Religious Education (RE) Policy for Taverham VC CE Junior School

As a Church of England school, we see it as our duty to give children and members of the school community the skills to maximise their engagement with the world around them, enable them to grow spiritually, emotionally and personally, and develop the character and values which will serve them well in future life and support success.

Formally adopted by the Governing Board/ Trust of:-	Taverham VC CE Junior School
On:-	11th May 2026
Chair of Governors:-	Dave Filby
Next Review:-	May 2029

Aims and Objectives

'Religious education is primarily about enabling pupils to become free thinking, critical participants of public discourse, who can make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief which shape the global landscape' (Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019).[1]

RE aims to broaden children's awareness, understanding and tolerance of different belief systems, cultures and lifestyles worldwide, and to encourage and develop in pupils the skills required to interact peacefully with others they will meet in this changing world, who believe, think and live differently. Our intent is to provide pupils with the opportunities to explore some of the key ideas and concepts of major religions and worldviews in a safe environment, investigating and reflecting upon religious values and questions within the three disciplines of RE – theology (believing), philosophy (thinking) and human and social sciences (living).[2] Within these three disciplines, we assess a variety of skills as well as comprehension of core concepts and personal knowledge over time – as laid out by the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019 (Revised 2026).

At Taverham VC CE Junior School, we develop pupils' knowledge of Christianity, its values and its impact on citizens around the world while also investigating key concepts in other major religions and worldviews. We address fundamental questions concerning, for example, life as a journey, the existence of a creator deity and life after death. RE units, which are taught half-termly, follow an enquiry-based process of learning based around a Big Question to enable children to engage with and explore a range of key concepts and subject knowledge. To broaden their understanding, we use resources such as artefacts, analyse holy texts and explore the impact of an idea on people's lifestyles worldwide – as well as making connections between the texts and real life and considering different interpretations, developing critical thinking while questioning whether a belief or idea is rational or reasonable. We enable children to develop a sound knowledge of Christianity as well as other world religions, and through this we intend to develop within pupils respect and tolerance for other people worldwide. Children reflect on what it means to have a faith and to develop their own spiritual knowledge and understanding. We help pupils learn *from* religions as well as *about* religions.

As a Church of England School, we believe that all children, whether they have a faith or not and whatever their background or culture, deserve a rich, broad and balanced RE curriculum with engaging opportunities to develop all pupils' becoming moral, social, spiritual, confident and aware individuals. We base our curriculum design on the research of four diocesan RE advisers — Jane Chipperton (Diocese of St Albans), Gillian Georgiou (Diocese of Lincoln), Olivia Seymour (Diocese of York) and Kathryn Wright (Diocese of Norwich) – who developed the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for RE that '[enables] pupils to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief. Implicit within this is the study of a range of religions, belief systems and worldviews.'[3]

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[1] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NTW2bsFTLY

[2] https://www.dioceseofnorwich.org/schools/siams-re-collective-worship/religious-education/age-related expectations

[3] Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019

The Aims of the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019 (and therefore of Taverham VC CE Junior School)

- To know about and understand a range of religious and non-religious worldviews by learning to see these through theological, philosophical and human/social science disciplines (sometimes called 'lenses').
- To express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religious and non-religious worldviews through a multidisciplinary approach.
- To gain and deploy skills rooted in theology, philosophy and the human/social sciences engaging critically with religious and non-religious worldviews.[4]
- Further objectives of teaching religious education in our school are to help children:
- develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity, and other major religions (Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Humanism)
- develop an awareness of spiritual and moral issues arising in their lives;
- develop knowledge and understanding of major world religions and value systems found in Britain (and across the world);
- develop an understanding of what it means to be committed to a religious tradition;
- be able to reflect on their own experiences and to develop a personal response to the fundamental questions of life (class Big Question);
- develop an understanding of religious traditions and appreciate the cultural differences in Britain (and across the world) today;
- develop investigative and research skills, and make reasoned judgements about religious issues;
- have respect for other people's views, and celebrate the diversity in society;
- develop our Vision as a school, 'learning for a fuller life' (John: Chapter 10 Verse 10).

