

SOUTHWARK DIOCESAN BOARD OF EDUCATION

Developing Church of England Education



POLICY STATEMENT

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN OUR CHURCH OF ENGLAND SCHOOLS.

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education's Religious Education (RE) policy is based upon 'A Review of Religious Education in England' (*The Religious Education Council of England and Wales*) and 'Religious Education The Non-Statutory National Framework' (*Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency*.) We also have due regard for 'Religious Education in English Schools: Non-Statutory Guidance 2010' (*Department for Children, Schools and Families*) and 'Religious Education in Church of England Schools: A Statement of Entitlement' (*the Board of Education / National Society Council*.)

In all Diocesan C of E schools it is expected that the RE is seen at the heart of Christian distinctiveness of the C of E school and central to school effectiveness. As such, RE must be given the priority that it deserves as a core subject in the curriculum and must aim to be an outstanding specialism of the school. It is intended that the RE provided will be of the highest quality, aiming for excellence in teaching and learning. The RE should be progressive, innovative, creative, exciting and engaging and its relevance made clear for all. The subject should receive adequate time allocation in the curriculum and proper budget allocation whilst all teaching staff should receive appropriate professional development to enable them to achieve this vision. The SDBE advocates that every school appoints an RE Subject Leader / Head of RE who will be the key person with the responsibility for leading and developing the subject in the school. This person should be someone who cares strongly about the subject and is appropriately trained and resourced to fulfil this role. Similarly the SDBE encourages all schools to develop a Faith Group which can oversee the implementation of and monitor and evaluate the impact of the RE provision in the school, having regard for the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools through which the school's effectiveness of RE will be inspected.

The RE provided should enable pupils to:

- ✓ develop a strong foundation of the Christian faith through knowledge and understanding. This should be through beginning to grow an understanding of Christian theological concepts that underpin Christian Beliefs. It should include learning about and from The Bible, Old Testament characters, the life, teachings and actions of Jesus, Christian festivals, creation, wisdom, saints, liturgy, the local Church, the Christian community, rites of passage, living out the faith and values rooted in Christianity;
- ✓ apply an understanding of Christianity to make reasoned and informed responses to life issues and moral choices;
- ✓ Recognise that there are a number of different branches of Christianity who may share common beliefs but practise their faith in different ways;
- ✓ develop some knowledge and understanding of the other principal world faiths, applying an understanding of religion to develop informed respect, empathy and sensitivity towards all people and help build bridges of understanding leading to community cohesion;
- ✓ grow and deepen their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- ✓ develop the ability to reflect on their own beliefs, values and experiences and communicate issues of faith and truth;
- ✓ develop skills of critical analysis and evaluation and the promotion of understanding of people from different faith backgrounds and none and of diversity within faiths.

The Southwark Diocesan Board of Education has produced a syllabus for RE for teaching in its primary schools. It is recommended for use by each school; with due regard to its Trust Deed. The scheme comprises units of study for the teaching of Christianity at Foundation Stage, KS1 and KS2 and the study of the other principal world religions, specifically beginning from KS1. It clearly identifies opportunities for pupils to both learn about religion and learn from religion.

Assessment should be built into RE to inform future teaching and learning; for the Foundation Stage the Early Learning Goals are recommended and for Key Stages 1-3, the 8-Level Scale for Assessment in RE is recommended, although schools can use this as a basis and adjust the terminology to match the assessment language used in their wider assessment policy if they wish. It is expected that in our C of E schools pupils in

Key Stages 4 and 5 will have the opportunity to study Religious Studies (RS) to the accredited level of GCSE and A Level.

Although legally parents have the option of withdrawing their children from the teaching of RE / RS, it is expected that, by applying to a church school, parents understand the school's distinctive Christian character and recognise that RE is central to the life of the school and will therefore not feel it is necessary to withdraw their child from RE / RS. For these reasons, it is vital that the purpose of RE is properly understood by the whole school community and that the RE is inclusive and taught in such a way that it is seen as non-threatening and highly relevant for all pupils in our diocesan church schools.

Approved: June 2016 (Schools Committee)

Date of next review: June 2019