



Villa Real School
together we achieve

Religious Education Policy 2021

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Chair of Governors

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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Religious Education

Religious Education (RE) is an academically rigorous subject which makes a distinctive contribution to pupils/students' overall knowledge. It provides opportunities for external accreditation, including ASDAN Towards Independence and ASDAN Short Courses. RE contributes dynamically to pupils'/students education in school by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human.

In RE pupils/students, learn about religious and non-religious worldviews in order to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions. They learn to interpret, analyse, evaluate and critically respond to the claims that religious and non-religious worldviews make. Pupils/students learn to express their insights and to agree or disagree respectfully. Teaching therefore equips pupils with knowledge and understanding of what is meant by the terms 'religion' and 'worldview' as well as systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Teaching should enable pupils to appreciate that worldviews are complex, diverse and plural and have influence on individuals, communities, societies and cultures.

RE offers opportunities for personal reflection and pupils'/students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development as it encourages pupils to examine the significance of their learning in relation to themselves and others. It enables pupils to explore their own beliefs (whether they are religious or not), ideas, feelings, experiences and values in the light of what they learn. RE encourages empathy and respect. It enables pupils/students to develop their own sense of identity and belonging. It also promotes respect for the right of others to hold different beliefs, values and ideas.

RE should develop in pupils/students an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diverse religious and non-religious worldviews. It helps pupils/students deal positively with controversial issues, to manage strongly held differences of belief and to challenge stereotypes and prejudice.

As such RE is central to good local, national and global citizenship. It makes a significant contribution to the active promotion of mutual respect and tolerance of others' faiths and beliefs, a fundamental British value. It prepares pupils for life in modern Britain.

Aims of Religious Education

The Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education aims to ensure that pupils/students:

- Develop deepening knowledge and understanding about a range of religious and nonreligious worldviews so that they can: -
 - Describe and explain beliefs and theological concepts
 - Describe and explain some sources of authority and teachings within and across religious and non-religious traditions
 - Describe and explain ways in which beliefs are expressed
 - Know and understand the significance and impact of beliefs and practices on individuals, communities and societies
 - Connect these together into a coherent framework of beliefs and practices
- Gain and deploy deepening understanding of specialist vocabulary and terms
- Know and understand about religious diversity within the region, as well as nationally and globally
- Know and understand how religion can be defined and what is meant by the term “religious and non-religious worldviews” and with increasing clarity know that these worldviews are complex, diverse and plural
- Gain and deploy skills that enable critical thinking and enquiry in relation to the material they study
- Reflect on their own thoughts, feelings, experiences, ideas, values and beliefs with increasing discernment

The Agreed Syllabus is designed to ensure that pupils/students learn about a range of religious and nonreligious worldviews throughout their school life. The word ‘worldview’ refers to the philosophy of life or approach to life, which structures how an individual understands truth and the nature of reality, the meaning and purpose of life and his or her own place in the world.

The Agreed Syllabus uses the word ‘worldview’ to explore, institutional systems of making meaning and structuring how one sees the world and themselves in it. These include religions such as Christianity and Islam as well as nonreligious worldviews such as Humanism.

The legal requirements for Religious Education

RE must be provided for all registered pupils/students in maintained schools, including those in Reception classes and the Sixth Form. RE is a component of the basic curriculum, to be taught alongside the National Curriculum in all maintained schools. In all maintained schools, other than voluntary aided schools with a religious character, it must be taught according to a locally Agreed Syllabus, which is the statutory order.

Each Local Authority (LA) must have a SACRE (Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education) to advise the LA on matters connected with RE. The SACRE may require a review of the Agreed Syllabus at any time. This is in addition to the requirement on LAs to convene an Agreed Syllabus Conference (ASC) to reconsider the Agreed Syllabus every five years.

The Education Act 1996 states that an Agreed Syllabus must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain. It must be nondenominational and must not be designed to convert pupils or to urge a particular religion or religious belief on pupils. Teaching about denominations is not prohibited. The Agreed Syllabus sets out what pupils/students should be taught. The benchmark expectations set out the expected standards of pupils' performance at different ages.

The Head Teacher must ensure the provision of RE in accordance with this Agreed Syllabus. The school must ensure that sufficient time and resources are given to RE to meet statutory requirements. For LA maintained schools, the governing body and the LA must also exercise their functions in securing this provision.

Community and foundation Special Schools must follow the legal requirements to provide RE for every pupil, so far as practicable. Schools Standards and Framework Act 1998 Section 71 (7). Regulation 5A, Education (Special Educational Needs), Regulation 20101, SI 2001/3455

Parents have the right to withdraw pupils/students from RE, if they wish to do this, they must make an appointment with the Head Teacher / RE co-ordinator.

