

Hopton CEVC Primary School Religious Education Policy



Approved by: Resources Committee

The Governing Body of Hopton CEVC Primary School adopted this policy

November 2019

It will review it in November 2021

Review date:	Reviewed & approved by	Change details
November 2021		Vision on page one updated to current whole school vision.
November 2023		Definition of spirituality added to school vision.
January 2023		Details of Spirituality added (page 5)
February 2024	Resources Committee	Page 3: Training and event planning amended. Page 7: Co-ordinator substituted for Lead.
February 2025		




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Definition of Spirituality in our school:

'At Hopton CEVC Primary School, spirituality is looking in, out and up. We look in to ourselves, out to the world and up to connect to something greater.'

The School Vision

<p>Head</p>  <p>Knowledge & learning</p>	<p>Aiming to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ensure a high standard of teaching and learning daily within school. Children will be inspired by lessons and motivated to learn. ➤ Always challenge ourselves as practitioners, be forward thinking and embrace new ideas for the children. We never stop learning as teachers. ➤ Deliver teaching and learning that is for every child, ensuring that we care for children and develop a curriculum that we would be happy for our own children to access.
<p>Hands</p>  <p>Skills & relationships</p>	<p>Aiming to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Build confidence and resilience in every child, so they understand, with hard work, anything is possible. ➤ Work in co-production with parents, giving them opportunities to be part of their child's learning journey. ➤ Deliver a skill and knowledge-based curriculum for children, inclusive of their needs.
<p>Heart</p>  <p>Spiritual development & character</p>	<p>Aiming to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Acknowledge, it is a 'given' that all children in school should be safe and happy. ➤ Have biblical values but are also open to nurturing the spiritual development of children with some or no faith. ➤ Listen to all those around us who feed into the holistic knowledge bed of the children. ➤ Ensure children leave Hopton as a polite, well rounded, respectful individuals who have a solid moral compass and thirst for learning and life.

1. A statement regarding the legal position of RE in our school.

All state schools in England must teach Religious Education to all pupils including those in their Reception year, with the exception of those withdrawn by their parents. Schools in our diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich are required to use the most recent Suffolk Agreed Syllabus to plan their RE. VC schools do not have RE inspected as a subject in SIAMS inspections but the provision, planning and delivery of RE is now considered in other sections of the inspection and must be robust.

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

Hopton is a Voluntary Controlled school therefore we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus. As a church school, we use the recommended Diocesan resource, The Emmanuel Project. We have written a long term plan which is available on our website. As a Church of England school we enrich religious education through share days with an RE focus, have close relations with our parish church and chapel, and use of an 'Open the Book' team. Where possible we seek to attend events in the wider community. We continually seek to improve and update our teaching through attendance at courses, distribution of relevant newsletters, and subscriptions to the Diocesan newsletters.

1. Rationale/Aims for teaching RE in our school.

In Religious Education at Hopton CEVC Primary School we aim that Religious Education will:-

- **provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development
- **encourage pupils to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- **enable pupils to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society
- **teach pupils to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice
- **prompt pupils to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- **Develop a sense of awe, wonder and mystery** in relation to their experiences of the world around them and through philosophical discussion (P4C).

See locally agreed syllabus for specific skills and attitudes developed in RE.

Attitudes in Religious Education

While knowledge, skills and understanding are central to religious education, it is also

vital that pupils are encouraged to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following four attitudes are essential for good learning in religious education and need to be consistently developed at each key stage:

Self-awareness *in religious education, this includes pupils:*

- ☐ feeling confident about their own beliefs and identity and sharing them without fear of embarrassment or ridicule
- ☐ developing a realistic, positive sense of their own religious, moral and spiritual ideas
- ☐ recognising their own uniqueness as human beings and affirming their self-worth
- ☐ becoming increasingly sensitive to the impact of their ideas and behaviour on other people.

Respect for all *in religious education, this includes pupils:*

- ☐ developing skills of listening and a willingness to learn from others, even where the views of others are different from their own
- ☐ being ready to value difference and diversity for the common good
- ☐ appreciating that some views are not inclusive and considering the issues that this raises for individuals and for society
- ☐ being prepared to recognise and acknowledge their own bias
- ☐ being sensitive to the feelings and ideas of others.

Open-mindedness *in religious education, this includes pupils:*

- ☐ being willing to learn and gain new understanding
- ☐ engaging in argument about religious, moral or spiritual questions, while being able to disagree reasonably and respectfully and without belittling or abusing others
- ☐ being willing to go beyond surface impressions
- ☐ distinguishing between opinions, viewpoints and beliefs in connection with issues of conviction and faith.

Appreciation and wonder *in religious education, this includes pupils:*

- ☐ developing their capacity to respond to questions of meaning and purpose
- ☐ appreciating the sense of wonder at the world in which they live
- ☐ recognising that knowledge is bounded by mystery
- ☐ developing their imagination and curiosity.

2. Spirituality in our School

Christians believe that God became human and therefore always strive to be the best human they can possibly be. As educators and in accordance with the Equalities Act 2010, we want to help every child to be the best that they can be and have a duty to support the children to achieve this; part of this responsibility is to help children develop spiritually. At Hopton all aspects of school life reflect a Christian ethos and all policies are based on Christian principles.

Our understanding of spirituality is rooted in our school's Christian foundation. We provide opportunities for children to look into and discover who they are as unique individuals made in God's image. We encourage them to connect to something greater and discover the possibility of a creator God who loves us while reaching out and caring for the world he created.

