



# **Cornerstone Academy Trust**

## **Religious Education Policy**

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## **What is Religious Education (RE)?**

Religious Education contributes dynamically to children's learning by provoking challenging questions about their meaning and purpose in life, beliefs about God, ultimate reality, issues of right and wrong and what it means to be human in a rich global society. RE is concerned with both learning about and from religions and worldviews in local, national and global contexts, to discover, explore and consider different answers to questions. Through RE, as an integrated part of our broad and balanced curriculum, children acquire core knowledge and understanding of different beliefs and practices which shape their growing understanding of history and culture. Furthermore, it seeks to develop children's skills in investigation and enquiry, communication, interpretation, analysis and evaluation. RE offers children opportunities for personal reflection and helps to foster pupils who have a confident sense of their own moral, spiritual and cultural development, children with their own ideas, values and identities, who can respect the religious and cultural differences of others and contribute positively to a cohesive and compassionate society. Pupils will have opportunities to explore Christianity, Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism as part of their curriculum within the Trust. Consideration will also be given to non-religious perspectives to provide a detailed world view.

## **How do we teach RE?**

Our aims in teaching religious education are:

- To instill in the children a curiosity about and understanding of religious questions, beliefs and experiences.
- To develop key attitudes including self-esteem (feeling valued and significant), respect, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder at the world.
- To consider the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures.
- To understand the values of our diverse society and appreciate people's differences.
- To engage with a range of real artefacts and media, as well as people and places, to gain 'real-life' experience and understanding.
- To develop and deploy the skills needed to understand, interpret and evaluate texts, stories, sources of wisdom and authority and other evidence.
- To develop children's communication skills through sharing their ideas and those within religions and beliefs in an informed way including different styles of writing, oral contributions and the use of IT.
- To develop and articulate individual insights, beliefs and ideas when responding to religious enquiries, whilst respecting and valuing the ideas of others who agree and disagree.
- To sensitively recognise and discuss the place of religion in world events in order to counteract racial, religious and cultural stereotypes.

- To make use of the school's diverse connections and communities, including the school's established international links and global community projects.
- To enhance children's sense of responsibility for the care of the Earth and its people, developing their understanding of what it means to be a global citizen both within religious belief systems and outside them.

There will be evidence in the learning environment of:

- A variety of multimedia-rich resources.
- A combination of primary and secondary resources for research.
- Provision of adequate display space for exhibiting children's work and information such as religious and cultural terms linked with current projects.
- Word banks made available on OneNote with language and vocabulary relevant to current projects.
- Planned opportunities for reflection and discussion.

### **RE across the Key Stages**

In all Key Stages, RE needs to be embedded as part of the school ethos, alongside the themes and ideas explored in the PSHCE curriculum and during assemblies/collective worship. It will undertake a broad and balanced programme that takes account of abilities, aptitudes and physical, emotional and intellectual development. Making strong links with the British Council Themes around what it means to be a 'Global Citizen', RE learning and development across the school will focus around key enquiries and questions, as well as providing a scaffolded understanding of major beliefs. Children will have opportunities to relate their learning to their own experiences, to exciting humanities projects and to the school's global community links.

**In the Foundation Stage**, pupils develop an awareness of who they are and what makes them special. They encounter religions and worldviews through a range of people, books, special times, places and objects. They listen to and talk about stories, they use all their senses to explore the world around them and they ask questions and reflect on their own feelings and experiences. They use their imagination and curiosity to develop their appreciation of and wonder at the world in which they live. This happens through planned, purposeful play and through a mix of adult-led and child-initiated activities.

They will:

- Use role play and imagination to explore cultural traditions and celebrations, recognising differences and similarities
- Learn to communicate their own feelings and recognise those of others, forming positive relationships
- Develop an awareness of the changing world around them - Learning about seasons and life cycles through photographs, artefacts and 'hands-on' experiences
- Begin to know about their own cultures and beliefs and those of other people

Focus Themes	Key Enquiries
People who help us Being Special Why is God important to Christians?	How do different religions and communities celebrate?

**In Key Stage 1**, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, recognising their local, national and global contexts. They use basic subject specific vocabulary and they have ample opportunities to raise questions. They begin to express their own views in response to the material they learn about.

