



Religious Education Policy

Emmanuel Middle School, Verwood



School Vision Statement:

“Don’t just do the minimum that will get you by. Do your best.” Colossians Chapter 3 verse 22

Legal Status of RE

(National Curriculum in England: Framework Document, DfE, September 2013, p.4)

'Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which: promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils; and prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life. All state schools ... must teach religious education'.

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils in all Key Stages. However, although it has guidelines from the National Curriculum, it uses a local Agreed Syllabus which must be taught (unless parents request RE in accordance with the trust deed of the school). The law requires that the RE syllabus “must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are mainly Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions in Great Britain”.

Emmanuel is a Church of England School, therefore RE holds a special place where staff and pupils come from all faiths and none and is a valued subject. In the Church of England’s Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, it makes clear that outcomes in RE relate to pupils’ theological understanding of Christianity, to develop and inform respectful attitudes towards religion and critical reflection on religion and belief.

In agreement with the Governors and in consultation with the Headteacher, we have adopted the Dorset and Bournemouth/Pool Agreed Syllabuses. These will provide pupils with a systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews to enable pupils ‘to become religiously literate so that they can engage meaningfully in life in modern Britain’.

Rationale

The weekly teaching of RE may be a legal requirement but as a Church of England school, it should also be seen as an integral and significant part of the school’s curriculum.

RE at Emmanuel is a subject that allows pupils to explore Faiths across the world, establishing their core beliefs and practices and examining their relevance in everyday life. Skills and knowledge are nurtured over time that enable them to have academic and practical tools that will enhance their learning further in RE – continuing on to Upper School and beyond.

Pupils build their understanding of world religions and views across the four-year journey at Emmanuel whilst also examining in detail the central beliefs and knowledge of the Christian faith and how to live a Christian life. At the centre of teaching RE is remembering our school’s Christian mission statement of caring for one another and ensuring that everyone feels secure and valued.

Aims

From the Dorset and Bournemouth/Poole Agreed Syllabuses and Understanding Christianity, all Emmanuel pupils should:

- Know and understand a range of religions and worldviews to recognise diversity which exists within and between religious traditions.
- Identify and investigate through enquiry, questions posed by religions and worldviews about what it means to be human.
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views.
- To explain reasonably their ideas about beliefs and practice and how it influences individuals and communities.
- RE should contribute to the school's Prevent duty to combat extremism.
- To express their own personal reflections and responses about identity, diversity and ethical issues.
- Develop a knowledge and understanding of the key features of Christianity both as a major world faith and in its impact on our local community, and on our society today.
- Grow in their spiritual development as they are given a safe space for reflection and debate and consider their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical convictions.
- Gain an increasing awareness of the spiritual dimension within themselves and others through reflection and discussion and develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery.
- Develop skills and attitudes, particular to RE, which will support their personal, moral, social and cultural development.
- Think about their own beliefs and values in light of the beliefs of others, both religious and non-religious, and the School Values of Emmanuel.

Guidelines

- All views expressed in a lesson should be valued both by staff and peers, although it may be necessary to counter certain racist, sexist or other undesirable statements or stereotyping.
- Respect for cultural differences should be developed. There should always be an understanding attitude shown by adults towards the family background, culture and traditions of pupils.
- Strategies should be developed to maximise the possibility for all pupils to make worthwhile contributions in oral written and expressive situations.
- It is recognised that there are strong cross-curricular links between RE and History, Geography, Art, Science, English and Wellbeing.
- Teachers should be prepared to foster positive moral and ethical stances on contemporary issues.
- All pupils are entitled to equal rights to access the RE curriculum at an appropriate level regardless of their race, sex, state of health or ability.

Pupil Entitlement and Timetabling Arrangements

All pupils are expected to attend one RE lesson a week of approximately one hour unless their parents have withdrawn them.

RE and Differentiation

- RE is, by its very nature, a subject that leads to higher order questioning and this is one of the most natural ways of stretching the gifted and talented pupils within this subject. They should always be set challenging targets and encouraged to achieve to their full potential. Debate is a key way to challenge the most able pupils, along with engaging with original sources in a critical way. Developing empathy and understanding is another important aspect of their development within the subject.
- Those with special needs, who have difficulty in accessing the full curriculum, should also be encouraged to work to their highest level. Some simpler texts are available and scaffold to support access to activities. Scaffolded support during assessments is provided and the class teacher's judgement will assist whether verbal submissions may be recorded with the help of a TA. Computers are available also for this purpose. It is important to liaise with the SENDCO and TAs when planning work for these children.

The teaching of RE

Content:

We follow a coherent and systematic study of Christianity (Understanding Christianity Course)
We introduce pupils to other principal religions represented in the UK, including Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism and Islam across both Key Stages.
In a number of units, we also study the worldview of Humanism as a non-religious belief.

Approach:

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, art, music as appropriate.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visits from members of local faith communities to the school. We have regular visits from Christian leaders to lead lessons and workshops. All pupils visit our local church for a Christmas carol concert and, from 2020, Y6 will be involved in a cross curricular event to commemorate Holocaust Remembrance Day that will include hearing a survivor speak about their experiences.

RE Every Child Matters and PSHCE

RE helps to deliver many of the aspects of ECM; in particular...

- Emotional health: Through exploring themes such as loss, suffering, death and commitment.
- Discrimination: Through appreciation of a variety of religions, cultures and worldviews, promoting understanding.
- Achieving: Through engaging with challenging questions of meaning and truth.
- Personal confidence: Through discussion and the valuing of opinions.
- Positive role models: Through the study of key people of faith.

Assessment and monitoring of RE

The school has been developing its approach to the assessment of RE this academic year by incorporating extension questions that are linked to weekly lessons as well as incorporating end of unit assessment tasks.

Teachers will be responsible for highlighting targets for each pupil so that pupils are able ascertain where they are at the end of a unit. Both the teacher and the pupils can conclude whether or not a child is working at the age related standard or whether they have exceeded this or are working towards age related expectations as outlined in Understanding Christianity or the Agreed Syllabus.

The chance to share outcomes and moderate across a year group will be given once a unit is completed and the RE co-ordinator will use the data presented to her to challenge or support as necessary.

In line with the school policies on assessment and monitoring, it is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of their pupils, through marking assessments, classwork and through the use of Assessment for Learning techniques.

At least three times a year each pupil will complete an agreed key assessment task. This assessment task is usually a quizzing task but may include a written or speaking and listening element where appropriate. The level achieved by each pupil will be recorded by the teacher and entered on the school's pupil tracking database at the end of each term.

The level achieved will be used by the Subject Coordinator to track pupil progress through the school and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that pupils are set work that is appropriately challenging.

The Subject Coordinator will monitor RE within the school through analysis of this assessment data and inspections of colleagues' teaching, occasional scrutinising of books, moderation of marking and through pupil voice.

The right of Withdrawal from RE

At Emmanuel we wish to be an inclusive community, and have had considerable success in including those of other faiths with mutual respect, but recognise that parents have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher, before withdrawing their child, to discuss any concerns or anxieties they may have about the policy, provision and practice of religious education at our school.

Revised by Kathryn Richardson, RE Subject Leader October 2021

Date of Next Policy Review July 2022