Religious Education Policy

Approved by:	**Full Governing Body**
Date:	**February 2026**
Next review due by:	**February 2030**

Rationale

Religious Education (RE) is a statutory subject and allows children to explore, reflect and respond to religious beliefs, values and experiences. RE plays a central role in a broad and balanced curriculum that will enable students to participate fully in a multi-religious and multi-secular world. It aims to enable young people to hold informed and balanced conversations about worldviews, religion and beliefs. It provides a safe environment where pupils can explore their own ideas and learn to evaluate the opinions of others. Whilst a greater emphasis is placed upon the Christian faith in RE in church schools, it is important that young people experience the diversity of lived religion.

The document 'Review of RE in England' states: - "Every child and young person who goes to school is entitled to an experience of religious education (RE) that is both academically challenging and personally inspiring." Our main aim is to aspire to this.

1. Aims and Objectives

The school's starting points are the two Attainment Targets in the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus:

1. For pupils to learn *about* religions and beliefs which have influenced the lives of millions of people and heavily influenced the development of different human cultures. Pupils apply academic skills such as analysis and critical and creative thinking, approaching the study of religion with different disciplines as they mature.
2. For pupils to recognise and develop their own perspective *from* their increasingly academic and creative exploration of religions and other worldviews.

Children will learn about different religions by developing knowledge of Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Sikhism and Humanism as well as non-religious worldviews and we will provide opportunities for children to:

- Encounter the key objects, people, places and activities associated with the religions studied, e.g. visits to a range of different churches, the Mosque, visitors to collective worship.
- Study the lives of people who are held by members of their faith to be an example to others, looking particularly at how these people have lived out the beliefs and values of their faith and understand what it means to be committed to a religious tradition.
- Extend their awareness that certain features, e.g. worship, prayer, festivals, sense of community, are shared by more than one religion although often expressed differently.
- Consider the meaning of symbols, stories and symbolic language for members of faith communities.
- Encounter the key beliefs of the religions studied and develop investigative and research skills to enable them to make reasoned judgements about religious issues.
- Consider the impact of religious beliefs on individuals and their local community.

Children will learn from religions by developing positive attitudes towards other people and enhancing their own spiritual and moral development through:

- Considering the value of certain religious practices in their own lives, e.g. prayer, reflection, celebrations.
- Talking about stories which focus on values, relationships or religious teachings and considering the relevance of this to their own lives.
- Exploring questions of the meaning and mystery of life and engaging with a range of ultimate questions.
- Developing an understanding of what it means to belong to a community.
- Discussing the differences between fairness and unfairness, right and wrong, and the nature of individual responsibility.

- Developing creativity within the curriculum, expressing ideas and feelings in the forms of art, music, drama etc.
- Having respect for other people's views and celebrate the diversity of society.
- Asking significant and highly reflective questions about religion and demonstrate an understanding of issues related to nature, truth and value of religion. Foster an attitude of fair-minded enquiry towards a whole range of religious and non-religious convictions.

The curriculum for RE aims to ensure that all pupils:

Know about and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so that they can: describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between communities and amongst individuals; identify, investigate and respond to questions posed, and responses offered by some of the sources of wisdom found in religions and worldviews; appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and worldviews, so that they can: explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practices and forms of expression influence individuals and communities; express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions and teachings about identity, diversity, meaning and value, including ethical issues; appreciate and appraise varied dimensions of religion or a worldview.

Gain and deploy the skills needed to engage seriously with religions and worldviews, so that they can: find out about and investigate key concepts and questions of belonging, meaning, purpose and truth, responding creatively; enquire into what enables different individuals and communities to live together respectfully for the wellbeing of all; articulate beliefs, values and commitments clearly in order to explain why they may be important in their own and other people's lives.

2. The Legal Position of Religious Education.

The RE education curriculum forms an important part of our school's broad and balanced curriculum. Meeting the requirements of the 2016 Church of England Statement of Entitlement the curriculum follows the Oxfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023-28 and the Scheme of Work produced by our Diocese. The Education Reform Act 1988 states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that the religious tradition in Great Britain is in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

Oxfordshire SACRE has also taken some account of recent case law (Fox v Secretary of State for Education) and the Report' use of 'worldview' as central to the provision of high-quality RE. We have adopted the Report's understanding of 'worldview' as a person's way of experiencing, responding to and understanding the world:

A worldview is a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. This includes how a person understands the nature of reality and their own plane in the world. A person's worldview is likely to influence and be influenced by their beliefs, values, behaviours, experiences, identities and commitments. (report, page 4).

