The Oak Tree Federation
Religious Education Policy
March 2026

'The evolution of society's religious and non-religious landscape highlights that it is all the more important for pupils to build up accurate knowledge of the complexity and diversity of global religion and non-religion.' OFSTED Review of RE, May 2021.

Intent

- To give children a strong foundation in the Christian faith
- To develop children's knowledge, understanding and respect of other religious traditions and the way in which those of other faiths and no faith tradition understand the world
- To help children to understand the significance of religion and the role it can play in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Implementation

In accordance with the Education Act 1996 Religious Education must be provided for all registered pupils, and we acknowledge that parents/carers have the right to withdraw their child/ren wholly or partly from RE without providing a reason.
The East Sussex Agreed Syllabus 2022 provides the curriculum framework across the federation (as required for Firle C of E Primary School, which is Church of England controlled).
The syllabus is enriched through 'Understanding Christianity' resources, developing and adapting plans and resources through an enquiry-based approach to enable pupils to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding required. The 'pillars of progression' within RE ensure pupils know more, remember more and can do more, and are planned for and interwoven throughout the long-term plan and within each unit plan:

- **Substantive knowledge (facts)**
- **Disciplinary knowledge (ways of knowing):**

making sense of the text; understanding the impact/sociology (religion/beliefs in action); making connections/philosophy (What can we learn from religion?)

- **Personal knowledge (reflecting on one's own beliefs and developing understanding of others' beliefs)**

The curriculum is discretely designed and planned for each individual school, ensuring that it is unique to our children, our setting, our families and our community. The planning for teaching of RE is led by the RE subject lead across both schools.

At Firle C of E Primary School, in providing the children with a strong foundation in Christianity, we aim to give them a sense of the distinctive character that the Anglican tradition provides. This will emerge through discrete RE teaching and learning, the use of the local church for visits, links with our daily worship, visits by local religious leaders and groups and awareness of the liturgical calendar.
The curriculum for Laughton Community Primary School is closely linked to that of Firle, but is adapted according to its needs as a Community Primary school. The community church is visited to support the curriculum and to celebrate some key Christian festivals.
Visits to places of worship for other faiths are planned for both schools, within the two-year cycle.

RE as a Sensitive Subject

All staff need to show sensitivity in the delivery of RE. Staff and children across the federation may come from any faith tradition or none. Staff at Firle will be in sympathy with the aims of a church school, and all students come to the school aware of its affiliation, however assumptions must not be made about held beliefs and respect for all is imperative.
The East Sussex syllabus requires schools to draw upon Christianity at every key stage, however, we will not seek to indoctrinate or persuade pupils to adopt any particular belief but help them to develop skills, attitudes and concepts which enable them to recognise the importance that a belief has for the individual or group, and reflect on its significance or otherwise for their own developing beliefs and values.
RE is taught in larger blocks of time (a ½ day a fortnight) to ensure that the children have had opportunity to fully explore the concept they are learning and share their understanding.

Trips, Visitors and Resources

In all areas we attempt to enrich the curriculum through the use of resources, visits and visitors and RE is particularly enhanced through the use of religious artefacts and visits to and from places of worship and members of faith communities. With the additional sensitivities associated with religion we will ensure that children are aware of the need and the protocol for showing of respect to artefacts, places of worship and people. During their RE curriculum through the school the children will experience visiting the local church, a synagogue, a Hindu Temple and a Mosque to enable them to have a broader understanding of faith and places of worship.

Philosophy, Spiritual Skills and RE

RE provides an excellent opportunity for investigating the deeper questions of life: what is God like? What is truth? How should we live?

These links with philosophy will be explored in RE lessons. In addition, RE and worship at Firle/assemblies at Laughton, will be used to teach children spiritual skills and attitudes such as: prayer, meditation, reflection, openness, questioning, critical awareness, compassion, self-awareness and respect.

Links with Collective Worship and Assemblies

RE is closely linked with Collective Worship (CW) at Firle CEP and assemblies at Laughton. It is planned that such elements can be followed up in RE where appropriate. The key differences are that RE focuses more on learning about and from religion, whereas CW and assemblies focus more on experiencing religious practice. Further, in RE we ensure children learn about other religions in addition to Christianity, whereas our CW at Firle is wholly Christian. Assemblies at Laughton focus on all religions in their celebration of festivals as well as the school and British values.

Procedure

Role of the Governing Body	The GB has: ● a legal duty to provide RE for all registered pupils ● appointed a member of staff to be the RE Subject Lead ● nominated a link governor(s) to visit the school regularly, to liaise with the Headteacher and SL and to report back to the GB ● responsibility for the effective implementation, monitoring and evaluation of this policy
Role of the Executive Headteacher	The Executive Headteacher will: ● ensure that RE is taught according to the LA's Agreed Syllabus ● monitor and evaluate this policy
Role of the Subject Lead	The Subject Lead will: ● lead the development of RE throughout both schools ● provide guidance and support to all staff ● keep up to date with new developments and resources ● review and monitor teaching and learning ● ensure planning is cross-curricular where relevant ● develop the teaching of RE through the use of different teaching and learning styles
SEND	Teachers will ensure planning is differentiated to include children of all abilities. We differentiate by:

	● planning with SEND at the centre ● providing resources to ensure learning is accessible to all ● setting open ended tasks ● setting tasks of increasing challenge ● developing teacher and the children's questioning skills
Assessment and Recording	Children will have opportunities to record what they know in a variety of ways, including writing, drawing, art, drama etc. Formative assessment tasks are used to find out what children already know and to plan for next steps in their learning. Children's progress within a unit of work is assessed through ongoing informal observation, questioning and set tasks. Summative assessment is carried out against the unit title and unit objectives and shared with the subject lead, in Terms 1, 3 and 5. As part of the enquiry cycle, children have the opportunity to express what they know (after evaluation/summative assessment tasks), which allow opportunities to assess personal knowledge). End of year assessments are carried out against end of Key Stage statements. At Firle CEP School end of year assessments are reported to parents:- working below, working towards, expected and working at greater depth.
Impact	To measure impact, regular monitoring will be carried out by the subject leader, teachers and Foundation Governors, at regular intervals, within each school and across the federation. See the yearly action plan for details of the monitoring schedule.

E Ricca, May 2022, reviewed by R West February 2024, March 2025, March 2026

Date adopted by Governors: 1st December 2022