



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

Agreed: Autumn 2023
Review: Summer 2024

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At Valley End we nurture a love of life-long learning, enabling our whole school community to flourish within an ambitious and challenging curriculum; our golden rules are the foundation of our school family.

Galatians 5:22 – the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness.

Valley End Golden Rules

We love and care and forgive each other

We respect property and God's creation

We are honest and always tell the truth

We always try hard to do our best

Our vision is at the centre of all we strive to achieve both within the school and within the wider community and our golden rules are intrinsic to all the experiences we aim to share with the children on a daily basis.

All maintained schools are required by law to provide religious education for all registered pupils. RE must be taught according to the locally agreed syllabus (The Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023 - 2028). Valley End is a Church of England controlled school and as such follows the Agreed Syllabus for Surrey.

As a church school, we value the place of RE in the school curriculum very highly and we aim to provide a rich and varied RE curriculum that enables learners to acquire a thorough knowledge of the Christian faith. Learners also have the opportunity to learn about other faiths and this is always approached in an inclusive and respectful manner.

Religious Education gives children in our school a unique opportunity to reflect on and learn from the faiths and beliefs of those around them. World and local events reported through the media engage the curiosity of all children and cause them to question how such events can happen: in these days we are aware of the migration of people who make our country their new home, and the many complex and varied reasons for this. Effective Religious Education has much to offer our children as they prepare for life in this rapidly changing world, where critical thinking and discernment will be ever more important and valuable.

The teaching of RE aims to enhance pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development and we recognise the importance of helping children learn to respect religious faith and gain a broader understanding of the moral and spiritual world.

RE at Valley End C of E Infant School provides opportunities for children to:

- Demonstrate an appreciation of the nature and belief and the important contribution of religious and spiritual insights and values to the individual's search for the meaning of life, whilst acknowledging that this may also come from a non-religious perspective
- Recognise that someone's worldview, including their own, can be influenced by many factors and is an intrinsic part of how they view the world
- Develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and of the other principal religions and beliefs represented in Great Britain, through their history, contemporary diverse expressions and encountering peoples' lived experience
- Develop interest in and enthusiasm for the study of worldviews and enhance their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and promote empathy, generosity and compassion
- Enable children to develop the ability to make reasoned, informed and creative responses to religious and moral issues and therefore develop respect for others
- Recognise the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on the individual, on culture and on communities throughout the world and therefore encourage children to consider their responsibilities and how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society.

Breadth and Balance

The following will be studied: -

Early Years Foundation Stage: - For EYFS the approach is Thematic – key questions are based upon children's own lives and experiences, and introduce pupils to Christianity, and other world views represented within their own class and / or school.

- The RE syllabus for EYFS is presented as six topics exploring one of the key questions and building understanding of core concepts (identity, community and God) from both the child's and a religious point of view
- These topics will be taught in line with the Early Learning Goals: learning in RE should start from the child's own experience and from within the EYFS curriculum through planned, purposeful play, with a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities

Key Stage One: - Introducing the study of and selected key concepts within Christianity, Judaism and Islam, incorporating appropriate elements of non-religious world views. There are also thematic units which are designed to draw together learning across a year group and help to build the children's' schemata

Skills, processes and attitudes developed through RE

Reflection

- On feelings, relationships, experiences, beliefs and practices.

Empathy

- Considering the thoughts, feelings, experiences, attitudes, beliefs and values of others
- Identifying feelings such as love, wonder and forgiveness.
- Seeing the world through the eyes of others, and seeing issues from their point of view

Investigation – this includes: -

- Asking relevant questions; we encourage children to think of 'big' questions, which help children to challenge their thinking and progress with their understanding.
- Knowing how to gather information from a variety of sources.
- Knowing what might constitute evidence for justifying beliefs in religion.

Interpretation – this includes: -

- Drawing meaning from artefacts, works of art, music, poetry and symbolism.
- Interpreting religious language.
- Suggesting meanings of religious texts.

Evaluation – this includes:-

- Debating issues of religious significance with reference to evidence and argument.

Analysis – this includes:-

- Distinguishing between opinion and fact.
- Distinguishing between different features of different religions and beliefs.

Synthesis – this includes:-

- Linking significant features of a religion together in a coherent pattern.
- Connecting different aspects of life into a meaningful whole.

Application – this includes:-

- Making the association between religion / belief and individual, community, national and international life

Expression – this includes:-

- Explaining concepts, rituals and practices.
- Expressing views and responding to questions of religion and belief through a variety of media.

At Valley End Infant School, we also aim to develop self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder as attitudes that are at the heart of RE.