Extract From Our Vision as a School

In adopting 'Learning for a fuller life', we want all children at Taverham VC Church of England Junior School to become:

- **Successful and happy individuals**, who participate fully, enjoy learning, make progress and achieve;
- **Confident and resilient young people** who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives;
- **Responsible citizens** who make a positive contribution to society, locally, nationally and globally;
- **Caring, respectful and tolerant** members of their community;
- **Reflective individuals**, with a strong spiritual and moral awareness.

[4] These aims are based on those found in The Non-Statutory National Framework for RE (2013)

The legal position of religious education

Taverham VC CE Junior School's religious education curriculum is set within the broader intent of the whole school curriculum and is based on the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for RE (2019): it meets all the requirements set out in that document. To this end:

- RE is provided for all registered pupils in full time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request (see below). In junior school, this is a requirement for all children in Years 3 through 6.
- RE is taught in accordance with the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus, with Christian values at the heart of all we do.[5]
- Along with the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus, we reflect the fact 'that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'. [1996 Act, Ch 56 S375 (3).]
- Teaching of RE helps to promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils at the school and of society.
- RE helps to prepare pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life.

Our school RE curriculum meets the requirements of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) and the 1996 Education and 1998 Schools Standards and Framework Act. The ERA stipulates that religious education is compulsory for all children. The ERA allows parents to withdraw their child from religious education classes if they so wish, although only after they have given written notice to the school governors. The ERA also allows teachers to refuse to teach religious education, but only after they have given due notice of their intention to the school governors. The Religious Education curriculum forms an important part of our school's spiritual, moral and social teaching. It also promotes education for citizenship. The ERA states that the RE syllabus should reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, and that it should, at the same time, take account of the teachings and practices of other major religions.

Teaching and Learning Style

We base our teaching and learning style in RE on the guidelines and advice set out by the Diocese of Norwich and the Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019 (Revised 2026) and in line with SACRE, in order to encourage all pupils to become 'religiously literate.' Good teaching in RE focuses on the three disciplines (theology, philosophy and human and social sciences) and the skills assessed therein (see below), using the *Understanding Christianity* resource where appropriate. Please note that these skills are accessible and achievable by all pupils at the school, no matter the strength of their academic/ writing ability.

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[5] The Designation of Schools Having a Religious Character (England) Order 1999

By asking an interesting and relevant Big Question, the children's curiosity is fired. Within each year group, all pupils will have been given opportunities to develop in all areas within the three disciplines through learning specific subject knowledge, and will have explored a broad range of questions relating to Christianity and other main worldly religions and views over six RE units, one per half term.

By the end of each year, all pupils will have studied in depth multiple key concepts and beliefs within Christianity and another major world religion (Islam in Years 3 and 4; Hinduism in Years 5 and 6), whilst also comparing values and ideas between other major religions and world views as are relevant; RE units are enquiry-based and encourage pupils to discuss key religious ideas along with their own in a safe classroom environment. By the end of Year 6, all pupils will have investigated twenty-four Big Questions, developed their personal knowledge and a sense of their own position – where they feel they themselves fit into the bigger picture.

All pupils will have questioned and revisited all ten strands within the three core disciplines (theology, philosophy and human and social sciences) multiple times, so developing and consolidating their religious literacy.

RE in Taverham VC Junior School ties in closely with our policy of Collective Worship and with the school's Christian Ethos. Every class visits the local church twice a year as part of an RE day/week exploring Christianity; we also invite representatives of local religious groups to come into school and talk to the children, and organise RE trips when possible. Pupils investigate religious and moral issues individually, in groups and as a class. As in the teaching of other subjects, we recognise the importance of differentiating to suit all needs and abilities of the pupils we teach. We provide all pupils with choices and opportunities to develop their skills in other areas of the curriculum. We achieve this in a variety of ways, for example, by:

- clearly outlining the three or four Age-Related Expectations that are the goals of that specific RE Day/Week, using language pupils in that year group will understand;
- setting tasks which are open-ended and can have a variety of responses;
- setting tasks of increasing difficulty and depth;
- providing resources of different complexity, adapted to the ability of the child;
- inviting pupils to ask questions and follow their own trains of interest;
- allowing children to research certain areas thus working at their own pace and ability.

