

Statutory

Policy provided centrally for adoption by schools with minimal amendment to the core text.
Changes are allowed to the text where indicated.

Religious Education Policy

North Leigh CE Primary School



Valuing Everyone in our school, in our community, in our world.

This policy was updated in September 2025.

The policy must be reviewed and updated at least every 36 months.

All children are provided with equal access to the curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

The impact of this policy on staff workload has been considered.

Signed

Ben McPherson

Headteacher

Sophie Warner

Chair of Governors

Date

29 September 2025

Religious Education Policy

Reviewed: September 2025

Next review date: September 2028

Introduction

In accordance with A Statement of Entitlement published by the Church of England Education Office (2019), RE should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. It will educate for dignity and respect, encouraging all to live well together. At the heart of RE in Church schools is the study of Christianity as a living and diverse faith, focused on the teaching of Jesus and the Church. There is a clear expectation that as inclusive communities, church schools provide high quality sequential and ordered learning about a range of religious, non-religious and world views fostering respect for others. RE has a very high profile within the church school curriculum and learning activities provide fully for the needs of all learners.

As a Voluntary Controlled Church of England School, our vision for North Leigh grows from Christ's new commandment to his disciples at the last supper: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another as I have loved you, you are also to love one another" John 13:34. This reflects our inclusive ethos and commitment to ensuring that all in our school community have the opportunities necessary to life in all its fullness.

Through RE lessons, our pupils will be helped towards feeling valued, celebrated, nurtured and challenged individuals.

Aims

RE at North Leigh supports the distinctive Christian character of the school as well as our whole school approach to our social, moral, spiritual and cultural education.

- To enable pupils to develop a good understanding of Christianity as a living, diverse and global religion through its beliefs and practices
- To enable pupils to develop an accurate understanding of the teachings and practices of other religions and non-religious world views
- To enable pupils to learn about the impact of Christianity and other religions on culture, politics, art and history and on the lives of their adherents
- To promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development by exploring ways in which religions engage with challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life and offering opportunities for personal reflection in their own search for meaning and truth
- To provide pupils with the evaluative skills to make informed and meaningful decisions between conflicting beliefs and values
- To develop an ethos in which there is genuine respect and encouragement for the diversity of religious and non-religious stances, traditions and viewpoints both within the school, and in the local community and wider society
- To promote community cohesion through developing an understanding of the social and religious context of the local community, whilst also recognising the national diversity of religious make-up
- To be at the adventurous forefront of inter-faith approaches by helping young people to build friendships across faith boundaries whilst at the same time helping pupils understand and respect their own religious and non-religious heritage.

For these aims to be fulfilled we believe that:

- our teachers have an obligation to be religiously well-informed, whatever their own background and have access to subject specific professional development led by the RE Lead

- our school staff have a responsibility to understand the diverse religious and multi-cultural practices in the local community and within the diverse pluralism of the UK
- as educational leaders, teachers should challenge situations where pupils may make derogatory comments or act in an insensitive or hurtful way to others
- the RE curriculum is intrinsic to the outworking of our school Christian vision: “Valuing Everyone - in our school, in our community, in our world”
- as a Church school, RE has a high profile within the curriculum and is a priority for senior leaders
- our teaching staff and Governing Body understand the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools
- our Governing Body has a duty to monitor standards in RE effectively

Experiences and opportunities within RE:

Religious Education at North Leigh School introduces pupils to a range of relevant disciplines including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences, through a well-planned sequential scheme of work from Reception to Year 6. We have adopted the Understanding Christianity resource, The Discovery RE scheme and the ODBE scheme of work to help engage and challenge our pupils through an exploration of core concepts and questions. Units of work are planned to develop both knowledge and skills, including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Christianity is taught in every year group, with Christmas and Easter given new treatment each year, developing children’s learning in a progressive way. Children in the main, study one religion/belief system at a time to avoid confusion, but as they move through school, have increasing opportunity to identify similarities and draw comparisons between different faiths, engaging in meaningful and informed dialogues with those of all religions and worldviews. Through the framework of their own experience, children learn to understand and respect the experiences of others. They are also enabled through their knowledge to challenge ideas about religion and recognise intolerance.

Years 1 – 6:

RE is taught through themed whole school RE weeks (one per short term), where learning is concentrated into focused blocks to enable pupils to engage, investigate and explore a Big Question over an extended period of time. Our Christianity units provide opportunities for pupils to explore biblical text, examine what this may mean for Christians in the world today and make connections with their own lives and their understanding of the wider world. Learning is shared with parents and our school community through parent newsletters, photo galleries on the class pages of our school website and in the Class RE Books. Pupils also spend additional time learning about Christian festivals: Harvest, Christmas and Easter.

Direct teaching and learning time for RE fulfils the statutory requirements of the Locally Agreed RE syllabus.

Reception Class:

RE teaching happens either weekly or during RE Week, as appropriate to that particular unit of work, making it meaningful and accessible to our youngest learners. Learning is shared in the same way as the rest of the school. They also use a balance of Understanding Christianity and Discovery RE to support the planning and delivery of age – appropriate quality RE teaching and learning.