'Teachers 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 Teacher 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.' (Guidance dealing with withdrawal from RE, NATRE p3 2020)

Planning Guidance for Special Schools

Religious Education can be delivered in a variety of ways, for example, a weekly lesson, an afternoon of Religious Education every few weeks, a full day of Religious Education (this enables a visit to take place or faith members to visit school). Villa Real School plans Religious Education, which allows for continuity and progression as appropriate. Units of work may appear more than once in order to allow for consolidation of learning. Exemplar plans in the Agreed Syllabus may be used and adapted to meet the needs of pupils/students. Religious Education is a discrete subject area within the formal curriculum. Whilst it supports other areas of the formal and wider curriculum, Villa Real School are aware of its distinctive nature.

Religious Education and the promotion of British Values

Villa Real School actively promotes fundamental British Values. They form part of a school provision for pupils'/students spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious Education has a significant role to play and gives opportunities to consider the right of the individual to freedom of belief and the right to express this belief in different ways. In addition, to encounter people from a wide variety of religious and non-religious worldview through visits to places of worship, visitors to school.

The contribution of Religious Education to Literacy

Religious Education makes a significant contribution to pupils'/students wider literacy. In Villa Real School teachers plan opportunities which lead to discussion, debate and critical evaluation, they model and encourage the use of complex specialist vocabulary and terms appropriate for the age and ability of pupils/students.

Religious Education and the whole school curriculum

RE contributes to the aims of the whole school curriculum and has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which

all pupils/students all entitled. RE encourages pupils/students to develop positive attitudes to their own and others' beliefs, ideas, experiences, feelings and values, in a classroom climate that recognises and respects difference.

RE, therefore contributes to the development of the following:

- Economic – as pupils/students develop skills in RE for adult life, employment and lifelong learning.
- Cultural – as pupils/students develop understanding of how religious traditions contribute to the cultural heritage in all its diversity.
- Social – as pupils/students develop understanding of how religious identity and belonging are expressed, and consider their own participation in groups and communities.
- Personal – as pupils/students reflect on their own spiritual and moral ideas and those of others.

The Fundamentals of Religious Education

RE is based around three elements:

1. Knowledge and understanding – is about what religion is and the impact it has for individuals and communities. It involves investigation of and enquiry into the nature of religion and beliefs through the four RE concepts. Belief, Authority, Expression of Belief and Impact of Belief.
2. Critical thinking – requires pupils/students to use reason to analyse and evaluate the claims that religions make. Critical thinking in RE is accessible and can be formally assessed by the quality of their ability to analyse various viewpoints, explain or justify their opinion and evaluate the opinion of others.
3. Personal reflection – this develops pupils'/students ability to reflect on religion in relation to their own beliefs, values and experiences and the influence of these on their daily life, attitudes and actions. Pupils/students can make personal progress through reflection but this should not be assessed.

Four concepts:

1. Belief – What do people believe? Questions of meaning, purpose and truth. Key beliefs of individuals and religious communities.
2. Authority – How do people know what to believe and how to act? Questions about the importance of holy books, founders, leaders, teachings, tradition, spiritual encounters as source of authority.
3. Expression of belief – How do people express beliefs, feelings and commitment through worship? What beliefs do they express? Differing

forms of expression, how identity belonging and commitment are expressed through ceremonies, rituals and symbols.

4. Impact of belief – How does belief and worship affect what people feel and think and how they act and behave? Identity, belonging, commitment expressed. Values, attitudes and actions affected by beliefs. Differing views on the impact of faith. Controversial issues affecting individuals, local and global communities.

Each concept conveys a fundamental idea for understanding how religion works as well as being distinctive, also relates to other concepts and is capable of exploration at different levels and depths.

Five types of enquiry questions:

1. Philosophical questions – These are ultimate questions of meaning, purpose and truth.
2. Theological questions – These questions about the particular belief of faith traditions.
3. Ethical questions – These are the questions about people's values and actions and how much moral decisions are made as a result of religious beliefs. Ethical questions may focus on particular moral issues and the religious and non-religious responses to these.
4. Sociological questions – These are questions about the impact of religion on society and the role of religion in communities, both locally and globally.
5. Phenomenological questions – These are question that focus on how the beliefs of a religion are expressed in practice and ways in which the beliefs make a difference to the lives of individuals and communities.

Curriculum

RE in Villa Real School is taught using a modular approach and by following the New Durham Agreed Syllabus 2020. Pupils/students will study Christianity at each of the key stages (KS1 to 14-19 Provision). At least one of the other five principal religions will also be taught at one of these key stages. This is a requirement of this New Agreed Syllabus and ensures that each of the principal religions are studied in a systematic way at least once during a pupil/student's education.

Villa Real has developed a bespoke personalised curriculum so that all pupils/students benefit from truly individualised learning with reference to the National Curriculum and accreditation.

This covers the 4 areas of REAL -

R- Regulation

E- Emotional Well-being

A-Access to the World

L- Learning

This ensures pupils/students are challenged to be as prepared as they can be to access the real World. Villa Real's curriculum is designed around four interlinking pathways.

