

The Weald Federation

Of Five Ashes, Frant, Mark Cross and Mayfield Church of England Primary Schools



With God's love we grow and learn together

With God's love we grow and learn together to inspire every child and adult to flourish within our community. Through our Christian ethos, excellent teaching and shared learning, we aim to encourage everyone to discover who they are in relation to God, the world and others. This is in order to prepare for, and positively contribute to, our ever changing and diverse world.

RE Policy

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Approved by:	FGB Ethos Group

Introduction

- The purpose of this document is to provide a clear summary of the role of RE within the broad education offered at The Weald Federation.
- We believe that RE has a vital part to play in promoting the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of our pupils. We also believe that through RE, the children will gain a greater understanding of their own spiritual and philosophical beliefs and opinions.
- The RE curriculum is underpinned by our vision, fostering the development of respect, compassion and open-mindedness towards others with different faiths and beliefs. Through self-awareness, reflection and a sense of belonging, our children flourish as we prepare them to make a positive contribution to our diverse and ever-changing world.

Legal Requirements

- The statutory requirements for the teaching of RE are to be found in the 1944 Education Act and the 1998 Education Reform Act.
- RE must be provided for all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in the Early Years Foundation Stage.
- Right of withdrawal: Legislation allows parents a right of withdrawal from all or part of Religious Education. If exercising this right, parents/carers must communicate in writing to the Head of School. Parents/ carers should be aware that they are required to provide work of a religious/faith/belief-based nature as a substitute for the RE work.
- RE is part of the basic curriculum but not of the National Curriculum. It must be taught according to a Locally Agreed Syllabus (LAS). At The Weald Federation, RE is taught according to the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education: *"Faith and Belief in the 21st Century"* (Adopted 2022).
- RE must not be denominational, but teaching about denominational differences is permitted.
- The agreed syllabus must 'reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of other principal religions represented in this country'. The East Sussex Agreed Syllabus meets this requirement by emphasising that *'The syllabus focuses on the major world religions and what it means to live a life within those faiths in the 21st Century. It is also designed to encourage debate and exploration of faith and beliefs in all their guises from a range of worldview perspectives, both religious and non-religious.'*

Aims of Religious Education

The Weald Federation has adopted the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2022-2027) 'Faith and Belief in the 21st Century' which was created as a collaborative project between members of the Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and teachers from both primary and secondary phases. In accordance with the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus, we will give children the opportunity to:

Explore Concepts

We aim to develop successful learners who:

- develop a deep knowledge and understanding of key religious concepts;
- become religiously literate adults;
- are encouraged to learn about religion and explore the beliefs of others;
- To explore Christianity as a world faith

- develop the ability to contribute positively to society and cultivate an understanding and respect for others and themselves;
- value both the commonality and diversity present in the world through gaining an understanding and respect for the main world religions;
- ask questions.

Explore opportunities for personal and spiritual development

We aim to develop confident individuals who:

- expand their personal development through openness, exploring beliefs and questions and meanings;
- consider their own experiences, giving rise to the opportunity to learn from religion;
- Nurture pupils' own faith/beliefs;
- develop a sense of identity and belonging;
- develop their self-knowledge, self-esteem and self-confidence;
- Contribute to personal development including pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development with reference to the PSHE curriculum;
- accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely.

Explore communal responses to issues

We aim to encourage responsible citizens who:

- promote fundamental British values;
- explore their role as part of both local and global communities;
- think beyond themselves and consider community issues;
- distinguish right from wrong and respect the civil and criminal law of England;
- accept responsibility for their behaviour, show initiative, and understand how they can contribute positively to the lives of those living and working in the locality of the school and to society more widely;
- acquire a broad general knowledge of and respect for public institutions and services in England;
- develop an appreciation that living under the rule of law protects individual citizens and is essential for their wellbeing and safety;
- further tolerance and harmony between different cultural traditions by enabling an appreciation of and respect for their own and other cultures;
- encourage respect for democracy and support for participation in the democratic processes, including respect for the basis on which the law is made and applied in England;
- enjoy opportunities for creative expression that is respectful and sensitive to others;
- develop spiritual, moral, social, cultural and ethical awareness;
- have an acceptance that other people having different faiths or beliefs to oneself (or having none) should be accepted and tolerated, and should not be the cause of prejudicial or discriminatory behaviour;
- develop an understanding of the importance of identifying and combating discrimination.

Implementing Religious Education - Organisation

The East Sussex Syllabus is based on three core principles; *making sense of beliefs, understanding the impact and making connections.*

For Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 these are:

1. Making sense of beliefs

- identify, describe, explain and analyse beliefs and concepts in the context of living religions and non-religious worldviews, using appropriate vocabulary;
- explain how and why these beliefs are understood in different ways, by individuals and within communities;
- recognise how and why sources of authority (e.g. texts, teachings, traditions, leaders) are used, expressed and interpreted in different ways, developing skills of interpretation.

2. Understanding the impact

- examine and explain how and why people express their beliefs in diverse ways;
- recognise and account for ways in which people put their beliefs into action in diverse ways, in their everyday lives, within their communities and in the wider world;
- appreciate and appraise the significance of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.