'At Hopton CEVC Primary School, spirituality is looking in, out and up. We look in to ourselves, out to the world and up to connect to something greater.'

Beyond academic learning, we support children to be rounded, strong, meaningful and engaging citizens of the world who can bring greater value into their own lives and those of others.

Opportunities for Spirituality at Hopton may include (but are not exhaustive of):

- Strong sense of community
- High quality of relationships with pupils and staff
- Positive attitudes to learning
- Celebrating successes
- Support during challenging times
- Promotion of our Christian values
- Daily opportunities for reflection
- Strong Pastoral support
- Daily Collective Worship
- Cross-curricular spirituality links

3. The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion in our school.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all pupils should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at each of these four levels.

The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.

The community within which the school is located – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.

The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.

The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

RE is an important subject in contribution to the schools development as a Rights Respecting School.

4. Approaches to teaching RE in our school.

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all pupils are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through using the Emmanuel project.

In order to make religious education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

Where possible we want our pupils to have opportunities to encounter local faith communities through visits to local places of worship or visit from members of local faith communities.

Religious Education at Hopton CEVC Primary school is delivered in the following way:

We use as a basis for our planning the most recent Suffolk Agreed Syllabus and we have written a 2 year rolling long term plan outlining what should be taught when. This ensures

the right balance between Christian units and focusing on other religions and provides consistency and progression (it is available on our website).

How RE is organised in our school.

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus we have agreed that we will teach RE as a discrete subject. The RE lead is responsible for updating the long term planning, storing resources and information on the school 'T' server and in the allocated RE storage area. The RE lead is responsible for distributing useful information and delivering or arranging appropriate Inset to staff and governors.

At KS 1 pupils study units on Christianity and Judaism. The children learn about other religions through 'encounters'.

At KS 2 pupils study units on Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, Hinduism and Humanism.

5. Assessment and Recording of RE in our school.

In line with the school policy on assessment and recording.

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. The level achieved is used by the co-ordinator to track pupil progress through the school and is used by the class teacher to ensure that each pupil is set work that is appropriately challenging.

6. Arrangements for monitoring standards of teaching and learning in RE and how RE contributes to School Self Evaluation in our school.

The Headteacher monitors RE within the school through analysis of assessment data and through a schedule of lesson observations and work scrutiny. This monitoring is fed back to staff in order to develop RE and raise standards.

There are a number of areas of our SIAMS Self Evaluation Form that are related to RE and that the subject impacts on. This is reviewed by staff and governors.

7. Responsibilities for RE within our school.

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the governing body and head teacher also make sure that:

- all pupils make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing pupils' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion

- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and pupils can make good progress
- where there are insufficient teachers in a school who are prepared to teach RE, the head teacher ensures that pupils receive their entitlement to RE. In these circumstances, head teachers might wish to seek advice from the Diocese or Local Authority.

8. The right of Withdrawal from RE

At Hopton CEVC Primary school we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from religious education. However, the right of withdrawal does not extend to other areas of the curriculum when, as may happen on occasion, spontaneous questions on religious matters are raised by pupils or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the head teacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of religious education.

Managing the right of withdrawal

- The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all pupils and respects their own personal beliefs.
- Parents should be made aware of its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- The school may also wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or pupils themselves if they are aged 18 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although a school should ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- Where parents have requested that their child is withdrawn, their right must be respected, and where RE is integrated in the curriculum, the school will need to discuss the arrangements with the parents or carers to explore how the child's withdrawal can be best accommodated.
- If pupils are withdrawn from RE, schools have a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Pupils will usually remain on school premises.
- Where a pupil has been withdrawn, the law provides for alternative arrangements to be made for RE of the kind the parent wants the pupil to receive. This RE could be

provided at the school in question, or the pupil could be sent to another school where suitable RE is provided if this is reasonably convenient.

- If neither approach is practicable, outside arrangements can be made to provide the pupil with the kind of RE that the parent wants, and the pupil may be withdrawn from school for a reasonable period of time to allow them to attend this external RE.
- Outside arrangements for RE are allowed as long as the LA is satisfied that any interference with the pupil's attendance at school resulting from the withdrawal will affect only the start or end of a school session.

Case study: Managing the right of withdrawal

In one school, parents approached the head teacher with a request to discuss whether or not to withdraw their child from RE. The head teacher met them and showed them a copy of the locally agreed syllabus, together with the school's policy and scheme of work for RE. The parents were also invited to join an RE lesson to see how the school's policy worked in practice. This provided reassurance that the approach being adopted was one of genuine open enquiry which would respect the beliefs of all children.

As a result, the parents decided not to exercise their right of withdrawal.

In another school, in Year 7 RE is taught in blocked topics as part of an integrated studies programme along with English, history, geography and citizenship. The teachers discussed the programme with the parents whose child had been withdrawn from RE and agreed to vary some of the work to accommodate the parents' wishes. The pupil took a full and active part in the lessons but was provided with slightly modified resources and tasks. As a result, the benefits of the integrated approach to teaching RE and the rights of the parents were both protected.

In a primary school, a number of parents from a local Jehovah's Witness community expressed a wish to withdraw their children from RE. The head teacher met with representatives from the community, including some of its leaders, to explain the school's approach to the subject. As a result of the meeting, the school developed a relationship of trust with the community and was able to identify those aspects of the RE programme which the parents were happy for the children to join and those from which the children would be withdrawn – mainly around the celebration of Christmas.