

Copthorne C.E. Junior School

Religious Education Policy

Approved July 2025

To be reviewed July 2027

Our Vision

“Creating confident, curious learners with God’s love”

We, at Copthorne C.E Junior School, believe that every child and adult is unique. With God’s love, we grow and learn together, encouraging everyone in our school family to “let their light shine” (Matthew 5:16). We strive to be the best that we can be, knowing that “what will be has not yet been revealed” (1John 3:2). Through our Christian values, we flourish as one inclusive community. Our children move on to the next phase of their education with a lifelong love of learning and a compassionate and considerate approach to life.

Our Ethos

The ethos of Copthorne Junior School is to work together to extend Jesus’ model of the Kingdom of God on earth, by living out a lifestyle through the Christian values and according to His teaching. We are inspired by His message, His life and example through which God’s unconditional love for all people is expressed. Recognising our historic foundation, we seek to preserve and develop the religious character of our school in accordance with the principles of the Church of England and in close partnership with the local parish church and Chichester Diocese.

The school aims to serve its community by providing an education of the highest quality within the context of our Christian beliefs and practices. Inspired by these values we aim to provide an exciting, fun and stimulating environment, where all children feel happy, safe, and motivated to achieve greater things. We celebrate academic achievement as well as success in the arts and encourage our children to do the very best they can, to be unafraid to question and challenge, and to learn to solve problems creatively.

Our Values

At Copthorne Junior School we believe that our Christian values can be both the driver and the vehicle for our school improvement. Our values are rooted in the biblical message of God’s love for us and how we in turn grow in our own expression of our own love for Him and for each other. *“We love because He loves us first” (1 John 4:19)*. In working out the message of God’s love, our school values are:

COURAGE, CREATIVITY, CONFIDENCE, COMPASSION and CURIOSITY

Introduction

At Copthorne CE Junior School, Religious Education (RE) plays an important role in defining the school’s distinctive Christian character and achieving the vision. The subject is central to the school’s understanding of education. As a school we recognise that spiritual development lies at the heart of the curriculum.

Religious Education provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human. It develops pupils’ knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, other religious traditions and other world views that offer answers to questions such as these. It enhances pupils’ awareness and understanding of religions and beliefs, teachings, practices and forms of expression, as well as of the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.

Aims

- To help children learn and achieve, alongside their own personal development;
- To enable pupils to learn about the other major religions, their impact on culture and politics, art and history, and on the lives of their adherents;

- To give children opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of human experience and fundamental questions of human life, relating these to the beliefs, values and practices of believers, and others;
- To use their learning to develop their own beliefs, values and worldviews.

General Principles

As a voluntary controlled Church of England school, we place a great emphasis on the importance of RE as contributing to the development of the whole person by:

- Helping pupils consider important questions about the meaning and purpose of existence;
- Considering the range and depth of human experiences; considering what is ultimately worthwhile and valuable in life.
- Developing children's social and moral conscience to form positive relationships within the community and take personal actions to improve their own lives and the lives of others.

These questions are important for all people, whether they adhere to a particular religion or not.

RE is a subject that aids the development of individual pupils by:

- Increasing pupils' awareness of the spiritual dimension of human life;
- Learning that people respond to spiritual questions and experiences in many different ways, both religious and non-religious;
- Challenging the different answers offered by believers and others;
- Developing a reflective capacity, empathetic understanding, philosophical and evaluative thinking skills;
- Gaining awareness that people express beliefs and ideas about God, human beings and the world in a variety of ways e.g. symbols, expressive arts and traditions;
- Helping pupils to understand that a person's background influences the way they think, feel, believe, act and express themselves;
- Affirming religious and cultural diversity in the context of West Sussex, Britain and the rest of the world – this is vital to foster global citizenship, e.g. to help our children understand and actively engage in local and national projects;
- Encouraging pupils to develop their own beliefs, values and sense of self-worth and to examine rights and responsibilities in human society;
- Helping pupils to explore human experience in relation to faith and the religious traditions and practices which have helped to shape western civilisation and the civilisation of others.

Teaching and Learning

We follow the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education (2020-25) and the Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office. We have decided to base our programme of study on 'The Emmanuel Project', supplemented by 'Understanding Christianity'. These resources include Christianity and other world faiths and beliefs. As a result, pupils will gain greater insight into the world in which they are growing up. They will also be able to appreciate the faith, beliefs and practices of others and develop a deeper understanding of their own. We aim for these outcomes to contribute to harmonious relationships within and between communities, promoting social inclusion and combating prejudice.

Our curriculum offers a challenging enquiry approach to RE with 'big questions' and a clear progression of knowledge and skills. Each unit offers pupils opportunities to creatively engage, enquire, explore, evaluate and express their understanding of a religious key concept through the following areas:

- Text or Narrative
- Community Practice
- Living

The focus on the areas above, plus the central line of enquiry approach, ensures that the five key syllabus themes contained within the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus for RE are fully addressed.

