

**Edwinstree Middle School**  
A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School



## **Religious Education Policy**

<b>Date of Issue:</b>	<b>May 2017</b>
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<b>Governors Committee:</b>	<b>Full Governing Body</b>

# **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN COMMUNITY, FOUNDATION AND VOLUNTARY CONTROLLED SCHOOLS**

## **BACKGROUND TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AT OUR SCHOOL**

Religious Education is a core subject at Edwinstree and is taught in one hour blocks of time per week. As a faith school we welcomed the new curriculum and underpinning principles that RE should provide an in depth study of religious sources of wisdom and their impact whilst exploring their own personal and critical response. We are currently following the new Understanding Christianity national pack as the foundation for our curriculum. Our students are exploring in depth the key Christian concepts and using the bible to source an understanding and meaning to Christian values.

The New Hertfordshire RE syllabus was launched in May and our assessment and schemes will be tracked alongside this to ensure we cover the agreed syllabus in key stage 2 and key stage 3. At Edwinstree we will map the coverage of the 6 religions in conjunction with our partner schools. We will explore in depth the religions of Judaism and Islam alongside Christianity. We look forward to the Understanding Islam release.

We have recently identified Edwinstree Christian values of Koinonia, Trust, Creation, Reverence, Wisdom, Humility, Service, Friendship, Thankfulness, Endurance, Compassion, Peace, Forgiveness, Justice and Hope. These values will be explored in the four years that students attend the school. Each subject has identified the values that they explore in their areas of study. These will then be mapped in detail on term by term basis across the curriculum and explored in depth. Our Collective Worship calendar identifies the themes to explore on a half termly basis and the values that we will be considering for that half term. Over a period of 4 years at the school students will have covered all the themes in collective worship as well as exploring them in the various subject areas.

Families who send their children to this school are either 'nominally' Christian or from predominantly from non-religious backgrounds. There is a very small proportion of students from other faith backgrounds, including Hindu, Muslim, Jewish etc., some children are from practising Christian families, RE is concerned with "learning about religion" and "understanding it's impact on our lives and the way we see the world." and it is not the practice of this school to preach to or convert the children. But to explore what religion can bring to us and the values that are held dear within it. The faith background of both the staff and child's family is respected at all times.

Parents remain with the right to withdraw their children from religious education (RE) at Edwinstree. If a parent asks for their child to be wholly or partly excused from attending any RE the school must comply unless the request is withdrawn. Any parent who wishes this may consult the head teacher. Teachers may also withdraw from the teaching of RE). We currently have no parents or staff requesting a with-drawal as of May 2017.

### **A. VALUES AND AIMS**

We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens what we aim to do in every aspect of school life. We are determined to use our faith to support each individual child to flourish and encourage our students to live life in all its fullness. Our values of compassion and service support us to store great worth in the necessity to support each

child to be the best individual they can and develop; spiritually, morally, socially, culturally and intellectually.

Specifically, RE at our school aims to enable students of whatever ability and level of development to:

### **Understand all Sources of Wisdom and their impact as all students should:**

- Know, understand and explore the significance and impact of sacred texts, and other sources of wisdom and their ways of expressing meaning.
- Express their ideas and insights about the nature of beliefs, values and practices and their impact on the identity of individuals and communities.
- Recognise and explore the diversity which exists within and between religious traditions.

### **Understand and reflect on their own and others personal and critical responses. All students should:**

- Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections, critical responses and connections to faith and belief enquiring into philosophical, moral and ethical issues.
- Engage with the questions and answers offered by religions and worldviews concerning ultimate questions and human responsibility.
- Develop the skills required to engage with others in dialogue and to cooperate in society with respect and compassion.

## **B. OBJECTIVES**

### **Learning**

Religious Education at Edwinstree will provide students with a systematic knowledge and understanding about Christianity, Islam and Judaism (please note the other principal religions are covered at our partner schools) and world views which give value to life. RE aims to enable students to become religiously and theologically literate in their learning so that they can engage in life in an increasingly diverse society. It is not telling students what religious views they should have but rather assisting them in shared human understanding, developing their personal identity and searching for meaning in the context of evaluating different view- points.

Re offers distinctive and valid opportunities to promote student's interdisciplinary learning and spiritual, moral, and cultural development. It contributes to development of beliefs and values and to schools' "Prevent" duty to combat extremism. Dedicated RE lessons, in partnership with whole school approaches, should allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, including phenomena resulting in humanitarian responses whether local, national, or global.

