

RE at Hampstead Parochial Primary School is seen as a core academic subject and as such is given the same status as other core subjects within the National Curriculum and the school's theologically rooted vision. It is taught weekly and taught by the class teacher. The long-term plan ensures that pupils build on prior learning. Medium term plans are adapted from the London Diocese Boards of Schools planning and the R.E leader regularly reviews and assesses the implementation of the planning across the curriculum.

We have agreed a set of principles as a staff body that outline the place of RE in the curriculum and its importance:

- We believe that Religious Education allows us to ask big questions where there is not necessarily a 'right' or 'wrong' answer.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to explore values and morals that we and others hold.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to explore other cultures and beliefs whilst developing acceptance and tolerance of difference.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to learn from other people's beliefs and practices.
- We believe that Religious Education allows us to experience awe and wonder at ourselves, the world and universe.

### **RE Syllabus**

The school uses the LDBS syllabus.

Each termly unit has an individual unit plan. It outlines:

- The unit title and the 'Big Questions' which will be covered
- The faith, year group and prior learning for the unit
- The key AT1 and AT2 focus
- Key RE vocabulary
- A breakdown of the learning intentions for the unit
- Opportunities for cross-curricular links
- Spiritual, Moral, Cultural and Social developments
- Sensitivities to be aware of when delivering the unit
- Possible further thinking and extension activities
- Suggestions of places to visit

Teachers edit and adapt the LDBS planning accordingly, clearly stating their learning intention, success criteria and independent activities.

The LDBS syllabus is accessible on the school network. Additional resources to support planning, teaching and learning are located in topic resource boxes (located centrally in the school).

### **Intent of the RE LDBS syllabus**

- To enable all children to become religiously literate;
- To ensure RE enables all children to live life in all its fullness – Vision for Education (Church of England);
- To offer a systematic enquiry-based approach to the teaching of RE so that the following skills in children can be developed:
  - *ability to be critical thinkers*
  - *ability to engage critically with texts*
  - *ability to ask deep and meaningful questions*
  - *ability to make connections within and across religions and worldviews*
  - *ability to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions*
  - *ability to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices.*

- To offer units of learning that:
  - *are rooted in theological concepts, strong subject knowledge and content*
  - *offer a balanced curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences*
  - *offer sequential learning both in terms of knowledge and skills across the primary age range*
  - *offer motivating, engaging and creative lessons for all children*
  - *provide opportunities for children to develop empathy towards people of similar or differing religious or worldviews to their own*
- To ensure the teaching of RE supports and enhances:
  - *The Christian vision of the school*
  - *contributes significantly to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of children*
  - *takes note of the Religious Education Church of England Schools – Statement of Entitlement*
  - *the Church of England’s vision for Education – every person deserves to ‘live life in all its fullness’*

### **Implementation of the RE LDBS syllabus**

Within every unit of learning the following steps take place as part of the learning process:

#### **Enquire:**

Engage with a big question and subsidiary questions. All questions will be rooted in one of the disciplines of RE: Theology, Philosophy or Human/ Social Science.

#### **Investigate/ Explore:**

What is the religious content and context being explored? How deep can we go? This ‘explore’ stage of the enquiry is where children will be primarily learning about religion and belief. In order for this to be effective there are some strategies that can be used to ‘deepen’ learning:

- interpreting and analysing sacred texts;
- using challenging and controversial questions;
- extended pieces of writing;
- discussion which continually asks ‘Have we gone deep enough yet?’; engage with complex theological concepts, questions and issues
- children engage with authentic religious believers (face to face, via webcams, podcasts, video, skype etc)

#### **Evaluate/ Communicate:**

What is our understanding of the concept? What impact does the concept have on the lives of believers? What difference does this belief/ practice make? The aim of this part of the enquiry is to encourage dialogue about the learning. Children should use skills of analysis and evaluation. The focus should be on the impact of the belief or practice on the religious or belief community being studied.

#### **Reflect on/ Express:**

What is our understanding and response to the enquiry question when considered from the perspective of the faith and belief traditions that have been encountered? What is our personal response? It should be always based on knowledge and understanding, not values or SMSC development.

## **Early Years Foundation Stage**

In Reception and the Early Years Foundation Stage, Religious Education is taught through age-appropriate, experiential learning that supports children's personal, social and emotional development. Teaching is rooted in Bible stories, role play and guided discussion, enabling pupils to explore Christian beliefs in an engaging and meaningful way. Children are introduced to biblical texts, with a particular focus on the messages and teachings of Jesus, such as kindness, forgiveness and care for others. Through questioning and discussion, pupils are encouraged to share their thoughts, listen to others and begin to reflect on values and beliefs, supporting the development of curiosity, respect and early religious understanding.

## **Religious Education in Key Stage One**

By the end of Key Stage One, we aim to ensure that all children:

- have an understanding of the main beliefs and teachings of Christianity, Judaism and one other world faith at an age-appropriate level;
- children will have begun to recognise similarities and differences within and between religions and have an awareness of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview;
- children will have a religious vocabulary appropriate to their age and be able to ask important questions about life;
- they will be able to recognise that others may have a different viewpoint to their own;
- some children working at greater depth will have begun to make connections and be able to describe what things are different and the same for religious people.

## **Religious Education in Key Stage Two**

In Key Stage Two, we aim to enhance children's previous learning and enable them to develop a greater understanding of core beliefs and theological concepts of Christianity. Children will be given the opportunity to study three further world faiths.

By the end of Key Stage Two, our aim is that children will:

- be religiously literate at an age-appropriate level;
- able to use confidently a wide range of religious and philosophical vocabulary;
- have a solid understanding of Christianity as a diverse and global living faith and other world faiths studied and know what the impact of belonging to a faith has on a believers' life.