Pathway 1 – Beginnings: A play-based and sensory curriculum for Early Years Foundation Stage learners. These pupils are assessed on REAL progress and using Development Matters advice and the reformed Statutory Framework for the EYFS.

Pathway 2 – Moving on: An exploratory and engagement based curriculum. Pupils/students will be assessed on REAL progress and learning on Engagements Steps or Progression Steps. Pupils from year 1- year 9 may access this curriculum. Pupils/students assessed on Engagement Steps, will also be accessing the Engagement Model.

Pathway 3 – Moving up: An academic curriculum for life and learning with provision for pupils'/students' specialist needs. Pupils/students will be assessed on REAL progress and learning on Progression Steps. Pupils from year 1- year 9 may access this curriculum.

From September 2020 the Engagement Model introduction is statutory for all pupils/students working below the Pre-Key Stage Standards. Villa Real School uses the Engagement Steps, via BSquared assessment tool to track attainment and progress alongside Engagement Model observations.

Early Years Foundation Stage

During the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS), RE is taught as part of whole class topics or themes. Pupils/students begin to encounter and explore the world of religion in terms of belonging, special people, books, times, places and objects and by visiting places of worship. Pupils/students are given the opportunity to ask questions, use their imagination and curiosity to develop appreciation and wonder of the world. Work is recorded, monitored and assessed in Early Years Journals and on Earwig.

Key Stage 1

Pupils/students are introduced to some of the beliefs and features of a religion. In relation to their learning about these religious beliefs and practices, pupils/students are given the opportunity to express their views and reflect on their own ideas and feelings. Pupils/students will be introduced to Christianity and Buddhism. RE should be taught in every year group in KS1, the recommended time for this is approximately 36 hours per year.

Key Stage 2

Pupils/students will build on their prior learning and deepen their factual knowledge of religious beliefs and practices in Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism (plus a small special study on Islam). The recommended time for this is approximately 45 hours per year.

Key Stage 3

Pupils/students may question the relevance of religion and become more critical. Pupils/students will build on prior learning from KS2 and develop knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and features of Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. The recommended time for this at KS3 is approximately 45 hours per year.

14-19

At this stage, pupils/students are taught RE through accredited qualification, ASDAN Towards Independence and or ASDAN Short Courses in Beliefs and Values. Pupils/students are allocated sufficient curriculum time to cover the accreditation specification which enables all pupils/students to make progress in line with their age and ability. RE remains a statutory subject for all pupils/students in school Sixth Forms.

The recommended time RE should be taught may differ in SEND Schools as class teachers will use their professional judgement when planning RE, so that the provision allows for continuity and progression and is accessible, meaningful, and meets the varying needs and abilities of all pupils/students irrespective of age. Some of our pupils/students may follow a sensory based programme for RE which is based on the key religions as stated above. Staff at Villa Real School follow the assessment method from B Squared.

Development

This policy was developed and is reviewed annually in discussion with the Senior Leadership Team, RE co-ordinator, teaching and teaching support staff, pupils/students, parents, carers, governors, advisory staff and other external partners (e.g. the Local Authority, National Association of Teachers of Religious Education (NATRE)).

Implementation - Management

The RE Co-ordinator will monitor and manage the delivery of RE in all key stages.

Staffing

All staff will contribute to RE through their roles as class teachers, curriculum subject teachers and support staff. The RE programme is planned, monitored and evaluated by the RE Co-ordinator in consultation with the Senior Leadership Team.

Partnerships

The School has partnerships with the following venues and or learning providers:

Newton Hall Baptist Church
Blackhill Baptist Church
Food Bank Consett
Consett Christ Church
Jesmond Synagogue

Resources

Funding is allocated in the annual budget planning round in the context of whole school priorities and particular needs in Religious Education. The Religious Education Co-ordinator is responsible for the effective deployment of resources. All teachers have access to 'Cornerstones' an online Curriculum resource with lesson plans, ideas and worksheets as well as KS1 & KS2 lesson plans produced by the LA.

Professional development

The RE Co-ordinator has undertaken suitable training and professional development to ensure that they are able to manage their responsibilities. The RE Co-ordinator will attend all relevant training opportunities and network meetings to update knowledge and skills and disseminate information relating to RE throughout school by way of meetings, briefings and staff training.

There are annual updates and training opportunities for all school staff. An assessment of whole school staff training needs is done annually or more frequently by request. Staff training needs relating to RE are identified by the Deputy Head/Head Teacher. The School endeavours to meet training needs within a reasonable period of time.

Monitoring, review and evaluation

The school analyses pupils'/students' destination information, feedback from students, parents/carers to inform its programme. External providers are reviewed by the Local Authority. The Schools' RE programme is reviewed annually and a report is submitted to the Head Teacher and Governors.