<u>Curriculum planning in Religious Education</u>

At our school, we plan the RE curriculum in accordance with Norfolk Agreed Syllabus for RE 2019 – and Revised edition in 2026 – in alliance with the Diocese of Norwich and SACRE. We ensure that Big Questions, themes, concepts and topics studied in religious education are relevant to the world we live in and build on prior learning. We offer opportunities for children of all abilities to develop their religious literacy, awareness of the world and cross-curricular skills during each RE unit, and each subsequent enquiry offers pupils increasing challenge as they move through the school. Big

Questions, key concepts and methods of assessing pupils have been agreed by all teachers including the head teacher, guided by the RE Leader and the Norwich Diocese.

Contribution of RE to the teaching in other curriculum areas

English

Religious education contributes significantly to the teaching of English in our school by actively promoting the skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening, as it regularly involves discussions about new ideas or concepts. Most RE units include some kind of textual analysis, whether that means interpreting an excerpt from a holy text, annotating Christian symbols or researching important historical figures. Pupils' religious literacy is assessed mostly through discussion, explanation of key vocabulary or short pieces of writing. Some RE units also provide pupils with opportunities to examine texts written in other languages and/or alphabets (eg Islamic text) and to try writing in other forms themselves.

Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship

'Religious education is primarily about enabling pupils to become free thinking, critical participants of public discourse, who can make academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief which shape the global landscape' (Norfolk Agreed Syllabus 2019).[6] At Taverham VC CE Junior School, we make pupils aware of a wide range of situations and lifestyles and encourage every child to consider the values, emotions and choices of others, in order to develop their own moral compasses, to respect other people and to make positive decisions in the future. In religious education lessons, too, we teach pupils about the values and moral beliefs that underpin individual choices of behaviour. Because RE has such a prolific focus on what other people believe, what they think and how these impact on individuals, these subjects are intricately linked. We also promote the values and attitudes required for citizenship in a democracy by teaching respect for others and the need for personal responsibility. In general, by promoting tolerance and understanding of others, we enable children to appreciate what it means to be positive members of our pluralistic society.

Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

In Taverham VC CE Junior School, we wish to develop the 'whole child,' ensuring each child in our school is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged. We hope to develop spiritual, moral, social, cultural, mental and physical, ethical, self-respecting and confident individuals. Through religious education in our school we provide opportunities for development in all of these areas. For example, in terms of spiritual development, children consider and respond to questions concerning the meaning and purpose of life. We help them to recognise the difference between right and wrong, through the study of moral and ethical questions. We enhance their social development by helping them to build a sense of identity in a multicultural society. Children explore issues of religious faith and values and, in so doing, they develop their knowledge and understanding of the cultural context of their own lives.

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[6] https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6NTW2bsFTLY

RE and ICT

Information and communication technology enhances religious education, wherever appropriate, in all key stages. Opportunities to use ICT are in selecting and analysing relevant information using the Internet, and in the review, modification and evaluation of their work; also to improve presentation. Older children use ICT to research concepts they are not familiar with; younger children can take photographs of the class acting out a scene from the Bible on the school iPads.

RE and Inclusion

At Taverham VC CE Junior School, we teach religious education to all children, whatever their ability and individual needs; culture and background. It is 'not a faith school for Christians but a Christian school for all.' We celebrate diversity and actively promote respect, curiosity and open-mindedness. Our RE curriculum enables every child to explore a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, while feeling safe, valued and included, regardless of their personal beliefs or experiences. Religious education forms part of the school's curriculum policy that provides a broad and balanced education for all children. Through our religious education teaching we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive hard to meet the needs of those pupils with special educational needs, those with disabilities, and those learning English as an additional language, and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this.