In Key Stage 1 pupils have opportunities to:

- explore photographs of people of faith as well as artistic images and places of religious significance
- visit places of worship focusing on symbols and feelings
- listen and respond to visitors from local faith communities
- use their senses and have times of quiet reflection
- use art and design, music, dance and drama to develop their creative talents and imagination
- share their own beliefs, ideas and values and talk about their feelings and experiences
- begin to use ICT to explore religions and beliefs as practised in the local and wider community

In Key Stage 2 pupils have opportunities to:

- explore photographs of people of faith as well as artistic images and places of religious significance
- encounter religion through visitors and visits to places of worship, focusing on the impact and reality of religion on the local and global community
- discuss religious and philosophical questions, giving reasons for their own beliefs and those of others
- consider a range of human experiences and feelings
- reflect on their own and others' insights into life and its origin, purpose and meaning
- express and communicate their own and others' insights through art and design, music, dance, drama and ICT
- develop the use of ICT, particularly to enhance their awareness of religions and beliefs globally

Provision for Religious Education

At North Leigh School, Christianity is the major area of study. Understanding Christianity provides sequentially planned units of work together with quality resources and supporting knowledge for teachers. This is a valuable resource that also supports consideration of a biblical text. The use of Picturing Christianity, internet sources, first hand experiences, visits and visitors provide increasing opportunity to explore Christianity as a living global faith, recognising commonality of belief and practice as well as celebrating cultural and denominational difference. Discovery RE and ODBE schemes provide a good basis for the planning, delivery and assessment of other religions (Judaism, Hinduism and Islam), no religious and world views. We also recognise and welcome the benefits of working with other local schools for the delivery of high quality RE.

Planning, assessment and monitoring of RE

Planning for each unit takes account of pupils starting points and intended learning outcomes, providing opportunities for pupils to demonstrate what they have learnt. Pupils are assessed against "Knowing it", Living it" and "Linking it" outcomes six times a year and these support an end of year teacher assessed judgement. Progress is monitored and reported annually to parents.

The right of withdrawal from RE

ODST academies continually aim to be inclusive communities, fully respecting a range of religious and moral beliefs and views, but recognise that parents, have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education on the grounds of conscience. We ask any parent considering this contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties they may have about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education in our school.

Monitoring, evaluation and review

This policy will be reviewed every 3 years. The effectiveness of its implementation will be assessed.

All children are provided with equal access to the curriculum. We aim to provide suitable learning opportunities regardless of gender, ethnicity or home background.

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Religious Education Policy

Approved by:	Ethos & Governance
Date:	September 2024
Next review date:	September 2027

Adopted by school:	North Leigh CE Primary School
Date:	September 2025

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Introduction

We believe that the teaching of Religious Education (RE) reflects the ethos and values that are held in our school and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and none. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

The Legal Position

Every school in England must provide the National Curriculum, RE, and Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSHE). See paragraph below for the information about the right of parents to withdraw from RE. ODST Trustees have determined that religious education in our school should be based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus while also, in Church of England schools, reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019.

For Church of England schools, the statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate the quality of RE provision and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the school. *See Appendix for additional note for former Voluntary Aided (VA) schools.

Purpose and Aims of RE

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious world views that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and none. This is religious literacy.

Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- To know about and understand 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 living, believing and thinking.

Curriculum and Time Allocation

The RE curriculum in our school, has been approved by the Local Governing Body (LGB). In accordance with the law, Christianity predominates across the RE curriculum offer.

In line with the locally agreed syllabus, it is suggested that the total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught in dedicated lessons/blocks/cross-curricular settings as appropriate. **The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship.**

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

RE teaching is challenging and robust, taught using an enquiry-based approach focused on Big Questions, discussion and investigation. Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils will encounter believers and visit places of worship.

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate to enable all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability or background.

Assessment procedures will be robust and in line with the assessment procedures and feedback policy of the school, meeting the requirements of the previously noted syllabus or scheme that has been adopted. Pupils will engage in a variety of activities which enable teachers to assess what they have learnt. Records kept will include information about pupils' experiences and judgements about their attainment and progress, as well as being used to inform planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The Headteacher and LGB will ensure that effective monitoring takes place according to the school's policies, and that the impact of teaching and learning is assessed. Monitoring activity may include lesson visits, book and planning reviews, and pupil interviews when appropriate.

The Right of Withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school and we encourage discussion with leaders prior to a request to withdraw. Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to this effect, and this will be reviewed on an annual basis. The school will keep pupils safe during RE lessons but is not required to provide any work or reading material for pupils who have been withdrawn.

Policy Review

This Policy should be reviewed regularly in line with the school's procedures, at least every three years.

Former Voluntary Aided Church of England schools within ODST

The trustees of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) recognise that the Christian character of its Church of England schools is held in the vision, values, curriculum and traditions maintained by each school. These values and traditions are reflected through the outworking by all in each school community and are cherished and celebrated across the trust as a whole.

The ODST aspiration to serve with a 'Common Vision for the Common Good' likewise reflects the inclusive ethos of the Trust, also reflected in the Admissions Policy, providing equality of opportunity and access for all regardless of background and faith. Trustees recognise the importance of providing rich opportunities for exploring spirituality for all ODST pupils (and staff) through the curriculum offer in each school and within collective worship.

The ODST Scheme of Delegation makes clear the local responsibility of LGBs (Local Governing Bodies) to monitor the provision, outcomes and impact of RE and Collective Worship within each school. This mirrors the accountability model for our former VA schools.

Trustees are mindful of the Trust Deed of each former Voluntary Aided school when taking on accountability for the RE curriculum to be taught and of the importance of equal access for all pupils to high quality teaching and learning. Therefore, following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the Trustees determine that RE in all our schools should be based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. Trustees recognise the right to withdraw from RE and this is made clear in the RE model policy (page 1, above) provided for all schools within ODST.

The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate RE and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the schools and will look for evidence of progress and attainment in Church of England schools. Religious Education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects as may be inspected by Ofsted.

Priority is given to RE curriculum development, support and enhancement provided both by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education RE Adviser, and through the School Improvement offer from the Trust. This includes RE Subject Leader Network meetings, training for LGB members on their monitoring of the effectiveness of RE, specific curriculum training and induction for RE subject leaders and teachers.