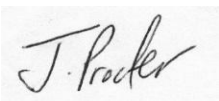


Religious Education Policy

Review cycle	1 / 2 / 3 years	Date: September 2025
Approved by	Full Governing Body / Executive Headteacher	
Changes made in this review cycle	November 2024	
Linked policies	Collective Worship Policy (East Hoathly and St Mary's) PSHE and RSE Policy (individual schools) SMSC Policy	
Signed		Date: September 2025
Position	Executive Headteacher	
Date of next Review	September 2026	

Introduction

At Pioneer Schools we believe that Religious Education has a unique and vital role to play within Education. It informs and extends the children's understanding of Christian beliefs and principles and examines the beliefs and principles of other faiths. It is also instrumental in enabling the children to investigate and develop their spiritual understanding, from which may flow the development of their moral values.

The teaching of Religion at Pioneer Schools allows children to explore how people in different times and cultures have faced major questions concerning the world in which we live, the universe of which we are a part, the purpose of our existence, the problems of pain and suffering, and beauty and love.

We feel that the teaching of Religious Education should promote skills of reasoning, fair-minded enquiry, curiosity and wonder, and that these are skills, which will prove invaluable throughout the children's school life, and beyond.

The Pioneer Schools follow Understanding Christianity, Guildford and East Sussex Agreed RE Syllabus 2022-2027. See appendix 1 for the overview. We use high quality resources and an enquiry approach to engage pupils with Christianity and other religions and worldviews, focusing on significant theological concepts which develop and deepen pupils' own understanding of the world as part of their wider religious literacy. Links with our Christian values and our school vision support pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and we provide a wide range of opportunities for learners to understand and to make links between the beliefs, practices and value systems of the range of faiths and worldviews studied.

Aims

Through Religious Education we aim to:

- ✦ Provoke challenging questions about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human.
- ✦ It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- ✦ Encourages pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives
- ✦ Enables pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- ✦ Teaches pupils to develop respect for others, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- ✦ Prompts pupils to consider their responsibilities to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.

Curriculum balance and time

East Hoathly Church of England Primary School and St Mary's Church of England Primary School, Nutley Church of England Primary School, Groombridge Church of England Primary School.

Reflecting our schools agreement, Christianity is the majority religion studied in each year group and comprises at least 50% of curriculum time in each academic year. Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, are organised on a weekly basis and equates to between 6 and 10% of our curriculum time.

Chiddingly and Park Mead Primary School

As in the guidance of RE in community primary schools, RE is an important curriculum subject. It is important in its own right and also makes a unique contribution to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils and supports wider community cohesion. RE can be taught on its own or as part of cross-curricular topic and learning journeys.

Early Years

RE comes under the People and Communities aspect of the EYFSP. It is taught as a standalone subject using East Sussex Agreed RE Syllabus.

National Curriculum/Legal Requirement

The Religious Reform Act (1988) requires that:

1. Religious Education should be taught to all pupils in full-time education, except those withdrawn at the wish of their parents *[see DfE Circular 1/94, para. 44]*.
2. Religious Education in grant-maintained, county-maintained and voluntary-controlled schools should be taught in accordance with an agreed syllabus (except in the case of grant-maintained schools which were formerly voluntary aided *[see DfE Circular 1/94, para. 23]*).
3. As part of the curriculum, Religious Education should promote the “spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils”.
4. An agreed syllabus should “reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain”. *[Education Reform Act 1988, Section 8 (3)]*
5. The Education Act (1944) requires that an agreed syllabus “must not be designed to convert pupils, to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils”. *[Education Act 1944, Section 26 (2)]*

Parents do have a right to withdraw their children from Religious Education. At East Hoathly, Groombridge, Nutley and St Mary’s, it is assumed that, as they are a Church School, parents have understood and accepted the importance of their child’s involvement in this aspect of the school curriculum.

Links with the Parish Church

East Hoathly, Chiddingly, Groombridge and Nutley and St Mary’s Schools have strong links with the local Churches. This provides the school with opportunities to show the children the integral role of the ‘Parish’ church in the community. Children’s knowledge and understanding of the church-school ethos is further developed through sharing in worship together and creating links with the local religious community.

Curriculum, teaching and learning strategies

The programme of RE in Pioneer Schools is laid out in a framework linked to year groups, taken from the East Sussex Agreed RE Syllabus 2022-2027. The programme has been planned to ensure continuity and progression, so that aspects that are to be taught in several year groups will build upon and extend previous learning. A considerable amount of RE is implicit in the daily life of the school, and is taught by example and through the School Vision and using the Christian value themes in collective worship.

Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They provide opportunities to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:

- posing and discussing ‘big’ and challenging questions
- reading and critically analysing texts

- interpreting information from different sources
- seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers
- listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils
- engaging in individual, paired and group work
- exploring a range of artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama
- experiencing visits and visitors
- taking part in outdoor learning
- taking time for reflection

Teaching in RE challenges stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about religions and worldviews. Lessons seek to present religions and worldviews in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

We consider encountering world faiths as an important element of our RE. Visits and visitors are therefore planned as part of the programme of study. We encourage pupils to participate in these visits which provide pupils with the chance to encounter world religions as living faiths in modern Britain. We also encourage faith leaders and other members of faith communities to visit our school.

The RE curriculum is adapted by:

- ✿ Individual time to explain particular principles involved
- ✿ Adaptation of tasks
- ✿ Extra time to complete work
- ✿ More adult input
- ✿ Different approaches to activities e.g. tape recording and pictures rather than written text
- ✿ Opportunities to extend and challenge thinking

RE and Inclusion

We teach RE to all pupils, whatever their individual needs. RE forms part of our commitment to provide a broad, balanced and inspirational education for all pupils, where high achievements are reached. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make progress and work hard to meet the needs of all our pupils. *Please see our SEND, Equal Opportunities Teaching and Learning and Book policies for details.*

Cross-curricular links

Religious education supports the development of general educational attributes such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' SMSC development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship. Where authentic opportunities exist, we make connections to learning in other subject areas in line with our school policy on teaching and learning.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see also separate SMSC policy)

It is hoped that values taught in RE will influence the child's moral development; that their spiritual and cultural development will be enhanced by the consideration of others' beliefs and the awareness that Great Britain is a multicultural society. Other curriculum areas and aspects of school life will also influence this development.

Spiritual Development

For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother's womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful.

Psalm 139.13-14

Spiritual development enriches and encourages the pupils' discovery of God the creator, of their 'innermost being' and of the wonder of the environment.

Through spiritual development, pupils can be enabled to:

- ✠ think about themselves, how they relate to other people, to the wider world in which they live, and to God;
- ✠ reflect beyond and within themselves on God's creation and the precious nature of human existence;
- ✠ develop greater self-awareness and self-esteem;
- ✠ encounter a sense of awe, wonder and mystery: and,
- ✠ experience opportunities for creativity, curiosity, freedom, imagination and response.

Moral Development

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect.

Romans 12.2

Moral development is based on the teachings of Jesus Christ, which offer pupils a secure foundation stone on which to make decisions and build their lives.

The pupils' moral development will be concerned with questions of intention, motive and attitude. Pupils should learn to distinguish 'right' from 'wrong', to develop a sense of personal identity and be encouraged to have an awareness of the moral traditions of others. Pupils are encouraged to:

- ✠ make decisions
- ✠ reflect on and change personal behaviour
- ✠ resist peer pressure
- ✠ show love, respect, caring and concern for self and others and the environment
- ✠ challenge behaviour such as dishonesty, injustice, discrimination and the misuse of power

Social Development

As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples.

John 13.34-35

Social development helps to develop pupils' understanding of what it means to live in a Christian community where Jesus' command to love one another is put into practice.

Pupils' social development involves them acquiring an understanding of the responsibilities and rights of being members of families and communities – local, national and global – and an ability to relate to others, and to work with others for the common good. They display a sense of belonging and an increasing willingness to participate. They

develop the knowledge, skills, understanding, qualities and attitudes that they need to make an active contribution to the democratic process in each of their communities. Pupils are encouraged to:

- ✿ relate positively to others and respect differing viewpoints and ideas
- ✿ participate fully and take responsibility in the classroom and around the school
- ✿ use appropriate behaviour in a range of situations
- ✿ engage successfully in partnership with others
- ✿ exercise personal responsibility and initiative
- ✿ understand that, as individuals, we depend on family, school, church and society

Cultural Development

'There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.'
Galatians 3.28

Cultural development provides opportunities to develop an understanding of Christianity as a worldwide, multi-cultural faith that has an impact on the lives of millions of people.