Progress and Attainment

All RE units provide pupils with opportunities to develop their religious literacy through a few of the strands of the new assessment criteria encompassed by the three core disciplines of teaching and learning.

Key: Orange = believing (thinking); blue = thinking (philosophy); green = living (human and social science)

Ways of Assessing in RE

THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND
Diocese of Norwich

Lower KS2	Methods Ask questions and consider the best ways to find answers z use the methods from KS1 with awareness of (for example) organised teachings and individual lived experiences; historical/ contemporary contexts; ritual or artistic forms of expression z weigh up how sufficient sources are (e.g. one interview or six; one quote or an extended passage; one example or several) z recognise that people disagree, and some answers leave space for mystery and wonder. Standards Might ask questions about meaning and purpose in life, expressing their own ideas and saying where these ideas come from. They might explore how religious worldviews help some people make sense of life and affect how they live day to day. For example, they might talk to adherents about what it means to believe there is a God, or to believe in salvation, or submission, or karma and samsara – how these ideas can transform a person's life. They might examine some texts and stories that illustrate these big concepts and find out ways in which they are interpreted. They may reflect on the difference it makes to these interpretations if someone is an adherent or not, including pupils' own perspectives	• **Storytelling and Interpretation** *I can read and listen to religious stories and talk about what they might mean and why they are important to believers.* • **Symbolism** *I can recognise religious symbols and explain what they mean in different religions and situations.* • **Exploration of Beliefs** *I can talk about different religious beliefs and compare how they affect the way people live, pray, and show their faith.* • **Rituals and Practices** *I can describe religious practices and explain how they help people express their beliefs.* • **Sacred Texts** *I can read parts of sacred texts, talk about what they mean, and understand why they matter to people today.*	• **Questioning** *I can ask big questions about life, beliefs, and the world around me to help me understand more.* • **Discussion and Debate** *I can share my ideas and listen to others in discussions and debates, even when we don't agree.* • **Reasoning and Argumentation** *I can explain my thoughts clearly and give reasons for my opinions by making links between ideas.* • **Ethical Thinking** *I can think about what is right and wrong, fair and unfair, and talk about how people make good choices.* • **Reflection** *I can think about my own beliefs and experiences and how they help me understand other people and the world.*	• **Exploring Daily Life** *I can describe how people show their religion in everyday life through things like rituals, traditions, folk traditions, and customs.* • **Understanding Community** *I can explain how people come together in religious communities to worship, celebrate, and support each other.* • **Cultural Awareness** *I can learn about different religious festivals and special occasions and show respect for how people celebrate in different ways.* • **Role Models and Influences** *I can find out about important people in different religions and how they have helped shape beliefs and practices.* • **Interactive and Experiential Learning** *I can explore real-life examples, data, and events to help me understand more about different religions and beliefs around the world.* • **Data** *I can collect, collate, sort and compare information about religious beliefs, practices and festivals using tallies or bar charts.*

