

# Great Horwood Church of England School

## Religious Education Policy



This policy was reviewed: February 2026

Date of next review: February 2029

Signed: *Stuart Bayliss*

(Chair of Governors)



## **Our Vision**

**Jesus said: "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing." John 15:5**

### **Great Horwood Church of England School Ethos**

At Great Horwood Church of England School, the academic, emotional and spiritual well-being of the children is at the heart of all that we do; where everyone is valued. We are a safe, welcoming school within the heart of the village community that aims to provide all our children and adults with the learning opportunities to flourish, be healthy, grow in resilience and realise their full potential; being fully equipped and prepared for a successful future.

Inspired by Christian faith and rooted in the teachings, values and spiritual growth of the Church of England we embrace our core values of love, perseverance and respect where all individuals learn to value themselves and others.

We are committed to setting high standards of achievement within a caring and nurturing learning environment. We aim to provide opportunities for children to develop a curiosity for learning, a thirst for knowledge through play, and an exploration of the world around them.

### **Introduction**

Religious Education (RE) at Great Horwood Church of England School plays an important role in expressing the Christian vision of the school. RE reflects the ethos and values that are held and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and none. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

It provides our pupils with opportunities to study religions and relationships. The teaching of RE supports our school vision as children are enabled to better understand and respect the experiences, attitudes, beliefs, and practices of other principal religions represented in this country. Pupils are encouraged to develop a reflective approach to life and connect with themselves, others, the world and beyond. They are given opportunities to make connections to other areas of the curriculum and are encouraged to use their knowledge to form reasoned judgements about religious issues.

### **The Legal Position**

Every maintained school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents (see paragraph below). At Great Horwood CE School RE is therefore taught in accordance with the Buckinghamshire Locally Agreed Syllabus while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate the way that RE contributes to the Christian character of the school and the teaching of RE will reflect this requirement.

### **Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:**

- To foster a spiritual development in R.E. by encouraging children to flourish within our Christian vision and values of love, respect and perseverance.
- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To 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.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways of living, believing and thinking.
- To formulate reasoned opinion and argument.
- To enter into meaningful dialogue with people of different beliefs and backgrounds, appreciating and celebrating diversity, recognising what we hold in common, and respecting a shared humanity that can be experienced, expressed, and responded to in diverse ways.

### **Curriculum and Time Allocation**

The RE curriculum at Great Horwood CE School, follows the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Christianity is taught in every year group, with key concepts revisited on a spiral curriculum. At least 50% of the time is devoted to Christianity. Other religions are covered according to the syllabus; e.g. Judaism in Key Stage 1, Hinduism, Islam and Sikhism in Key Stage 2. The total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught in weekly dedicated lessons. The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship. In KS1 this will amount to approximately 36 hours per year; in KS2 this rises to 45 hours per year.

### **The Early Years Foundation Stage:**

The Early Learning Goals promote children's social and moral development inherent in our R.E. planning. The Foundation Stage children are also involved in all major Christian celebrations undertaken by the school throughout the year. Learning in RE is structured through the Early years foundation stage framework. And Teachers consider the pupils' own background, experiences and questions when planning for RE learning and spiritual development.

### **Core Questions:**

- Are all families the same? (World Views)
- Who are Christians and what do they believe? (Christianity)
- Does everyone believe in God? (World Views)
- Why is the word God so important to Christians?
- Who am I and where do I belong? (Christianity)
- What is the church and who goes there? (Christianity)
- What do people celebrate and why? (World Views)

## Key Stage 1

### Core Questions:

- How do Christians decide what is right?
- What do most Christians celebrate together?
- What does Torah mean for Jewish people?
- In what ways is the synagogue important to Jews?
- Why do most Christians call God 'creator'?
- How do people know how to behave?
- **What do different Jewish people believe about God?**
- How do Christians find out what God is like?
- What are the best reasons for following a leader?
- Why do many Christians meet together regularly and what do they do?
- How and why is Shabbat important to some Jewish people in Britain?
- What questions do stories in the Bible make us want to ask?

## Lower Key Stage 2

### Core Questions:

- How and why has Christian practice changed over time?
- Who do Christians believe Jesus is?
- What is the Qur'an and why do many Muslims try to learn it by heart?
- Does art help with understanding stories?
- How do Hindus understand who God is (Brahman)?
- Does it matter if a story is true or not?
- How are different people inspired by the teachings of Jesus?
- How does the worldwide Christian family celebrate, worship and mark key events?
- What do Muslims believe about God and where did Islam start?
- What role does worship play in the life of a Hindu?
- Does prayer make a difference and how do Christians know?
- How and why do people argue that some places can be spiritual?