Our RE curriculum encompass a wide range of teaching and learning experiences, which might include:

- Sharing feelings, ideas, experiences and opinions;
- Opportunities for reflection;
- Discussing, debating and shaping an argument;
- First hand contact with members of faith communities;
- Educational visits off site
- Exploration of a range of stories/ literature;
- Responding to other people's imaginative expressions and expressing their own through different art forms;
- Using their senses to explore aspects of religious belief and practice;
- Stimulating resources e.g. books, pictures, visits, computing, film/video;
- Making connections between their learning in RE and other subject areas, and with experiences, questions and issues in life.

Spirituality

Opportunities are available for all to develop spirituality inspired by our vision and lived out values. The spiritual well-being of learners are developed in RE lessons as well as in everyday school life. Times are planned to reflect on the wows of life, such as the beauty and joy of the world, as well as time to reflect and empathise with the ow moments of disappointment or pain.

Learning activities in RE provide for the needs of all children, offering a safe place to explore their own religious, spiritual and or philosophical way of seeing, living, thinking, believing and belonging. The children are supported to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of all religions and world views and linking these to their ideas of spirituality.

Recording of Learning

Learning, efforts and contributions made by the children in RE lessons will be recorded in different ways. For example:

- Photographs may be taken of role play or practical activities and placed in children's RE books along with a pupil reflection about their learning;
- Artefacts and children's work may be displayed around the school and photographs taken to record such displays;
- Videos;
- Class mind maps;
- An RE book is used to record different aspects of RE learning through a variety of ways including written and artwork;
- Written, drawn or verbal reflections;
- Some children may have some of their thoughts and reflections scribed by an adult.

Curriculum Time Allocation

RE is timetabled for one hour per school week as well as an additional 6-8 hours of blocked teaching in exciting and engaging whole school 'RE Weeks' to ensure full coverage and deeper learning. This meets the expected standards of the West Sussex Agreed Syllabus for RE and the Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office.

RE also has close links with Collective Worship, pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) development and our RSHE curriculum (see relevant policies). The aim is to allow children to explore RE and spiritual thinking across the curriculum and not just in discrete RE sessions.

Inclusion

When planning for RE, as with any subject, teachers will adapt to meet the needs of individual children within their class to ensure they have the same opportunities, experiences and successes as their peers. We provide adaptations for our SEND, EAL and disadvantaged pupils in several ways, including:

- Providing supportive resources that scaffold;
- Adapted materials with additional visual support or reduced text as appropriate;
- Using IT to such as Clicker and iPads support children's recording;
- Mixed ability pairing/grouping;
- Class teacher support;
- Enlisting the help of additional adults, where possible, to support.

Equal Opportunities

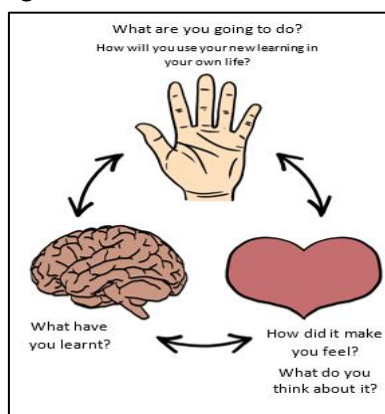
In keeping with the school's aims for equal opportunities, our teaching of RE endeavours to ensure that all pupils receive equal access to educational opportunities, regardless of their beliefs, gender, race, ability, social background or physical capacity. Care is taken in RE to avoid the reinforcement of negative or stereotypical images. Our curriculum aims to celebrate and appreciate cultural diversity through a variety of materials and experiences, in order to reflect the cultural diversities of our society and to encourage our children to be respectful, tolerant and compassionate members of wider communities.

Assessment and Reporting

The key approach to assessing children's attainment and progress in RE is through capturing pupil voice and evidence of knowledge and application of skills demonstrated in lessons in response to enquiry, exploration and experience. Parents are provided with information on their children's progress in RE via parent consultations and the Annual School Report at the end of each academic year.

The assessment of RE is closely linked to the quality of the planning. It is important, as in all subjects, to have:

- A key unit question;
- A focussed 'WALT' title for the lesson with clear steps to success that are shared/developed with the children;
- Knowledge of how each lesson will build on previous learning and prepare pupils for future learning, providing challenge, adaptation and support, where needed;
- Awareness of where there are opportunities to link, and make connections, with other religions and areas of the curriculum;
- Evaluated the work/unit covered in order to make further improvements;
- Marking/feedback that can be used as an assessment tool;
- Each unit of learning to start with children completing a 'What I already know' activity and ending with a 'Head, Heart, Hands' reflection activity that demonstrates what they have learnt, how they think/feel about it in relation to their own beliefs and worldview, and how they will use their new learning in their own lives to take positive actions (see diagram below).



Withdrawal from RE Learning

Parents may request that their child is withdrawn from all or part of RE. Where parents are wishing to exercise this right, the Governing Body would first suggest that the parents meet with the Headteacher to discuss their concerns. If the matter cannot be resolved, parents need to apply to the Governing Body in writing to withdraw their child from RE lessons. The Governing Body will make arrangements with the Headteacher for the children to be supervised or engaged in another activity during this time.