### **Assessment, recording and reporting**

There are now eight key areas of learning which enable Edwinstree students to develop knowledge and understanding of sources of wisdom and their impact whilst exploring personal and critical responses. Developing religious and theological literacy through religions and world views permeates all areas of the programmes of study. The following eight key areas of RE are:

- Belief and practices
- Sources of Wisdom
- Symbols and actions
- Prayer, worship and reflection,
- Identity and belonging
- Ultimate questions
- Human responsibility and values
- Justice and fairness.

**Progress made by students is recognised as not being linear, therefore schools are not expected to follow the eight key areas of RE described in particular order.**

Each of the eight key areas of learning has agreed statements that should be met within each key stage. (Please refer to Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus for Education 2017 – 2022) they drive student's development in becoming religiously and theologically literate. Within each key stage students are tracked to identify whether they are above, below or at expected age related level using part or all of these statements.

Learning outcome statements are provided for each key stage and will now be used to provide an ongoing assessment of learning and how we report to parents.

At the end of key stage 2 the religiously and theologically literate student should;  
Connect their knowledge and understanding of some religions and worldviews, reflecting on these, using specific religious vocabulary. Analyse different viewpoints within and between religions and beliefs. Understand the impact of faith on believers within local, national and global context. Demonstrate respect and compassion responding to diverse points of view about belonging, meaning and truth. Explore shared human responsibility and values through enquiry and experience and express personal reflections with increasing curiosity. Identify the importance of moral choices, selecting examples of giving and reasoning to support their ideas.

At the end of Key Stage 3, the religiously and theologically literate student should;  
Use a range of increasingly complex religious, moral and philosophical vocabulary to demonstrate the ability to understand and explain a range of religious and worldviews, recognising their local national and global context. Use this knowledge to analyse, synthesise personal and critical responses to a range of different issues in order to form coherent, well-argued conclusions. Challenge arguments about the meaning of religion and spirituality and suggest reasons relating to the search for the truth.

Since training in May, we have embarked on our new schemes of work and will trial an assessment system this term that identifies which of the eight key areas we will be assessing at above, below or at age related. We will undertake moderation exercises to ensure that we are familiar with the statements and what they mean in the context of a student's work.

School reports are sent home in the summer term of each year and the RE report will from 2018 make reference to the end of key stage RE statements.

## **TIME ALLOCATION**

In line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2017 - 2022 we plan for RE will be delivered in one hour periods a week throughout the year. This meets both the requirement of key stage 2 156 hours over 4 years and key stage 3 36 hours per year. This does not include Collective Worship time which is separate – please see our Collective Worship policy May 2017.

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## **PLANNING**

In order to ensure that our aims are met and the Programme of Study is covered at each key stage the school follows the Hertfordshire Agreed syllabus and a scheme of work is provided for each teacher, which incorporates the Understanding Christianity pack planning and resources and will when produced incorporate the Understanding Islam pack. Our scheme gives examples of how to explore and navigate the pack. It also outlines the opportunities for using and assessing the 8 areas of learning.

Short term planning to adapt our scheme of work to the individual needs of their classes is the work of the classroom teacher. The RE Subject Leader is available to help with this and keeps a range of teacher's resources as a guide. (When planning each unit of work the teacher will identify which parts of the programme of study is to be the focus, the learning objectives for the unit, the learning tasks planned to achieve them, time allocated and any resources, visits or visitors needed. The work planned must be relevant to the needs of the students). This will all be placed in our scheme of work.

## **CROSS CURRICULAR ISSUES**

RE teaching and learning will be the means to many wider cross-curricular themes and dimensions.

There are clearly very special opportunities to explore multicultural and equal opportunities issues and for consideration of the environment. Moral questions will be raised and students will develop their personal, social, cultural and emotional development. Understanding the world is developed through this learning. Links will be made with people and communities within the locality.

Expressive arts and design are explored in developing personal and critical responses to each wisdom.

Children's skills in oracy and literacy are enhanced. In particular their ability to read, understand, interpret and contextualised text will be explored in depth.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The RE subject leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders.

There is a yearly staff meeting on RE where key leads discuss; areas for development. RE is discussed every two weeks in subject leader meetings and books shared and monitored to support shared learning. This policy is reviewed at that annual meeting to ensure it still represents the values and practice of the school.