Withdrawal from RE

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. Parents have the right to withdraw their children from RE on the grounds that they wish to provide their own RE. This provision will be the parents' responsibility. This right of withdrawal exists for all

pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.
When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request.

Should parents take up the offer of a discussion, the school may seek to establish the religious issues about which the parent objects to their child being taught. Discussion may include the practical implications of withdrawal and the circumstances in which it may be reasonable to accommodate their wishes. Practical examples of how a school may reassure a parent who has withdrawn their child may include inviting the parent to observe a RE lesson, discussing curriculum documents and discussing the aims of RE in the school with them.

3. Teaching and Learning

Good teaching in RE allows children to both learn about religious traditions and to reflect upon what the religious ideas and concepts mean to them. We encourage children to think about their own views and values in relation to the themes and topics studied in the RE curriculum and to build on their own experiences and extend their knowledge and understanding. Links to other curriculum areas will also be made when appropriate.

4. Monitoring

The Subject Leader and Head Teacher are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of teaching in RE. They are also responsible for supporting colleagues in the teaching of RE, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for the subject. The RE Subject Leader has specially allocated time for reviewing samples of children's work and visiting classes to observe teaching in the subject, together with the SIAMS governor.

5. Review and Evaluation

The RE Subject Leader will complete an annual action plan highlighting areas for further development. S/he will also report to the governors teaching and learning committee about developments in RE within the school.

6. Assessment and Recording

The standard of work in RE is expected to meet the standard children are following in other core subjects. Work should be recorded in books or files and any photographs that are taken of work or visits added or displayed.

To assess the children's progress in RE, teachers use the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education RE Scheme of Work which identifies assessment criteria and assessment opportunities and activities. These take place six times a year.

7. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

We value the diversity of individuals within our school and believe that all our children matter and we value their families too. We aim to give our children every opportunity to achieve their best by taking account of our children's range of life experiences when planning for their learning.

8. Spirituality: The Windows, Mirrors, Doors Approach

At St Leonard's CE Primary school, we recognise spirituality as a vital dimension of our curriculum. We believe that effective learning is, at its heart, a spiritual journey. To facilitate spiritual growth, we utilize the 'Windows, Mirrors, Doors' strategy developed by Liz Mills. This framework encourages pupils to move beyond surface-level learning toward deep personal reflection and outward action.

- **Windows**: We look out at the world to discover its wonders. We encourage children to be curious about the world's wonders and to ask big questions about things that inspire them or cause them concern.

- **Mirrors**: We look inside ourselves. We give children the space to be still and think about what they have seen. We help them reflect on their own feelings and learn from the experiences of others.

- **Doors**: We step out to make a difference. Spirituality is not just about thinking; it is about doing. We prompt our pupils to respond to their learning by making kind choices, being creative, and acting as courageous advocates for change in their community.

9. Special Needs Provision

As an inclusive school, we recognise the need to support children with Special Educational Needs as well as those who are identified as more able through differentiation. RE is taught as a whole class subject and treated in the same way as the core and foundation subjects, using a variety of experience, teaching and learning strategies. The use of concrete and tangible approaches to teaching is encouraged together with developing abstract thinking. In most instances the teacher is able to provide resources and educational opportunities which meet the child's needs within the normal class organisation. Support staff may be used to assist if required (see SEND policy).

10. Foundation Stage

RE is an integral part of the topic work covered during the year. As the Reception class is part of the Foundation Stage of the National Curriculum, we relate the RE aspects of the children's work to the objectives set out in the Early Learning Goals. Children will be taught RE by focusing on major world religious festivals and celebrations such as Christmas and Diwali. During topics such as 'Ourselves' and 'People Who Help Us', children will find out about events that are important to them and their family. Children will also be introduced to some important religious themes through stories, poems, drama and visits to places of worship.

11. Resources

We have boxes of artefacts and books linked to the various faiths and themes covered, together with a set of Bibles. Each class also has copies of a Children's Bible as well as access to an RE section in the school library. The subject is also enhanced by the use of ICT and of the Interactive Whiteboard.