We also want our children to have a solid understanding of what it means to have a religious or non-religious worldview. We aim for our children by the end of Key Stage Two;

- to be able to express and justify their own views with confidence;
- to be critical thinkers and be able to engage critically with Biblical and other sacred texts;
- to be able to draw on their religious and worldview knowledge in order to formulate their own opinion and understanding of the world in which they inhabit.

## **Access to the curriculum**

At Hampstead Parochial Primary School we aim to minimise any barriers to learning and adapt and differentiate our curriculum so children with special educational needs are able to access the learning at a suitable level for them. All children are treated equally and given equal opportunity to thrive in order for us all to live well together and 'live life in all its fullness' John 10:10.

Our aim is to enable all students to develop new skills, concepts, knowledge and to flourish. All children are treated with equal respect, worth and value regardless of race, colour, background, gender, sexuality, learning need or learning ability.

## **Impact of the RE LDBS syllabus**

- Children will be able to hold a balanced and well-informed conversation about religion and worldviews (Religious literacy)
- Children will make good or better academic progress from their starting points as a result of a rich and engaging RE curriculum
- Children will be able to reflect, respond and express their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions
- Children will be able to make their own choices and decisions concerning religion and belief based on a deep knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, belief systems, values and practices
- Children will have developed a deeper understanding of what it means to live life in all its fullness
- Children will leave Hampstead Parochial School ready to be global citizens in an evolving society in which they understand the importance of mutual respect and tolerance within the wider world beyond school.

## **RE and Collective Worship**

RE and Worship are separate areas of the curriculum. When planning for the curriculum, worship cannot be regarded as RE time; in our school we do not include worship time as part of the RE allocation.

## **Environment and Resources**

We aim to provide a rich, stimulating and engaging environment in which RE can take place, that fosters deep questioning and thinking. We plan and organise the environment, with a range of tasks and activities that are adapted accordingly, to ensure that all children can access the curriculum, whatever their stage of development and learning need. We promote both independent and collaborative working. All tasks have equal status in our planning and delivery of the curriculum. We enable children to know how to handle a range of artefacts. We value the importance of lived experience with a rich variety of real-life resources, including class trips to Places of Worship, galleries, museums and visitors helping to enrich the children's understanding. We take advantage of the offering of living in a diverse London. We pride ourselves on the working relationship we have with our local church and work collaboratively with the church and wider community.

## **Planning, assessment, recording, monitoring and evaluation**

Teachers use the LDBS units of learning and adapt them so that lessons are tailored to the needs of the specific cohort.

Formative Assessment is ongoing in all RE lessons through differentiated questioning. A summative assessment takes place at the end of every half-term. This includes a range of questions catering for an 'expected' child and 'exceeding'. These questions are based upon a key area of enquiry from the LDBS spreadsheet. At the end of every unit, the teacher assesses each child under 'working towards', 'expected' and 'exceeding'. The RE Leader is responsible for ensuring that these assessments have taken place and at the end of the year, a whole-school analysis of the data will be taken.

Standards and the quality of teaching and learning is monitored and evaluated in the following way:

The RE leader regularly carries out monitoring across the school in the following ways:

- Leading staff CPD
- Carrying out observations in RE
- Gathering pupil voice from a range of year groups
- Looking at books and RE outcomes from a range of year groups
- The RE leader also regularly attends RE network meetings with LDBS

## **RE displays**

Every class should have an RE display and Class Worship area. The areas are consistent in every class.

In the RE display and worship areas there must be displayed:

- The Big Question
- Key religious vocabulary
- Children's questions
- The big story (Christian concepts) 'timeline' with an arrow pointing to the concept being studied
- Our core Christian value for the half term
- Bible
- Cross
- Candle
- Prayer and Class Worship book

## **Prayer**

Every year group has a class prayer book. The children write individual prayers based around the core Christian value each half-term. Prayers for different festivals and special times of the year are also included (e.g. Harvest and Remembrance Day) and Upper Key Stage 2 are encouraged to write prayers around key issues, when appropriate. Children are responsible for bringing their prayer book to collective worship on set days and a child will read out a chosen prayer each week at the end of the worship.

## **Class Worship and Spirituality Books**

Books are used in every classroom during class worship to capture children's discussions and reflections based on any key questions posed. It is a method of capturing not only their

discussion but also cross-curricular links too. The comments can then be used to support teacher assessment. In addition, it is enjoyable for the children to look back on their learning and reflect on some of the spiritual and reflective comments.

### **Parents and Carers**

At Hampstead Parochial Primary School we value our parents and carers and recognise how essential they are in enabling our pupils to flourish. We welcome parents and carers in to our school and invite them to come and talk about their lived experiences and their understanding of faith.

### **Role of the RE subject leader**

The subject leader will:

- ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of Religious Education
- ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement
- keep up to date with developments in the area of RE through reading, attending LDBS RE network meetings and training and by forming links with other Church of England schools
- monitor and evaluate the planning, teaching and assessment of RE across the school in collaboration with the leadership team
- support staff in the teaching of RE across the school through team planning, teaching and moderation
- lead the review of the policies and impact of the syllabus on raising standards
- plan and lead INSET and CPD to build on the staff's knowledge and practice of effective RE teaching
- work closely with the senior leadership team to identify CPD needs of individuals, teams and the whole school
- regularly review and keep up to date the school's self-evaluation document for RE that forms part of the SIAMS ongoing self-evaluation document
- oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary
- ensure there is a school protocol, that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons

### **Evaluation / Review**

This policy is reviewed regularly by the RE leader in consultation with the Headteacher and ratified every two years by the Governing Body.