Religious Education Policy

'I have come that they might have life, life in all its fullness' John 10:10

As a Christian school, St Paul's sees the huge value, importance and benefit of effective Religious Education teaching. In our busy and uncertain world, it is both a privilege and an important responsibility to consider and explore the profound questions of life and faith with our children. Religious Education learning gives children opportunities to develop curiosity, ask meaningful questions and engage critically with Christianity and a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. Through exploring beliefs, practices and lived experiences, pupils develop their own understanding of the world and begin to reflect on their own personal worldview, whilst building respect, tolerance and appreciation of diversity. This helps nurture knowledge and understanding of God, Christian faith and the rich variety of beliefs and worldviews that shape our society. Pupils should learn about Christianity and other religions and worldviews, including non-religious perspectives, through an objective, critical and pluralistic approach.

Religious Education should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live well together.

Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews) and for the religious freedom of each person.

(Religious Education Statement of Entitlement for Church of England Schools, January 2026)

Vision

'Shaping futures, inspiring curiosity'

At St Paul's Church of England Primary School, we follow the example of St Paul (Acts 20:22–24), committing ourselves to helping our community flourish academically, socially and emotionally.

We promote curiosity, creativity and high expectations so every child can achieve their full potential. Our strong sense of community ensures staff, pupils and families work together to provide excellent pastoral care and a lifelong love of learning.

Guided by our Christian values, we welcome children and families of all faiths and none, creating a respectful, inclusive environment where everyone feels valued and able to thrive.

Religious Education

Religious education is an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. (*Religious Education Statement of Entitlement for Church of England Schools, January 2026)*

At St. Paul's we use the 'Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Surrey schools' (Surrey SACRE) by the Diocese of Guildford as our school curriculum. It provides a skill based, progressive curriculum that has been well considered and prepared for schools, with input from leaders of all faiths. The adopted RE curriculum is designed to be coherent, utilises multi-disciplinary skills and builds pupils' schemata, from EYFS to KS4. In addition, the syllabus helps pupils to understand their own and others' worldviews, religious and non-religious, and appreciate the influences of these on everyday life.

The units of work outline substantive knowledge, ways of knowing (viewed through the multi-disciplinary 'lenses' of theology, sociology and philosophy) and personal knowledge, as well as key questions that might be asked to help shape the learning in different ways, and end of phase expectations. This supports the recommendations of Ofsted's RE Research Review.

Each unit begins with a **Big Question**, broken down into **weekly enquiry questions**, which will enable our pupils to gain an understanding, along with key knowledge and skills, to reflect on how people of other faith live, and where they themselves belong in the world. Pupils will have opportunities to ask Big Questions about our role as humans. We support our children in enquiring about wider theological and philosophical questions to broaden their knowledge on life's great wonders. All of the RE units are linked by a 'golden thread': the concepts of God, Community and Identity – the 'multi-disciplinary lenses'.

This curriculum enables us to make our children aware of a wide range of religions and beliefs that exist within our society. It also includes non-denominational viewpoints such as Humanists through thematic topics such as 'Why is harvest a worldwide celebration?' and 'Where did it all begin?'

Religious Education contributes dynamically to pupils' and students' education by provoking challenging questions about meaning and purpose in life, beliefs (religious and non-religious), issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. In RE they learn about and from worldviews, including Christianity and other principal religions and beliefs (including non-religious perspectives such as Humanism) in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to these questions.

Pupils learn to weigh up the value of wisdom from different sources, to develop and express their insights in response, and to agree or disagree respectfully. Teaching therefore should equip them with systematic knowledge and understanding of a range of worldviews, beliefs, concepts and practices, enabling them to develop their ideas, values and identities (personal knowledge). Religious Education should also develop in pupils and students an aptitude for dialogue so that they can participate positively in our society with its diversity of beliefs. They learn to articulate clearly and coherently their personal beliefs, ideas, values and experiences, whilst respecting the right of others to differ. Religious Education supports pupils and students in developing their sense of identity and belonging and enables them to flourish individually within their communities and as citizens in a diverse world.

Aims and objectives

As stated in the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education, our school aims for all pupils 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 texts.
- Gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the worldviews being studied.
- Demonstrate an appreciation, recognition and understanding that worldviews may shape an individual's search for meaning and purpose in life and that these beliefs and perspectives may contribute to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Recognise that others' views and their own personal worldview, can be influenced by many factors and are an intrinsic part of how people understand and respond to the world.
- Engage with challenging questions of meaning, purpose and identity raised by human existence and experience.
- 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.
- Express insight into faith practices and develop their spirituality through 'ows, wows and nows'.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned, informed and creative responses to religious and moral issues.

Religious Education Curriculum

Religious Education is taught according to the Surrey Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education 2023-2028.

