

## Flourish

*The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever. Isaiah 32:17*

# Edwinstree Middle School

A Voluntary Controlled Church of England School



## Religious Education Policy

<b>Date of Issue:</b>	<b>Feb 2025</b>
<b>Review Date:</b>	<b>Feb 2026</b>

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# 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.

The Church of England's statement of Entitlement: *"Religious education in a Church school 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" ...* is embedded within Edwinstree's vision *"At Edwinstree, we recognise the unique and wonderful in everyone. As a community we support one another to flourish and live life in all its' fullness"*.

RE is part of the community that both upholds this vision and contributes to it being the lived heartbeat of Edwinstree.

The Siam's structure of the three-legged stool grounded our curriculum in exploring the believing, thinking, living approach. This was underpinned by the worldview approach.

Pupils experience a curriculum that deeply explores Christianity and the diversity within through a range of considered resources such as Understanding Christianity. They look at several other worldviews, including atheistic, alongside this. Pupils are consistently questioned and engage in meaningful dialogue on philosophical, ethical and theological matters.

As a VC school Edwinstree follows the Hertfordshire syllabus:

A. Sources of wisdom from religions and worldviews and their impact:

- know, understand and explore the significance and impact of sacred texts, other sources of wisdom and ways of expressing meaning
  - express ideas and insights about the nature of beliefs, values and practices and their impact on the identity of individuals and communities locally, nationally and globally
- recognise and explore similarities and differences which exist within and between religious and non-religious worldviews

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B. Personal and critical responses to religion and worldviews:

- express with increasing discernment their personal reflections, critical responses and connections to faith and belief enquiring into and responding to spiritual, philosophical, moral and ethical issues
- engage with the questions and responses 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

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, currently Islam and Buddhism. 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 always respected.

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 withdrawal from lessons.

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

We chose our biblical quote referencing the need for children to flourish and helping them to seek righteousness, the ability to find meaning and act in accordance with divine and or moral truths within their lives. RE provides the opportunity for students to learn and reflect. We have identified Edwinstree Christian values of Reverence, Trust, Humility and Peace as deeply embedded in the learning in RE.

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We believe at this school that RE both supports and strengthens 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:

- deeply explore Christianity and the diversity within
- consider other worldviews, including atheistic
- engage in meaningful dialogue on philosophical, ethical and theological matters.
- provide opportunities to grow into free thinking, critically aware and compassionate young adults
- consider challenging issues and embrace life in all its fullness (Problem of Evil game / Y7 women in church / Treatment of Black Jesus painting / Holocaust and Islamophobia / Y5 Ramadan in football)
- study the 6 main world religions and non-religious worldviews and gain a real breadth of knowledge and understanding.
- examine these beliefs, looking at denominational divides and collaboration.

**As part of the HERTS syllabus: Our students are required to understand 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.

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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 deep understanding of Christianity, alongside the main other worldviews, including atheistic. 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.

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### **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 2023) 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

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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 2023, we have embarked on our new schemes of work and have used an assessment system that reflects these key skills. We are constantly monitoring and adapting to ensure pupils are being accurately assessed with help of our Governing body and Hertfordshire and the Church of England advisory service.

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

### **TIME ALLOCATION**

In line with the requirements of the Hertfordshire Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education 2023 - 2028 we plan to 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 December 2022.

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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.

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. Their ability to read, understand, interpret and contextualise text will be explored in depth.

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### **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The RE subject leader manages this area of the curriculum in line with our job description for subject leaders. The RE Lead is supported and managed themselves by Deputy of Teaching and Learning.

The RE Lead supports those in their team through termly learning walks, meetings, assessment reviews and meetings.

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