




RE Policy

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Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust | Reg. in England: Company 08156759

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1. Introduction

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) is a multi-academy trust with a faith designation and a Christian religious ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive. Distinctive in the sense that all decisions about the nature and purpose of the Academy are taken through the lens of Christian values, inclusive in the sense that all students and staff are equally valued for their uniqueness in the eyes of God and their belonging to the school community.

2. Ethos statement

Vision

The Diocese of Bristol Academies Trust (DBAT) shares the Church of England’s Vision for Education 2016, “Deeply Christian, Serving the Common Good”, which includes four basic elements: wisdom, hope, community and dignity. We aim to deliver values-led education with the very best outcomes for children and young people.

Purpose

To provide high quality education enabling young people to flourish and grow: spiritually, in love and in understanding.

Introduction

We believe that Religious Education has a vital place in the education of all children. Through it we can teach moral and ethical values, foster personal, social and spiritual development, give meaning to the cultural traditions of this country, and encourage respect for the beliefs of other religions. It deserves a special place in the curriculum of a Church School called to educate for wisdom and knowledge, hope and aspiration, living well together with dignity and respect.

‘Religious education in a Church school should enable every child to flourish and to live life in all its fullness. (John 10:10). It will help educate for dignity and respect encouraging all to live life well together.’

Such an approach is offered through a commitment to generous hospitality, being true to our underpinning faith, but with a deep respect for the integrity of other religious traditions (and worldviews¹) and for the religious freedom of each person.

RE Statement of Entitlement from the Church of England Education Office Feb 2019

3. Legal Requirements

As an academy, we are independent of the local authority and are not required to follow the national curriculum or the local RE syllabus. However RE must be taught in accordance with our funding agreement and must reflect the requirement of the Education Reform Act 1988 which states ‘that religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, whilst taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principle religious traditions present in Great Britain.’

The school teaches religious education in line with the Swindon Vlocally agreed syllabus, with additional teaching on Christianity.

Section 48 of the 2005 Education Act requires the inspection of religious education in schools which have a religious character. This is the Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools (SIAMS)

4. Scope/ aims

Our school aims for all pupils are as follows:

- Through exploration of core beliefs and using an approach that critically engages with biblical text, to enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a diverse, global and living faith that influences the lives of people worldwide and as the religion that has most shaped British culture and heritage.
- To enable pupils to know about and understand different major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, and to appreciate the diversity, continuity and change within those religions and worldviews
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To contribute to the development of pupils’ own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs, ways of living, thinking and values.

5. Curriculum Implementation

Our school is part of the Bristol Diocese and was formerly a Voluntary Controlled Church of England school. Therefore, the teaching of Religious Education is considered to be of particular importance. It is a core subject taught not only as a discrete subject but linking with all other areas of the curriculum.

RE lessons provide a safe space for pupils to explore their own religious, spiritual and/or philosophical ways of seeing, living and thinking, believing and belonging. Lessons provide opportunities to engage

¹ The term worldviews is used throughout this policy/in our school to refer to a person’s way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. It can be described as a philosophy of life or an approach to life. It could refer to an ‘institutional’ worldview to describe organised worldviews including religions as well as Humanism, Secularism and Atheism or a ‘personal’ worldview for an individual’s way of understanding and living in the world which may be drawn from one or many institutionalised worldviews. **Based on Commission on Religious Education, Religion and worldviews: [The way forward A national plan for RE \(Religious Education Council for England and Wales 2018\)](#) p4.**

in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of all faiths and worldviews. Learning activities provide fully for the needs of all pupils, so that they develop a wide range of skills including enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection.

Teaching in RE aims to challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. Lessons seek to present religions and world views in all their richness and diversity in terms of beliefs, traditions, customs and lifestyle in a sensitive and accurate way in order to encourage a positive attitude towards diversity. All questions, views, and opinions are treated with sensitivity and respect.

Teachers establish clear links between elements of religious belief and practice and aspects of the children's own lives. Teaching enables pupils to gain something of personal value from their study of religious belief and practice, for example, the way that they might apply insights gained from religious stories to their own lives.

Our teaching and learning approach:

Religious education is usually taught in a 'whole class' setting but with flexibility to allow for discussion, questioning and reflection in small groups and individually

- Visits to local churches and places of worship and visitors to school are encouraged
- A variety of teaching approaches including teacher presentations, role play, drama art and story-telling as well as quizzes, questions and answer sessions, discussions and debates are employed in order that RE learning is active and enjoyable as well as rigorous and challenging.
- Pupils experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry-based style of learning by:
 - Posing and discussing 'big' and challenging questions
 - Reading and critically analysing texts.
 - Interpreting information from different sources.
 - Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
 - Listening to and discussing with the teacher and other pupils.
 - Engaging in pair and group work.
 - Exploring a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
 - Experiencing visits and visitors.
 - Taking part in outdoor learning.
 - Taking time for reflection.

Cross-curricular links - RE supports the development of general educational abilities such as literacy, empathy and the ability to express thoughts, feelings and personal beliefs. RE also makes a major contribution to pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural (SMSC) development. It addresses issues which arise in a range of subjects, such as English, art, drama and history, geography, computing, music as well as personal, social and emotional education and citizenship (PSHE&C).