Upper KS2	Methods Recognise that different questions can fit with subject disciplines, including (for example) theology, philosophy, a social science, creative arts z become aware of basic assumptions of these (e.g. 'insider/ outsider' perspectives) z examine beliefs, teachings, ways of living with a range of methods (e.g. experiment, interview, qualitative and quantitative data) z basic evaluative methods (e.g. reliable methods/ sources/ findings; generalisable conclusions; coherence with tradition etc.) z recognise that some important questions leave space for mystery and paradox. Standards Might ask a question about the difference that context makes to one's worldview. For example, after thinking about their own context, they might use and interrogate data, interviews and visual images to examine the differences it makes to be a Muslim in a Muslim majority country (e.g. Indonesia) and a Muslim minority country (e.g. UK), including opportunities and challenges, and how these shape their lived experience – not just intellectual ideas. They might reflect on whether it is similar if someone is nonreligious (e.g. Humanist) in a secular society or a religious society. They might reflect on their own context again and consider how it influences their own worldviews.	• **Storytelling and Interpretation** *I can explore complex religious stories, understand their meanings, and explain how they teach moral and theological messages. I can also see how stories connect to form a bigger picture in a religion.* • **Symbolism** *I can recognise and explain the meaning of religious symbols and understand how they are used in different places and times to share deeper messages.* • **Exploration of Beliefs** *I can compare different religious beliefs and explain how they shape people's lives. I can talk about ideas like the nature of God and where religious authority comes from.* • **Rituals and Practices** *I can describe religious rituals and practices and explain how they help people express their beliefs in different ways.* • **Sacred Texts** *I can read and talk about passages from sacred texts, understand their background, and explain why they are still important to believers today.*	• **Questioning and Inquiry** *I can ask thoughtful and challenging questions about life, beliefs, and what is right or wrong to help me think more deeply.* • **Discussion and Debate** *I can share my ideas clearly, listen to others, and take part in respectful discussions and debates about different beliefs and opinions.* • **Logical Reasoning** *I can give reasons for my ideas and explain how they are connected. I can also think about whether arguments make sense.* • **Ethical Thinking** *I can think about difficult choices and talk about what is fair, just, and responsible, using examples from real life and religion.* • **Reflection and Self-Awareness** *I can reflect on my own beliefs and experiences and understand how they shape the way I see the world and other people.*	• **Exploring Daily Life** *I can explain how people live out their religion in everyday life through rituals, traditions, folk traditions and customs.* • **Understanding Community** *I can describe how religious communities come together to worship, celebrate, and support each other, and why this is important to them.* • **Cultural Awareness** *I can learn about and show respect for different religious festivals, ceremonies, and special occasions from around the world.* • **Role Models and Influences** *I can explore the lives of important religious figures, past and present, and explain how they influence the beliefs and actions of others.* • **Interactive and Experiential Learning** *I can take part in activities like visiting places of worship and meeting people from different religions to help me understand beliefs in real life.* • **Data** *I can collect, interpret and question information about religious beliefs, practices and festivals using tables, bar charts and pie charts.*

From September 2026, all pupils will have access to an RE Organiser in books that accompany them through the school. Put together by the RE Leader, these organisers will have on them an overview of the three disciplines of teaching and learning in RE and all six enquiry questions alongside child-friendly skills and core concept vocabulary appropriate for their year group. Teachers will use this document to assess pupils' development towards becoming 'religiously literate' and pupils will also be able to see how well they're doing in RE and what their next steps are. Teachers both observe and listen to pupils during lessons, read work and responses to subject knowledge-focused marking in books and speak to pupils to complete their assessment of pupils' progress and attainment.

Resources

We have sufficient resources in our school to be able to teach all our religious education teaching units, including 4 copies of the Qur'an (in English and Urdu); every child is given a Bible in Year 3. We

have a range of resources for religious education which we keep in a central store: there is a box of resources for each religion taught. There is a collection of religious artefacts which we use to enrich teaching in religious education. The *Understanding Christianity* resource created by the Norfolk Diocese is used during some RE units, as appropriate. The school library has a good supply of RE topic books and computer software to support the children's individual research. We also invite guests in from a variety of worldviews and backgrounds, share with them our enquiry to narrow their supplementation to pupil learning, and both welcome and visit the local church.

Monitoring and review

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for monitoring the standards of the children's work and the quality of the teaching in religious education. She is also responsible for supporting colleagues in their teaching, for being informed about current developments in the subject and for providing a strategic lead and direction for RE in the school. The subject leader presents the Headteacher with an annual report which evaluates strengths and weaknesses in the subject and indicates areas for further improvement. She has allocated time when required for undertaking tasks identified in the RE action plan.

This policy will be reviewed at least every three years.