For our RE Curriculum Overview, please see:

St. Paul's Dorking
Church of England (Aided) Primary School

RE Curriculum Overview

	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
Reception	Who am I, and where do I belong?	Why do we have celebrations?	What makes our world wonderful?	What makes something special?	What can we learn from stories?	What makes a place special?
Year 1	CHRISTIANITY: Why do Christians call God 'creator'?	CHRISTIANITY: What is the 'Nativity' and why is it important to Christians?	JUDAISM: What is the Torah and why is it so important to Jewish families?	CHRISTIANITY: What do Christians learn from stories of Jesus?	ISLAM: Who is Allah and how do Muslims worship him?	Thematic Unit: Why should we look after our world?
Year 2	CHRISTIANITY: What is God like for Christians?	CHRISTIANITY: Why is giving important to Christians?	JUDAISM: Why do Jewish families celebrate the gift of Shabbat?	CHRISTIANITY: Why do Christians call Jesus 'Saviour'?	ISLAM: What is important for Muslim families?	Thematic Unit: What makes a good leader?
Year 3	CHRISTIANITY: How did Jesus change lives – and how is it 'good news?'	CHRISTIANITY: How can artists help us to understand what Christians believe?	JUDAISM: What are important times for Jews?	CHRISTIANITY: What's the Bible's 'big story' and why is it like treasure for Christians?	SIKHI: What do Sikh people value?	THEMATIC: How do people try to make the world a fairer place?
Year 4	CHRISTIANITY: What did God promise to his people?	CHRISTIANITY: What did Jesus say about God's kingdom & why is it 'good news'?	HUMANISM: How do non-religious people celebrate new life?	CHRISTIANITY: For Christians, is communion a celebration, or an act of remembrance?	ISLAM: How does 'ibadah' (worship) show what's important to Muslims?	THEMATIC: What is the Golden Rule and why do so many people live by it?
Year 5	CHRISTIANITY: How did the Church begin, and where is it now?	CHRISTIANITY: What do Christians believe about creation?	ISLAM: What helps Muslims to live a good life?	JUDAISM: What does it mean to be part of a synagogue community?	CHRISTIANITY: Why is the idea of 'rescue' so important to Christians?	THEMATIC: What does it mean to live a 'good life?
Year 6	CHRISTIANITY: What do Christians believe about the Messiah?	CHRISTIANITY: Trinity- How is God Three yet One?	HINDU (SANATAN) DHARMA: Why should Hindus live a good life?	CHRISTIANITY: For Christians, what difference does it make to belong to God's Kingdom?	BUDDHISM: What is the 'Buddhist way of life'?	THEMATIC: Who am I and where do I belong?

Curriculum Balance and Time

Reflecting the Church of England Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education 2019, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that Christianity is the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time. A minimum 5% of weekly curriculum time, but ideally more, meeting explicitly RE objectives, is committed to the delivery of RE.

Note: Collective Worship is not part of the "taught day" and so is not included in the calculation of R.E. teaching time.

Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Our RE curriculum is designed to ensure a balance of theology, sociology and philosophy. We have identified these as three Golden Threads:

- 'God': relating to theological approaches;
- 'Identity': relating to more philosophical approaches;
- 'Community': relating to sociological approaches.



These 'Golden Threads' are threaded throughout the units of work as part of the syllabus progression model in the way that they develop children's knowledge, understanding and skills in age-appropriate ways.

Pupils' own perspectives form a part of their learning within the syllabus as part of the development of their personal knowledge. Using pupils' starting points is one of the ways in which the syllabus strives to be inclusive of the wide spectrum of religious and non-religious beliefs that are a part of our community.

Religious Education in EYFS

The RE curriculum for the EYFS always starts from where the children are, often taking a child's-eye view and drawing upon their personal experiences. The curriculum allows children to explore the world around them from this starting point. In our school we organise our EYFS curriculum through adult led sessions and adult and child-initiated opportunities. Each week there is a short carpet session to introduce the enquiry question linked to the half termly learning to explore thinking. There may also be opportunities for children to engage in an adult-initiated task or to take the learning into their own child-initiated play. Within the learning related to 'People, Culture and Communities', the children also explore learning related to other key festivals and traditions from a range of faith perspectives.

Religious Education in Key Stage One

Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the worldviews, beliefs and 'lived experience' of some Christian, Jewish and Muslim people, and some non-religious people.

Pupils become more aware of other peoples' worldviews and are encouraged to develop important subject-specific and cross-curricular skills.

Religious Education in Lower Key Stage Two

Pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of the beliefs and lived experience of some Christian, Jewish and Muslim people and are introduced to the importance of equality to Sikhs, and

the Golden Rule to Humanists, recognising the impact of religion and belief on people's worldviews, locally (including within their own school), nationally and globally. Pupils make connections across their learning in the thematic units and deepen their understanding of concepts within and across religions / beliefs.