Our curriculum:

- We use the Understanding Christianity and Swindon Agreed Syllabus as frameworks throughout the school
- We undertake an annual school-wide focus on an aspect of global citizenship/courageous advocacy where children explore different issues, making connections between their lives and those of others around the world. This incorporates multiple perspectives, Christian, other world faiths and non-religious. It also includes opportunities for pupils to respond and make a positive contribution to the issue we have explored.

- Development of the themes followed in collective worship
- Understanding of the meanings of songs/hymns sung in hymn practice and collective worship;
- Festivals: Christmas, Easter, Harvest: The Christian tradition will be explained to the children, detailing why each festival is celebrated and what it means to Christians. This will also be linked to festivals from other faiths when relevant i.e. Festivals of Light.

Curriculum Overview Cycle A 2024-2025

As South Marston has mixed year groups and classes, we have carefully considered the knowledge, skills and content children need to learn. Furthermore, we aim to ensure a broad, balanced and engaging curriculum offering. With this in mind, we have developed a two-year cycle (Cycle A and Cycle B), with units alternating each year. The purpose of this is to expose children to a variety and breadth of units, which they can build upon each year. While content may be revisited, we aim for little content to be repeated and for children to progress. All objectives and units are based around the National Curriculum. Depending on the common trends, requirements and changes to curriculum may mean that there are future adaptations and developments to this cycle.

Early Years Foundation Stage	Year 1 & 2	Year 3 & 4	Year 5 & 6
<p>Why is the word 'God' so important to Christians?</p> <p>Why do Christians perform nativity plays at Christmas?</p> <p>Being special: Where do we belong?</p> <p>Why do Christians put a cross in an Easter garden?</p> <p>Learning stories from different religions.</p> <p>Covered through Understanding of the World</p>	<p>What do Christians believe God is like?</p> <p>Why does Christmas matter to Christians?</p> <p>How should we care for others and the world?</p> <p>Why does Easter matter to Christians?</p> <p>Who is Jewish and what do they believe?</p>	<p>What do Christians learn from the creation story?</p> <p>What is the trinity?</p> <p>Why are festivals so important?</p> <p>Why do Christians call the day Jesus died 'Good Friday'?</p> <p>What can we learn from religions about deciding right and wrong? (Focusing on Judaism)</p>	<p>Was Jesus the Messiah?</p> <p>What can be done to reduce racism? Can religion help?</p> <p>What matters most to Christians and to Humanists?</p> <p>What did Jesus do to save human beings?</p> <p>What do religions say to us when life gets hard?</p>

6. Assessment

Assessment is carried out in line with the locally agreed syllabus used by the school. Teachers may also use the statements from Understanding Christianity to assess children's knowledge and understanding of the key theological concepts taught in this scheme.

In addition through assessment we:

- Seek to identify pupils' development in the different areas of learning in the subject and not only in the acquisition of factual knowledge.
- Recognise the range of skills and attitudes which the subject seeks to develop.
- Employ well defined criteria for marking and assessment which identify progress and achievement as well as effort, following the school's marking policy.

7. Managing the right to withdraw

Parents have a right by law to withdraw their children from the Religious Education curriculum and our school will comply with any such request. However, in view of the Christian ethos and distinctive Christian character of our school, we would hope that all children admitted will participate fully in RE, and ask that anyone wishing to withdraw their child arranges to discuss this with the headteacher and to take up the opportunity to discuss the contents of the RE curriculum in school before making this decision.

8. Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum. The RE subject leader will assist the headteacher and governors by:

- ensuring that all pupils receive their legal entitlement to religious education and that RE provision reflects the [Church of England Statement of Entitlement](#).
- monitoring RE through work scrutiny and observation of teaching, carrying out pupil conferencing/pupil voice sessions; reviewing the learning environment/lesson visits.
- Supporting all staff in the delivery of high quality Religious Education

9. Links and 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.

10. Our Ethos and Values

As identified at the opening of this policy, our structure and approach here is underpinned by our Christian ethos and values, focused on an ethos that is both distinctive and inclusive.

In our adoption and subsequent adaptation of this policy we have asked ourselves two clear questions: "Is this policy and practice underpinned by our vision and values?" and "What is the impact of our vision and values on those subject to the policy?". This is a key focus of our ongoing development of policy and practice.

History of most recent policy changes and review period

Date	Page	Change(s) made	Origin of Change (e.g. TU request, change in legislation)
Sept 2023		New policy	

Policy Owner	Education Directorate
Policy Approved by	Education Committee
Date Adopted	September 2023
Latest Review Date	
Next Review Date	September 2026
Level	Level 2
<i>DBAT Policy levels:</i>	
LEVEL 1	DBAT policy for adoption (no changes can be made by the Academy Council; the Academy Council must adopt the policy)
LEVEL 2	DBAT policy for adoption and local approval, with areas for the Academy to update regarding local practice (the main body of the policy cannot be changed)
LEVEL 3	DBAT model policy that the Academy can adopt if it wishes
LEVEL 4	Local policy to be approved by the Academy Council