The cultural development of children and young people is primarily concerned with the exploration of the whole world, which engenders an understanding and tolerance of different cultural perspectives and enriches the meaning and purpose of life. It relates to the development of attitudes, beliefs, feelings and emotions, which enable pupils to share what they have in common and to celebrate their differences in a culturally diverse world. Pupils can be enabled to:

- ✿ think about themselves, how they relate to other people and the wider world in which they live
- ✿ gain a knowledge and understanding of their own culture and traditions
- ✿ experience opportunities for exploring beyond their own cultural traditions and broadening their cultural horizons and aspirations
- ✿ reflect beyond and within themselves on God's creation and the diverse nature of humanity
- ✿ recognise the importance of love and understanding in the Christian faith and of developing attitudes which challenge intolerance, prejudice and injustice

Our Schools' Vision

<p>Our Vision</p> <p>In our Church school, we learn through our values of Love, Strength, Wisdom and Truth. We aim for the highest standards and believe that by building a strong community, we can take care of everyone's wellbeing, achieving fullness of life.</p> <p>"With God all things are possible" Matthew 19:26.</p> <p>Love "For all that you do for those in love," 1 Corinthians 13:3</p> <p>Strength "Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid. For the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9</p> <p>Wisdom "Let us learn together what is good." Job 34:11</p> <p>Truth "And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." John 8:32</p> <p>Achievement For All, Learning Together, Learning For Life</p>	<p>Our Vision</p> <p>Being the best we can be, in a thriving community, following the example of Jesus</p> <p>Love Love and respect yourself and all others, treating them as you would like to be treated. Luke 10: 25-37</p> <p>Strength Recognise people's strengths and use your own to be resilient and the best you can be in all you do. John 6: 1-14</p> <p>Faith Have faith in yourself and others and be honest and truthful. Believe that you can achieve what you can achieve until you try. Luke 5: 1-11</p>	<p>Groombridge</p> <p>Excellence In all the work you are given, do the best you can. Think as though you are working for the Lord, not for earthly masters. (Colossians 3:23-24)</p> <p>Enthusiasm "Have joy in the Lord always. Let your gentleness be known to all." (Philippians 4:1-5)</p> <p>Compassion Be kind and loving to each other. Forgive each other. Help one another as you help yourselves through Christ. (Ephesians 4:2-3)</p>
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Nutley

Coming Soon...

Organisation

The RE subject leader will be responsible for policy, overview of curriculum, support and advice to staff, resources, monitoring progress and teaching and keeping up to date with recent developments and training needs of all staff.

The RE curriculum will be adapted for pupils by:

- ✿ Individual time to explain particular principles involved
- ✿ Adaptation of tasks
- ✿ Extra time to complete work
- ✿ More adult input
- ✿ Different approaches to activities e.g. tape recording and pictures rather than written text
- ✿ Opportunities to extend and challenge thinking

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

We have put in place an effective system of assessment which enables teachers and pupils to be clear about the progress they are making in RE. Teachers assess against statements from the syllabuses studied and data drops are provided to the RE Lead 2 times per year and data analysis is completed to identify areas of need. Pupil's RE books are covered by the school Books and Marking policy.

Assessment in religious education should:

- include both responsive teaching (formative assessment) and summative assessment
- identify suitable assessment opportunities within units of work
- meet the expectations of the syllabus followed
- seek to identify development of thinking skills and other attributes of learning - not only the acquisition of factual knowledge
- employ well defined criteria for marking, feedback and assessment, which identify progress and achievement
- include peer self-assessment
- enable effective tracking of pupil progress to identify areas for development in pupil's knowledge and understanding, as well as whole school areas for development
- enable effective reporting to parents
- enable school leadership to make accurate judgements about the quality of the RE learning

RE Leadership

RE is a high priority for senior leaders. The RE subject lead monitors and evaluates the effectiveness of RE across the federation.

The RE subject leader will:

- ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of RE
- ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement
- produce and regularly review the RE policy to ensure that it remains up to date and reflects current expectations and the school's vision

- ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work
- monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards
- ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE
- monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff
- liaise with the HT and governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school
- attend high quality professional development opportunities
- support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions
- seek opportunities to share effective practice
- 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.

Monitoring and evaluation

The RE Lead undertakes formal and informal monitoring of RE. This involves learning walks, book looks, planning audits and pupil voice. The RE lead meets regularly with senior leadership and governors and provides a report to the governing board once a year.

The effectiveness of RE is independently inspected by law under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005.