Areas of Learning

Within the Surrey Agreed Syllabus, learning in RE is split into 3 concepts (Golden Threads): God, Community and Identity

God – relating to theological approaches

Community – relating to sociological approaches

Identity – relating to philosophical approaches

These Golden Threads are threaded throughout the units of work as part of the progression in a way that develops the children's knowledge understanding and skills from EYFS to KS1 in age-appropriate ways

Through their learning experiences in KS1, pupils will develop their understanding of the Golden Threads of 'God' 'Community' & 'Identity' and be encouraged to:

- explore core concepts & beliefs for Christian, Jewish & Muslim people, and appreciate that some people call themselves 'non-religious';
- develop subject specific vocabulary;
- encounter how different people view the world in different ways;

- encounter and respond to ways in which people express their beliefs (e.g. stories, artefacts and other media, such as art and music – and what they might ‘mean’);
- begin to understand the importance and value of religion and belief for different people, especially other children, their families and the communities they belong to;
- ask relevant questions and develop a sense of wonder & curiosity about the world around them, using their imagination;
- ask questions and express their own views about what it means to be human: what’s important to themselves and to others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

Teaching and learning

In Key Stage One, RE is taught as a discrete subject and is allocated 1 hour per week of teaching time. In EYFS, RE is taught through a themed topic approach. The RE whole school planning document shows progression and coverage for each year group. This plan links weekly RE themes to the Agreed Syllabus for Surrey. RE is also found in other aspects of school life such as PSHE, celebrating festivals, collective worship, class discussions and circle times or stories with a moral or cultural theme.

Children learn about Christianity and aspects of Judaism and Islam through encountering some of the important places and objects connected with the religions that are studied. Children become familiar with stories about key people and learn about practices, celebrations and events as well using stories and symbols.

Through the teaching of RE, children develop positive attitudes towards other people. They also enhance their own spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by:-

Spiritual development -

- discussing and reflecting on questions surrounding worldviews, faith, belief, ethics and morality
- learning about and reflecting on important beliefs, practices and experiences which are axiomatic to religious and non-religious traditions and practices
- considering how beliefs and concepts are expressed culturally and creatively through the arts and human and natural sciences
- considering how worldviews perceive the value of human existence and relationships with each other, the natural world and for some, with God
- enabling students to develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence
- developing their own personal knowledge, which may include views and ideas on religious, philosophical and ethical issues

Moral development -

- exploring how beliefs, teachings and sacred texts influence individuals and groups
- thinking about matters of ethical and moral concern
- studying issues that promote respect of race, religion and belief
- distinguishing between what is right and wrong and respecting the civil and criminal law of the UK
- considering the importance of rights and responsibilities and developing social awareness

Social development –

- considering how religious and other beliefs lead to particular actions and concerns
- addressing issues relating to democratic processes, promoting respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied across the UK, whilst exploring potential tensions with religious laws

- investigating social issues from the perspectives of different worldviews
- recognising diversity and difference as well as the common ground between religions and beliefs
- expressing pupils'/students' personal views on a range of contemporary social issues whilst developing a capacity to consider respectfully the views of others
- acceptance of and engagement with British Values (Ofsted)

Cultural development –

- encountering people from different worldviews and cultures
- considering cultural diversity within the same religious or non-religious tradition
- promoting tolerance, racial and interfaith harmony and respect for all, combating prejudice and discrimination
- contributing positively to community cohesion and interfaith cooperation

Assessment

Assessment in RE is concerned with pupils' growing knowledge and understanding and their application of skills. It is NOT used to make judgements about personal beliefs, views or behaviour.

In EYFS, assessments are made using the Early Learning Goals within the areas of:

- Communication and Language
- Personal, Social and Emotional development
- Literacy
- Understanding the world
- Expressive Arts and Design

And specifically:

- Past and Present
- People, culture and communities
- The natural world

In Key Stage One, assessments are based on looking at the golden threads, focusing on understanding through theological, sociological & philosophical approaches to learning, reflected in end of key stage expectations and within units of work. We use end of key stage expectations of emerging, expected, exceeding.

SEND provision

As a highly inclusive church school we look at individual children's needs and adapt lessons accordingly to make sure all are valued.

The right of withdrawal

Parents have a legal right of withdraw their child from RE and from acts of collective worship on religious grounds. Should the school receive a request, close consultation with the parents as to the nature of religious education that would be acceptable would need to be sought and a mutual agreement reached.

Links to other policies:

Collective Worship
PSHE
Teaching and Learning
Assessment
Equalities
Special Educational Needs
Safeguarding and child protection
Anti-bullying