They will:

- Develop their awareness of the similarities and differences between their culture and others
- Listen and respond to stories and use sources of information to help them ask and answer questions
- Draw links between religious ideas and cultures, and historical chronology and geographical location
- Visit local places of worship
- Explore the concepts of fairness and right and wrong
- Investigate why conflict occurs when ideas, beliefs and attitudes clash
- Develop communication skills to resolve and work through conflict in order to achieve peace
- Tie discussions into conversations around key texts

Focus Themes	Key Enquiries
Understanding Others Conflict and Peace Who, what, when, where? Important Texts and their tales	What does it mean to be good? Religious stories tell us how best to live our lives. Discuss.

**In Key Stage 2**, pupils should extend their knowledge and understanding of religions and worldviews, again recognising their local, national and global contexts. They are introduced to an extended range of sources and subject specific vocabulary. They are encouraged to be curious and to ask increasingly challenging questions about religion, belief, values and human life. Pupils learn to express their own ideas in response to the material they engage with, identifying relevant information, selecting examples and giving reasons to support their ideas and views.

They will:

- Observe and understand varied examples of religions and worldviews so that they can explain, with reasons, their meanings and significance to individuals and communities
- Visit local places of worship
- Discuss and present thoughtfully their own and others' views on challenging questions about belonging, meaning, purpose and truth
- Learn about the concept of social identities, reflecting on how the groups they belong to inform such identities

- Consider and apply ideas about ways in which diverse communities can live together for the well-being of all
- Interpret and communicate religious knowledge in a variety of ways, through art and drama as well as the written word
- Become more eco-aware and informed about sustainability
- Engage in debates related to past and present discussions around equality, justice and human rights
- Collect research from a combination of primary and secondary resources

Focus Themes	Key Enquiries
Identity and Belonging Sustainable Living Fairness and Equality Rights and Responsibilities	The end is more important than the journey. Discuss. What is worship and does it have to happen in a special place? Do we all have a mission in life? What can creation stories tell us about the world?

### **Teaching and Learning**

We ensure RE is a stimulating subject which engages all children through employing a variety of teaching methods across the school. These include:

- Visiting local places of worship and receiving visitors from faith communities.
- Using art, music, dance and drama to explore beliefs, ideas and cultures.
- Children experiencing times of quiet reflection to develop their own thoughts and ideas.
- Using stories, pictures and photographs, information from the internet and videos.
- Using artefacts to help children develop their understanding of religious beliefs and forms of expression.
- Incorporating the use of computing and multimedia, taking full advantage of the school's international links and global community projects.
- Providing opportunities to work independently or collaboratively, to ask as well as answer religious enquiry questions.

We also aim to develop sound cross-curricular links using a religious focus to encompass other curriculum areas, where it is appropriate. Being strongly linked with history and geography, as the core humanities subjects, RE lends itself to important projects across the whole school. RE also has strong links with literacy, IT and PSHE. For example, in PSHE, children will learn about themselves as developing individuals and members of their communities. They will be developing relationships as they work with others and become aware of the needs, rights and views of others. Children will develop an active involvement in the life of the school and its community and will learn about the wider world and the interdependence of the people and cultures within it.

### **Equal Opportunities**

All children, regardless of their race, sex, religion, religious belief or ability, will be given equal opportunities to develop their knowledge, skills and understanding of RE. When selecting source material a range of perspectives and viewpoints are represented, including those of men and women of different religious, racial and cultural backgrounds. The importance of the pupil's own cultural background is recognised as a rich resource and respect for all is of paramount importance throughout the school. The class teacher will be responsible for planning activities that are differentiated and suitably challenging to meet the needs of all children, enabling access for all to the study of RE. A variety of multimedia and computing tools will help children find suitable access to the curriculum.

### **Assessment, Recording and Reporting**

Individual progress in RE will be assessed and marked by the class teacher in accordance with the school's marking policy. There is both termly and weekly planning made available to all teachers and parents via the Class OneNote, offering a breadth of coverage and clear progression. Any completed RE work will be uploaded to the child's individual OneNote and will be made available to parents. Children's progress and achievements will also be reported to parents/carers at the end of the school year.

### **Monitoring and Review**

The Leadership Team, in combination with the RE subject leader, will be responsible for monitoring the implementation of this policy and the specific schemes of planned work.

### **Rights of withdrawal**

We firmly believe that RE is an important subject in children's learning. We fully recognise the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from all or any part of RE on the grounds of conscience. We encourage parents to contact the Headteacher if they have any concerns about RE provision and practice at the school.