Pupils are encouraged to become more self-reflective in the way that they understand their own personal worldview and the things that may have influenced it. They will also continue to develop important subject-specific and cross-curricular skills.

Religious Education in Upper Key Stage Two

Pupils further develop their understanding of the beliefs and lived experience of some Christian, Jewish, Muslim & non-religious people, and are introduced to Hindu (Sanatana) Dharma and Buddhism. As learning develops across this phase, pupils will increasingly become aware of the factors that might account for diversity within and across communities, including opportunities to consider how some sacred texts can be interpreted in different ways e.g. creation stories.

Pupils continue to explore their own personal worldview and begin to articulate some of the factors that may have influenced it, also applying their thinking to help them to understand the worldviews of others.

Spirituality

At St Paul's we strive to give opportunities for children to develop in their spiritual thinking. We recognise that this may be within RE, but is likely to also be well beyond RE and into their wider learning.

We have defined spirituality as:

- Spirituality is not something we can see. Through the opportunities that we offer, we will help children to capture a sense of awe and wonder and to feel connected to their wider world.
- Our Christian identity at St Paul's will help all members of our school community to feel anchored, supported and connected to themselves and one another.
- We will provide moments for all to pause and reflect on the awe and beauty around us. We will provide opportunities for children to ask 'big' questions and to seek answers for themselves.

We encourage the children to express their spirituality as their relationship with ourselves, each other, the world around us and beyond. To do this we us the language of 'ows,' 'wows' and 'nows.' An wow is when we see, hear or feel something that is amazing, a now is when we see that the little things in school can be special too and a ow is when something upsetting happens. We aim to teach children that it is common to experience these feelings and equip the children with the tools they need when they are having an ow.

Assessment, Recording and Reporting

The thematic unit at the end of each year in each year group consolidates and articulates making links to the learning for the year and provides an opportunity to assess learning. In KS1 and KS2 two other units are also assessed (one Christianity unit and one alternative faith unit). In EYFS one other unit in the year is assessed.

The purpose of assessment enables staff to

- Ensure expectations related to the syllabus have been met.
- Recognise the importance of Religious Education in a Church school, while also recognising that the taught time is considerably less than that of English and maths.
- Seek to identify pupils' development of factual knowledge, skills and attitudes.
- Inform next steps in teaching and learning both for individual pupils and class groups.
- Inform whole school areas for development.
- Enable effective reporting to parents.

Monitoring

The Religious Education subject leaders are responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's learning and the quality of teaching in religious education. This is captured through the monitoring of planning, learning and teaching and also captures pupil voice within this context. This monitoring then informs future planning.

There is a governor allocated to evaluate and monitor the teaching and learning of RE. This is Rev Alex Cacouris.

Role of the RE subject leaders

The subject leaders will:

- support colleagues in the teaching of Religious Education.
- be informed about any current developments in the subject, locally and nationally.
- provide a strategic lead and direction for the subject in the school.
- attend termly RE network meetings at Guildford Diocese.
- ensure that all pupils receive their legal entitlement of religious education.
- ensure RE provision reflects the Church of England Statement of Entitlement.
- produce and regularly review a subject policy to ensure that it remains up to date.
- ensure all teachers know what should be taught in religious education, what resources are available, and what standards of attainment are expected at the end of each Key Stage.
- monitor and review the implementation of policy and units of work.
- monitor the quality and effectiveness of teaching and learning in RE and pupils' progress and standards.
- ensure there are rigorous assessment systems in place to enable teachers and pupils to gauge progress and attainment in RE, particularly through their final thematic unit.
- monitor, analyse and question RE assessments carried out by staff.
- liaise with the HT and Governors to feedback on the monitoring and impact of RE across the school.
- support colleagues by sharing new ideas and pedagogy, to help develop their subject confidence and expertise through CPD opportunities and support sessions.
- seek opportunities to share effective practice locally and regionally and engage in professional development for themselves and other staff members.
- oversee the RE budget and monitor RE resources to ensure they are kept and stored respectfully and replaced where necessary.
- ensure there is a school protocol that covers safeguarding procedures and a suitability process, for when visitors are invited into RE lessons.

Resources
Using the syllabus for guidance and specific resources where available, each year group creates their own material to deliver the learning. The Guildford Diocesan Education Resource Centre has closed but you can borrow artefacts boxes from Guildford Cathedral Resources Library.

Legal Requirements

Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (or their own request if aged 18 or over). (DfE Circular 1 / 94, paragraphs 44 & 49, and Non-Statutory Guidance 2010 page 28)

The school must comply with any request from a parent to withdraw their child from all, or part of Religious Education, and parents are not required to give their reasons for wanting to do so. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and that anyone wishing to withdraw their child would discuss this with the head teacher before making this decision.

Where pupils are withdrawn from all or parts of the RE curriculum, they will engage in a personal project linked to the wider curriculum.