Resources

The RE budget is allocated to enable a range of high-quality resources on different religions to be purchased. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be listed, stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- handle artefacts
- consume food
- visit places of worship/external organisations

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Legal Requirements

Religious Education is provided for all registered pupils in accordance with the statutory requirements. (*DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28*). The law relating to Religious Education for pupils who are not yet in key stage 1 is different from that relating to subjects of the National Curriculum. As Religious Education must be taught to 'all registered pupils at the school', it includes pupils in reception classes, but not those in nursery classes or play groups.

Parents have the right to withdraw pupils from RE. We comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child will discuss this with the Head of School before making their decision.

* Any queries about withdrawal from RE should be directed to the RE subject leaders in the first instance and thereafter to the Head of School.

We acknowledge that teachers also have the right to withdraw from teaching RE unless they are ‘reserved’ teachers. However, in our church schools, all members of staff are asked to support the Christian ethos of the school and therefore we expect teaching staff to teach RE when asked to do so. Any member of staff wishing to withdraw from teaching RE should discuss their wishes with the Head of School. Should a member of staff still seek to withdraw following this discussion they should provide written notice to the Head of School and governing board.

This policy has been adopted by the Governors/Directors in consultation with the senior leaders, the RE subject leader and teaching staff.

This policy should be read in conjunction with other policies including SMSC, Collective Worship, PSHE, Teaching and Learning, Assessment.

Appendix 1 – Long Term Planning Overview

	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Reception	F4 Being special: where do we belong?	F2 Why is Christmas special for Christians? Understanding Christianity - INCARNATION	F1 Why is the word ‘God’ so important to Christians? Understanding Christianity - GOD	F3 Why is Easter special to Christians? Understanding Christianity - SALVATION	F5 What places are special and why?	F6 What times/stories are special and why?
Year 1 and 2 26-27	1.10 What does it mean to belong to a faith community?	1.1 What do Christians believe God is like? Understanding Christianity - GOD	1.2 Who do Christians say made the world? Understanding Christianity - CREATION	1.4 What is the ‘good news’ Christians believe Jesus brings? Understanding Christianity - GOSPEL	1.7 Who is Jewish and how do they live?	
Year 1 and 2 25-26	1.9 How should we care for the world and for others, and why does it matter? (C, J, NR)	1.3 Why does Christmas matter to Christians? Understanding Christianity - INCARNATION	1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live?	1.5 Why does Easter matter to Christians? Understanding Christianity - SALVATION	1.6 Who is a Muslim and how do they live? Part 2.	1.8 What makes some places sacred to believers? (C,M)
Year 3 and 4 26-27	L2.1 What do Christians learn from the Creation story? Understanding Christianity - CREATION/FALL	L2.2 What is it like for someone to follow God? Understanding Christianity - PEOPLE OF GOD	L2.9 How do festivals and worship show what matters to a Muslim?	L2.4 What kind of world did Jesus want? Understanding Christianity - GOSPEL	L2.10 How do festivals and family life show what matters to Jewish people?	L2.12 How and why do people try to make the world a better place? (C, M/J, NR)
Year 3 and 4 25-26	L2.7 What do Hindus believe God is like?	L2.3 What is the ‘Trinity’, and why is it important for Christians? Understanding Christianity - GOD/INCARNATION	L2.8 What does it mean to be Hindu in Britain today?	L2.5 Why do Christians call the day Jesus died ‘Good Friday’? Understanding Christianity - SALVATION	L2.6 For Christians, when Jesus left, what was the impact of Pentecost? Understanding Christianity - KINGDOM OF GOD	L2.11 How and why do people mark the significant events of life? (C, H, NR)
Year 5 and 6 26-27	U2.1 What does it mean if Christians believe God is holy and loving? Understanding Christianity - GOD	U2.3 Why do Christians believe Jesus was the Messiah? Understanding Christianity - INCARNATION	U2.8 What does it mean to be a Muslim in Britain today?	U2.4 Christians and how to live: ‘What would Jesus do?’ Understanding Christianity - GOSPEL	U2.9 Why is the Torah so important to Jewish people?	U2.10 What matters most to Humanists and Christians? (C, M/J, NR)
Year 5 and 6 25-26	U2.11 Why do some people believe in God and some people not? (C, NR)	U2.6 For Christians, what kind of king is Jesus? Understanding Christianity - KINGDOM OF GOD	U2.7 Why do Hindus want to be good?	U2.5 What do Christians believe Jesus did to ‘save’ people? Understanding Christianity - SALVATION	U2.2 Creation and science: conflicting or complementary?	U2.12 How does faith help people when life gets hard?