Religious Education Policy

"I am the vine; you are the branches.
If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit"
(John 15:5)

This is a model policy for all Vine schools that has been reviewed and adapted for Howbridge Junior school.

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Approved by Vine Schools Trust on:	Spring 23
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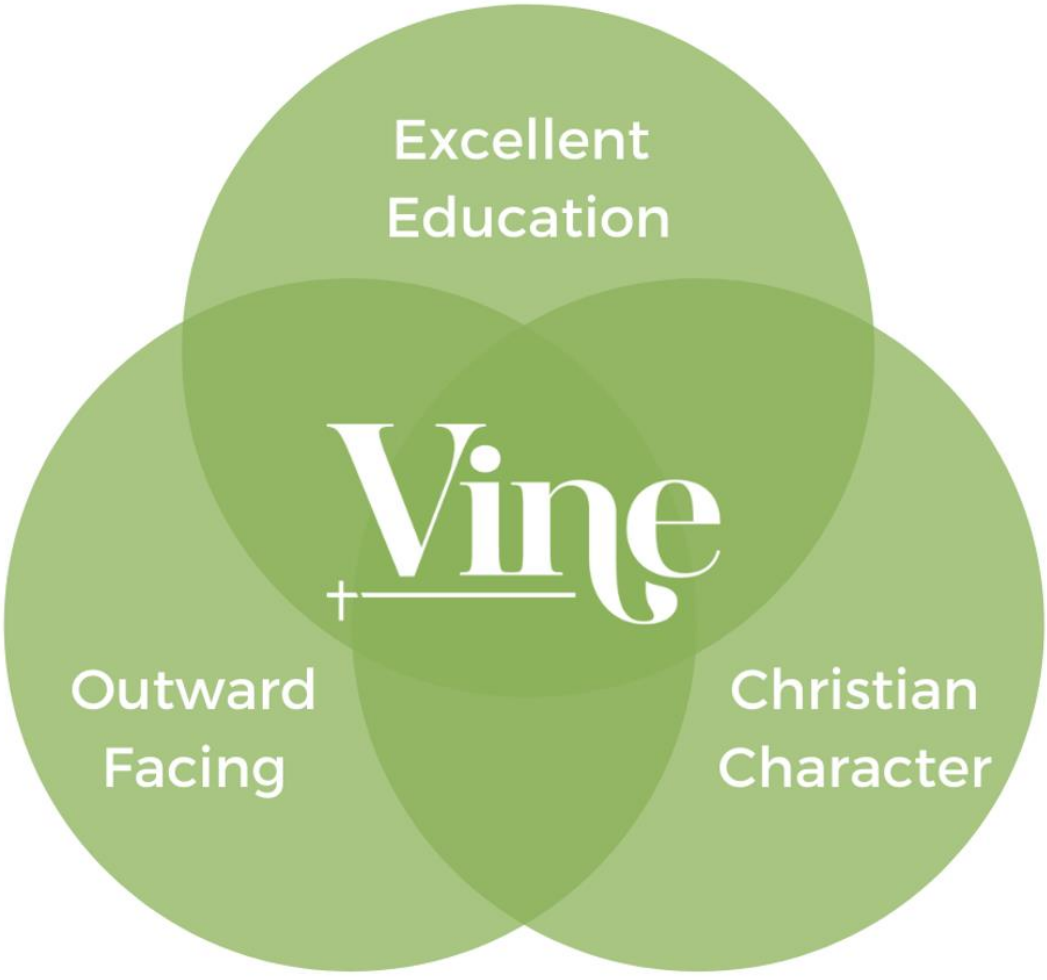
Vision & Values

V Valuing every person

I Inspiring great teaching

N Nurturing academic excellence and Christian Character

E Excelling, unlocking great potential



 Source: Ruth Everett – Diocese of Chelmsford Education Team - with thanks to Trinity Federation Diocese of Norwich Education and Academies Trust

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This is a new model policy

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1.Vision

Our Vision for Howbridge Junior School:

'Together We Shine'

At Howbridge C of E Junior School, our whole school community of children, parents, staff and governors come together so that we can live out the words of the gospel according to Matthew, 5:16, in our everyday lives:

'Your light must shine before people so that they will see the good that you do'

2. RE Policy Statement

Religious Education is unique in our curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'.

The Vine Schools Trust (VST) provision of RE is in accordance with the Trust Deed of each VST school. The VST have decided, following advice from the Diocese, and it's RE guidelines, to adopt the principles of the Essex Locally Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2019).

Each VST school is inspected under Section 48 of the Education Act 2005 and it will be inspected under its previous designation as a Voluntary Controlled or Voluntary Aided school.

3. Aims

The broad aims of religious education (RE) are set out within the locally agreed syllabus and the Church of England Education Office Statement of Entitlement (2019). The purpose of religious education in all of our schools is to promote religious literacy. By this we mean that pupils are able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. In addition, they are able to understand that their views may differ from others.

The aims of religious education are to enable pupils to:

- know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs.
- gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldview appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose 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.
- explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

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4. Broad and Balanced Curriculum

The curriculum for RE is designed to ensure religious literacy lies at the heart. A multi-disciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy and human/social sciences.

Theology:

Examining where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.

Philosophy:

Finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge and existence.

Human/Social Sciences:

Explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities and societies.

These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

In accordance with the structure of the Locally Agreed Syllabus we have agreed that:

- At KS2 pupils study primarily Christianity / Islam / Judaism with reference made to other principal religions, beliefs and worldviews.

These choices have been made to reflect our local context. The majority of our children come from white British backgrounds and the children do not encounter many different cultures in their day to day lives. We considered the portrayal of some other religions and cultures and we wanted to make sure the children understood the beliefs and practices of those religions in order to build their own knowledge and understanding. The range of regions that we study contribute to our wider understanding of other faiths and how we can learn from those other faiths through comparison with Christianity.