3. Making connections

- evaluate, reflect on and enquire into key concepts and questions studied, responding thoughtfully and creatively, giving good reasons for their responses;
- challenge the ideas studied, and allow the ideas studied to challenge their own thinking, articulating beliefs, values and commitments clearly in response;
- discern possible connections between the ideas studied and their own worldviews – their ways of understanding the world, expressing their critical responses and personal reflections with increasing clarity and understanding.

The emphasis of the curriculum will be on discovery during the Early Years, exploration during Key Stage One and making connections in Key Stage Two.

At The Weald Federation, the children will learn about and from Christianity in each year group. Christianity is the focus for at least half of our lessons, with world religions and belief systems including Hinduism, Judaism, Islam and Humanism contributing to the remaining parts of the RE curriculum. Learning is sequenced to help pupils develop a coherent understanding of several religions by studying one religion at a time before bringing together and comparing different religious beliefs and traditions. The curriculum encourages children to ask and answer 'big' questions, reflect and respectfully debate. Core concepts of religions and beliefs are thoroughly explored to help pupils understand how beliefs and practices connect, allowing them to build on prior learning as they progress through the school. Wherever possible links will be made with our termly topics to develop depth and breadth of concepts.

Our Federation is comprised of small, rural primary schools with mixed year groups. To enable us to teach the syllabus in a way that allows for the progression of skills and knowledge, we have divided the units into Cycle A and Cycle B (details of which can be found later in our Federation Curriculum Map).

RE is taught as a discrete subject, for an hour in each class every week. Occasionally, blocks of lessons may be taught together. There is an additional focus on the key Christian celebrations and values for all year groups – this may be in addition to the RE unit of work in a particular term.

'Understanding Christianity' and 'RE Today' resources are available for teachers to ensure a high quality of Christian education is planned and delivered that challenges and broadens the children's understanding.

All schools within the Federation have strong links with their local Church, which is used for both teachers and children in order to support and enhance the delivery of our RE Curriculum as well as celebrating Christian festivals and to occasionally hold Collective Worship.

In addition to the formal curriculum, our Christian values underpin the ethos within our schools. Each term, we focus on one of the following values: Respect, Perseverance, Justice, Trust, Thankfulness, Forgiveness, Service, Friendship, Truthfulness, Compassion, Generosity and Courage. Children explore the values from a Christian perspective, consider what the value means to them and reflect on how they and others demonstrate these values. There are opportunities each week to collectively share our thoughts on how these values can make our school, our community and our world a better place.

Spiritual Development

There are opportunities within the RE curriculum to develop pupils' spiritual development through:

- encouraging them to think about their relationship with themselves, the wider world and God
- opportunities to reflect within and beyond themselves on God's creation and the precious nature of human existence
- strengthening self-awareness and self-esteem
- encountering a sense of awe, wonder and mystery
- experiencing opportunities for creativity, curiosity, imagination and response.

World Religions

To be an engaging, inclusive and reflective curriculum the programme has been designed so that pupils will experience and learn about many major religions during their time in our schools. This includes but is not limited to:

- **Early Years:** children will encounter Christianity and other faiths
- **Key Stage One:** children will be taught about Christianity, Judaism and Islam
- **Key Stage Two:** children will be taught about Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and Humanism

Teaching will be enhanced where possible with planned visits to places of worship.

The Early Years Foundation Stage

RE is a compulsory part of the basic curriculum for all Reception pupils, and should be taught according to the agreed syllabus for RE.

In Reception classes, the curriculum has been designed so that children encounter Christianity and other faiths as part of their growing sense of self, their own community and their place within it.

Cross-Curricular Links

RE will form natural links with a range of other curriculum areas, particularly English, PSHE, Art, History, Music and Geography.

Equal Opportunities and Inclusion

As inclusive schools, we aim to meet the needs of ALL the children in our care, enabling their access to RE in order to prepare them for life in a diverse global society and ever-changing world. This is achieved through the following principles:

- setting suitable learning challenges;
- encouraging children to work and think more deeply;
- responding to pupils' diverse learning needs;
- overcoming potential barriers to learning;
- adapting learning through scaffolding and providing appropriate resources;
- assessment for individuals and groups of pupils.

Progression and Assessment

Children are assessed through the process of teachers' assessment. Evidence is gathered mainly through observation, discussion, drawing and written tasks to show that children are meeting their age expected outcomes for RE. Assessment is flexible, assessing against end of unit outcomes and on a lesson-by-lesson basis, allowing teachers to adapt learning as additional support (or challenge) needs are identified.

Teacher assessment for RE is recorded on our assessment system, Insight Tracking, each term. Children's progress in RE is evaluated by the Ethos and RE Leads at the end of Terms 2, 4 and 6.

Role of the Ethos and RE Team

- To develop and implement a Federation policy for RE;
- To organise and co-ordinate visits and visitors;
- To plan and review the teaching and learning of RE across the Federation;
- To support teachers in the assessment and recording of RE;
- To co-ordinate all Federation communication specific to RE;
- To plan, lead and participate in staff training relating to RE;
- To ensure that the RE curriculum is suitably resourced;
- To attend local RE network meetings and maintain CPD;
- To work in partnership with the Diocese partner.

Monitoring and Review

We will regularly review, reflect upon and evaluate our RE curriculum to ensure that it meets the needs of all the children in our schools.

The RE Lead Team and Governors (through the Ethos Group) work collaboratively to monitor and evaluate the quality of RE provision.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years or earlier if changes are made to the East Sussex Agreed Syllabus or SIAMS Evaluation Schedule.