## Upper Key Stage 2

### Core Questions:

- How and why do Christians try to make the world a better place?
- How do people make valid judgements about how and why the world is as it is?
- What might a Hindu gain from a pilgrimage to India?
- What do Christians believe about the death of Jesus?
- What does it mean to live a good life?
- What is the significance of Karma and Moksha for a Hindu?
- Why is it important to Muslims that Muhammad is known as the seal of the prophets?
- How do rites of passage shape the lives of different Christians?
- Does wisdom look the same for everyone?
- How far is belief in the resurrection important to Christians today?

- How far does the mosque contribute to the Muslim concept of Ummah?
- How does a worldview help people decide what is important?

### **Teaching, Learning and Assessment**

RE is taught using an enquiry-based approach, that is challenging and robust. At Great Horwood CE School our approach is based around Big Questions and an investigative approach, using the Oxford Diocesan Scheme of Work.

Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils will encounter believers and visit places of worship. We regularly visit the church building and meet with representatives from St James Church as part of the R.E. curriculum to develop the children's awareness of spirituality and to foster a greater understanding of Christianity and its place within the local community.

### **THEOLOGY (BELIEVING)**

Knowledge and understanding of:

- Key beliefs and practices of a range of world views studied
- Where beliefs come from: texts and stories
- How beliefs are interpreted differently and change over time

As part of the GHW two-year cycle pupils will be taught to:

### **HUMAN SOCIAL SCIENCES (LIVING)**

Exploring:

- How beliefs are expressed,
- Participation in faith communities
- Diversity of beliefs in action personally, locally and globally
- The impact of beliefs on the actions of individuals and communities

### **PHILOSOPHY (THINKING)**

Making connections to their own and others' lives by:

- Comparing and contrasting
- Questioning and exploring beliefs
- Using evidence and reasoning to form responses arguments and evaluations

### **RE and inclusion:**

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate to enable all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability, or background. In all our classes, children have a wide range of abilities, and we seek to provide suitable learning opportunities for all children by matching the challenge of the task to the ability of the child. We achieve this through a range of strategies. Scaffolded tasks are regularly used, and the level of support provided, which may include teacher, LSA or peer support, is planned carefully to allow access to all pupils and allow them to achieve fully.

This RE policy should also be read in conjunction with our SEND and equal Opportunities policies (available on the website) and 'Valuing All God's Children' Church of England.

At Great Horwood CE School, we believe that RE is an exciting and thought-provoking subject and use a variety of teaching methods, providing all students with access to religious education and to ensure all students are able to make progress in their learning. A range of teaching and learning strategies which are effective for inclusive teaching of religious education include:

- visits to places of worship, museums or art galleries
- representatives from religious traditions and the community as visitors to the class
- artefacts, big books, posters, videos, artwork
- art and craft to enable students to express their ideas
- use of drama, role play, music, gesture or dance
- music to create an atmosphere or for expression of ideas and emotions
- the use of stillness and periods of quiet reflection
- information and communication technology, such as chrome books, ipads, interactive whiteboards, websites, etc.

Assessment procedures will follow those of the Agreed Syllabus and be in accordance with other assessment and feedback procedures in the school. Students will engage in a variety of activities which will also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt. Records kept will include information about pupils' experiences and judgements about their attainment and progress, as well as being used to inform planning. At Great Horwood CE School we use the Oxford Diocese Board of Education (ODBE) assessment profile.

### **How SMSC is addressed through this subject**

In RE lessons, as well as PHSE and our Collective Worship policy, children are invited to reflect on their personal responses to issues, consider other people's responses, and appreciate that for some people belief in a spiritual dimension is important. We encourage children to consider the answers offered by faith groups to questions of meaning and purpose and problems within society and their own experience. Religious education also strongly supports the school's vision by introducing pupils to the significance of belonging to a community, the diversity of communities in the wider world, faith rules and their application to moral and ethical issues and cultural influences on religious practice.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation**

The RE subject leader and SLT will monitor teaching and learning in RE in accordance with school policy. The RE subject leader will observe teaching, conduct book and planning reviews and pupil interviews when appropriate to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors will ensure that adequate monitoring takes place and that the impact of such activity is assessed.

## **Resources**

The RE subject leader will ensure that RE resources are kept up-to-date and that staff are informed when new resources are purchased or made available electronically. Resources will include source materials (eg Bibles, visitors, artefacts) where appropriate and be treated with respect by all staff.

## **Safeguarding Links:**

Staff are encouraged to be mindful that discussions during RE lessons may produce pupil comments of a sensitive nature and know to follow procedures set down in the school Child Protection and Safeguarding Policy if a child is felt at risk.

## **The Right of Withdrawal**

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian (or withdrawing themselves if they are aged 18 or over) in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school. Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to this effect. When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that they are not required to give reasons for their request.

## **Policy Review**

This policy should be reviewed regularly in line with schools' procedures and must be done within a 3-year period in line with the school's procedure.