In accordance with the Statement of Entitlement (2019) at least 50% of curriculum time in each year group is allocated to the teaching of Christianity.

5. Teaching RE

Religious Education uses an enquiry –based approach to learning. This approach enables pupils to focus on an enquiry question, which explores aspects of the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences. A range of teaching strategies are used to ensure learning is challenging and relevant including the use of art, music, drama, thinking skills, artefacts and stories.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

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6. Assessment for RE

Pupils are assessed in terms of how they are making progress in relation to the theological, philosophical and human/social sciences disciplines within RE. In broad terms the following principles have been applied to each aspect in terms of what it means to become more religiously literate:

- Extending knowledge and understanding from the concrete and familiar to the abstract and complex
- Moving from simple ideas and beliefs/concepts to making connections between them and placing these within a bigger picture
- Demonstrating increasing layers of interpretation of religion, religions, beliefs and worldviews through engagement with a broadening and increasingly complex range of information.
- Showing an increasing ability to critically question and form coherent, logical arguments, including increasing recognition of divergences of opinion about and the controversial nature of religion and belief
- Expressing a broadening understanding of diversity in terms of the nature of religion, religions and worldviews.

Pupils are assessed using age-related expectations which are common across Vine academies. This is done in a variety of ways e.g. through written activities, role play, art work, discussion. Progress is tracked carefully.

Assessment is regarded as an integral part of teaching and learning and is a continuous process. It is the responsibility of the class teacher to assess all pupils in their class. We assess the children in order to ensure that they make good progress in this subject and to plan future work.

In addition, pupils are encouraged to use self-assessment to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding. A comment about their progress is made in the annual report to parents.

7. Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE Subject Leader/ SLT monitor provision and standards through observation, looking at work, analysing data, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff.

The Local Schools Board (LSB) monitor the role of religious education and its contribution to the Christian ethos of the school.

8. Responsibilities for RE

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the LSB/ Head Teacher / Head of School should make sure that:

- All pupils make progress in achieving the aims of the RE curriculum
- The subject is well led and effectively managed
- Standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- Those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject, having regular opportunities for CPD
- Clear information is provided on the school website about the RE curriculum
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetables so that the academy can fulfill its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress

9. Role of the RE Subject Leader

- To ensure that the policy is implemented and to keep up to date with reviews.

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- To have oversight of the RE curriculum and keep up to date with local and national changes.
- To monitor, review and update resources.
- To monitor pupil progress and achievement.
- To maintain and build priorities set by the VST.
- To develop links with the Church and Diocese.
- To coach, mentor and support teachers in developing their strengths in teaching RE, including planning, arranging and delivering CPD as appropriate.

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

VST schools are inclusive communities but recognise that parents and carers have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education on the grounds of conscience. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

We ask any parent/carer considering this to contact the Head Teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision, and practice of religious education.

10. Managing the right of withdrawal

- VST schools will ensure that parents/carers who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents/carers are made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- VST schools may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parent/carer.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents/carers, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need to be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents and carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents/carers can make an informed decision.
- Where parents/carers have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will discuss the arrangements with the parents/ carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.
- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent/carer would like the pupil to receive. This RE could be provided at the school in question, or the pupil could go to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.
- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupils with the kind of RE the parent/carer would like, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that an interference with the pupil's attendance at a school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

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11. Entitlement and Inclusion

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum at an appropriate level. Teachers should include a range of teaching styles and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child should be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self-esteem.

12. Resources

Schools provide a range of up to date and quality resources appropriate to delivering high quality RE and their curriculum design.

13. Professional Development

Whole staff and individual training needs will be identified through the school's self-evaluation process and staff appraisal.

14. The contribution RE makes to other curriculum areas

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78(1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Examining and exploring religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution promoting community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at each of these four levels.

15.Monitoring and Review

The implementation and impact of the policy will be evaluated through the self-evaluation processes. The policy will be reviewed every two years.

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16.Appendices

Theology
Philosophy
Human/Social Sciences

Enquiry Questions

	Jewish beliefs	Christianity world views	Christianity, Islam and world views.	Christianity	Islam and world views
	Practises (concept)	Creation (concept)	scripture (concept)	Salvation and Incarnation (concept)	Moral decisions /choices (concept)
Year 3	What special objects do some Jewish people have in their homes?	What do Christians learn from the creation story?	How do different Christian denominations worship? (links to how other faiths worship)	Who was Jesus? Or What do Christians believe about Jesus? (Christmas unit) (links to other religions)	How do people make moral decisions? (links to other religions- bigger focus on Islam)
Year 4	What are the festivals and meanings associated with Jewish beliefs?	What are the links between the Christian creation story and other religions? (links to other religions- bigger focus on Islam)	How is Christianity a living faith around the world? (links to other religions)	How do the parables teach us to live our lives?	What can we learn about the meaning of existence from the Quran? (links to other religions)
Year 5	How do the 613 mitzvot guide Jewish people?	How do Christians explain the suffering in the world? (the fall)	What would it mean to be a Islamic woman of faith? (links to other religions- focus on Islam)	What differences does the resur-rection make for Christians? (Salvation)	How do different groups contribute to society and culture in the local area? (links to other religions)
Year 6	What is the role of the Synagogue and Cheder in the Jewish community? (links to role of the Mosque)	Creation and Science: conflicting or complementary?	What do the Psalms teach us about faith in God?	Is it just Christians that should follow Jesus's teachings of love and forgiveness?	What does it mean to be human? (links to WWII teaching of Holocaust)

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