

Religious Education in Church of England Schools

A Statement of Entitlement at Sherrier C of E Primary

Introduction

Sherrier C of E Primary School is part of Embrace Multi Academy Trust which was formed in April 2019 by like-minded leaders and governors from a range of schools across South Leicestershire. We are clear on what we stand for, what we want for our pupils and where our future lies. We are a church-majority trust, driven by a moral purpose to develop our pupils in the fullest sense, regardless of which academy they attend and without detriment to others outside of our trust.

Religious education in all our Church schools should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all itsfullness. (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.¹

This viewpoint is

A high-quality sequential religious education² (RE) programme is essential to meet the statutory requirement for all state funded schools, including academies and free schools, to teach a full curriculum that prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life in modern Britain. Central to religious education 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 sequenced learning about a range of religions and worldviews³ fostering respect for others. In foundation and voluntary controlled schools, (such as Sherrier) with a religious character, RE is taught according to our Local Agreed Syllabus for RE . In academies and free schools RE must be taught in accordance with the funding agreement.

¹ The Church of England Education Office, *Church of England Vision for Education: Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good*. (The Church of England Education Office, 2016), available at <https://www.churchofengland.org/more/education-and-schools/vision-education>

² Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. The term religious education (RE) is therefore used throughout this document as it is connected to the Section 48 SIAMS inspection and, if and until the law changes we will need to continue to use the term. This does not stop individual schools, MATs or dioceses using other names including Religion and Worldviews for the subject.

³ The term worldviews is used throughout the document to refer to a person's way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an 'institutional' worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a 'personal' worldview for an individual's way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from

one or many institutionalised worldviews. Based on Commission on Religious Education, *Religion and worldviews: The way forward A national plan for RE* (Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018) p4.

The effectiveness of denominational education in Church schools is evaluated during the statutory inspection of Anglican and Methodist schools (SIAMS) section 48 inspection. That subsequent judgement will reflect the expectations set out in this document. The SIAMS evaluation schedule assesses the way RE contributes to the outworking of church school's Christian vision. It highlights the responsibility of Church school leaders to ensure that pupils flourish academically through the provision of high-quality RE. In addition, in voluntary aided schools, a judgement on standards in teaching and learning in RE is included in the SIAMS report.

The Entitlement: provision, profile and priority

At Sherrier, the pupils and their families can expect an RE curriculum that enables pupils to acquire a rich, deep knowledge and understanding of Christian belief and practice, this should include the ways in which it is unique and diverse. Parents can expect the use of high-quality resources, for example, the Understanding Christianity resource. Pupils can expect that teaching and learning in Church schools will use an approach that engages with biblical text and theological ideas.

Pupils can expect that our Church school RE curriculum will engage and challenge them through an exploration of core concepts and questions. They can expect our school to provide meaningful and informed dialogue with a range of religions and worldviews. At Sherrier, one way we approach such dialogue is through Philosophy for Children enquiry. There will also be opportunities for them to understand the role of foundational texts, beliefs, rituals, and practices and how they help form identity in a range of religions and worldviews. Pupils should explore how these may change in different times, places and cultures. RE will go beyond a sociological study of religious phenomena and will introduce pupils to a range of relevant disciplines including theology, philosophy and the human and social sciences. At Sherrier, progress in RE should be significant and attainment high, enabling pupils to develop confident religious literacy.

Parents and pupils can expect that in our Church school, RE will have a high profile within the curriculum and is a priority for senior leaders. The RE curriculum is intrinsic to the outworking of our school's Christian vision in enabling all pupils to flourish. In addition, the RE curriculum will contribute to British values and spiritual moral social and cultural development

Learning activities aim to provide fully for the needs of all pupils. Pupils should develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection. Pupils should have a safe space to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. They have opportunities across the curriculum and as part of P4C sessions to engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all religions and worldviews.

Curriculum statement: challenging, accurate and diverse

In all Church schools, religious education must be considered an academic subject. All pupils are entitled to religious education that is delivered in an objective, critical and pluralistic manner. Pupils are entitled to a balanced RE curriculum which enquires into religions and worldviews through theology, philosophy and the human and the social sciences. It should be a coherent curriculum that enables progress through ordered and sequential learning developing both knowledge and skills. There should be a clear curriculum vision and intent, a structure for implementation and provision and a process for evaluating impact.

Aims and objectives and where they are taught in our Sherrier curriculum

- 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. (In particular, the World Religions of Christianity, Hinduism, Judaism and Islam)
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience. Through our Inquiry questions related to each year group overarching themes.
- 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. Through our Inquiry questions related to each year group overarching themes.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking. Bible Weeks , Collective Worship

Curriculum balance and time: sufficient, appropriate and balanced

Reflecting the school's academy funding agreement, parents and pupils are entitled to expect that in Church schools Christianity should be the majority religion studied in each year group and should be at least 50% of curriculum time for the subject.

Sufficient dedicated curriculum time, meeting explicitly RE objectives, however organised, should be committed to the delivery of RE. This in our school is an hour weekly

The study of Christianity will be a significant part of any Religious Studies qualification offered. As a school we are clear that the RE entitlement is totally separate from requirements for collective worship.

Developing staff expertise and knowledge: confidence specialism professionalism

Pupils in Church schools are entitled to be taught by teachers who have a secure subject knowledge and are confident in helping them navigate and challenge cultural and religious stereotypes, prejudice and extremism. It should be a priority in Church schools to build up staff expertise in RE specifically, but not exclusively, working towards:

- at least one member of staff having RE qualifications or receiving specialist training.
- all staff teaching RE having access to subject specific professional development.
- all staff teaching RE knowing how to create and maintain classrooms in which academic rigour is balanced with respect for different personal beliefs and identities.
- all teaching staff and governors understanding of the distinctive role and purpose of RE within church schools.
- a governing body which is monitoring standards in RE effectively.

The role of the Diocesan Boards of Education

One function of Diocesan Boards of Education (DBEs) is to promote, or assist in the promotion of, religious education in schools in the diocese. This should be fulfilled by monitoring the quality of religious education in Church schools through taking note of SIAMS inspection reports and by securing high quality training for all schools throughout the diocese. This will help ensure that the provision for religious education is effective and is able to fulfil the expectations of this statement.

Support for effective and excellent RE

Teachers in Church schools belong to a wider educational and church community. They are entitled to expect positive support in providing effective and excellent religious education from:

- a named member of staff responsible for religious education and where that person is the headteacher someone who shadows the role
- their senior management team and their governing body, especially foundation governors or academy equivalents
- their local Diocesan Board of Education, including a school's adviser with an appropriate religious education background
- the Church of England Education Office
- local clergy and other ministers and Christian communities.

With recognition to Derek Holloway
School Character and SIAMS Development Manager
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