



Bishop Justus School Policies

Policy Title:	Religious Education Policy
LT Responsibility:	Head teacher
Review Body:	Aquinas Advisory Council
Date:	September 2019
Review:	September 2020

“Use knowledge as a kind of scaffolding to help build a structure of love and understanding. Your knowledge is useful when it is used to promote love, and becomes useless, even harmful, when separated from such an end.”

Saint Augustine of Hippo (*Letter 55, 33*)

Vision

The vision for Religious Education in Bishop Justus Church of England School is to enable and challenge students to flourish as loving and thinking human beings in their communities and the wider world. For this reason, we not only promote a rigorously academic curriculum but also foster students’ curiosity and ability to question critically and think deeply beyond the confines of exam based specifications and curriculums. Philosophical enquiry is therefore pivotal to enable this vision to materialise into the RE classroom through discussion. However, it is particularly important that the dialogue is such that it is a collaborative journey where students respectfully challenge each other (and through the skilful questioning of the teacher) to explore their thinking deeply in a caring community. Philosophical enquiry is not the end goal though because, as a Christian school, we reject the notion that we live in a ‘post-truth’ society and begin instead from the premise that there is truth and meaning and purpose in life. Theological enquiry therefore is encouraged, where debate begins out of an exploration into the beliefs of the world religions and particularly of Christian theology. The task is difficult as, although the teacher is objective and challenges the students to critically evaluate religious beliefs and practices, we live in a pluralistic society and indeed RE teachers and students are of different faiths and none. Opinions are not accepted freely but challenged and students are encouraged to see how beliefs and ideas impact upon everyday life and become actualised in reality. Our measure of success is not just the progress of students during their time here, verified by their success in GCSE and A-level examinations, but also that students are loving and thinking beings who go and ‘live life to the full’ (John 10:10).

Legal requirements

The National Curriculum states that:

Every state-funded school must offer a curriculum which is balanced and broadly based, and which:

- promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils, and
- prepares pupils at the school for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life ...

All state schools... must teach religious education....¹

Bishop Justus CE School recognises that RE 'must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain'.²

Aims of RE

Bishop Justus accepts and shares the aims of Religious Education as laid out by the Church of England Education Office because it is a church school and therefore is distinctive. These aims are:

- To enable pupils to know about and understand Christianity as a 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 and understand about other major world religions and world views, their impact on society, culture and the wider world, enabling pupils to express ideas and insights.
- To contribute to the development of pupils' own spiritual/philosophical convictions, exploring and enriching their own beliefs and values.³

As a Church school there is also the expectation is that all pupils are religiously literate and as a minimum pupils are able to:

- Give a theologically informed and thoughtful account of Christianity as a living and diverse faith.
- Show an informed and respectful attitude to religions and world views in their search for God and meaning.
- Engage in meaningful and informed dialogue with those of other faiths and none.
- Reflect critically and responsibly on their own spiritual, philosophical and ethical convictions.⁴ It is also the expectation that all pupils receive a GCSE qualification in RE by the end of KS4.

¹ DfE, *The National Curriculum in England: Framework Document*, September 2013, p.4

² Education Act (1996 Section 375 (3), Schools Standards and Framework Act (1998, Schedule 19, para 5).

³ Religious Education in Church of England Schools, *A Statement of Entitlement* June 2016, p.2

⁴ Religious Education in Church of England Schools, *A Statement of Entitlement* June 2016, p.3

Teaching and learning

RE has a high profile within our school curriculum and is comparable with other core curriculum areas. Quality teaching in RE helps generate respect for different views and interpretations where real dialogue takes place. Learners develop and use a wide range of higher level skills such as enquiry, analysis, interpretation, evaluation and reflection to deepen their understanding of the impact of religion and world views as lived by believers. Key cross-curricular skills such as reading, writing, observation, and discussion are practised. Rigorous assessment based on knowledge and understanding of core religious concepts shows that attainment is high and progress significant in developing an understanding of Christianity and a range of other world religions and on other world views as appropriate.

RE offers a wide variety of teaching and learning experiences, understanding that pupils learn best in different ways. Pupils will experience opportunities to learn and express themselves through an enquiry based style of learning by:

- Listening to the teacher and each other.
- Reading of texts.
- Seeking information for themselves in libraries and on computers.
- Discussion with the teacher and other pupils.
- Pair and group work.
- Using a range of media such as artefacts, pictures, photographs, music and drama.
- Visits and visitors.
- Artwork.
- Outdoor learning.
- Time for reflection.

Collective worship

This policy covers the provision of RE in the curriculum – collective worship is not covered in this policy.

SMSC

Although, all subjects in the curriculum and the school as a whole have an equal duty to promote students' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural development, RE is particularly well placed to do this. RE develops students' capacity for cultural understanding and moral enquiry particularly strongly, both through curriculum content and the personal characteristics required to participate in RE.

Inclusion

RE, as all school subjects, adheres to a policy of inclusion. RE teachers plan lessons and schemes of work to ensure that all students can access high quality RE. To this end, teachers will monitor the success of their provision and differentiation, and employ specific strategies when necessary. Additionally, the RE department may set students according to ability or to maximise student progress and this may be done in liaison with other departments (i.e. English in KS4) and with pastoral teams.

Differentiation and Special Educational Needs

Policy and practice in religious education reflects whole school policy and encompasses the full range and ability of all pupils. All pupils' contributions are valued in RE as they draw on their own experiences and beliefs. A range of teaching and learning strategies to achieve differentiated learning are used including task, outcome, resource, support and pupil grouping. There is particular concern to ensure that all tasks are challenging and sufficiently demanding to stimulate and engage all pupils whilst extending the most able.

Breadth and balance

Although work on Christianity will predominate, there will be in-depth work on the major world religions and on other world views as appropriate. Teaching will seek to bring about a deeper knowledge and understanding of religious traditions but also to develop a range of skills such as the ability to empathise and evaluate attitudes, and develop respect for diversity.

Equal Opportunities

Religious education will challenge stereotypes, misinformation and misconceptions about race, gender and religion. It seeks 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 will be treated with sensitivity and respect.

Health and Safety

Health and safety issues may arise in religious education on a number of occasions for example, when pupils:

- Handle artefacts.
- Consume food.
- Visit places of worship.

Teachers will conform to guidelines in the school's health and safety policy in these circumstances.

Resources

Religious education will be funded to enable a range of resources on different religions to be purchased, such as books for teachers, pupils and the library; posters, CDs, DVDs and artefacts. The school makes use of guidance material produced by the Diocese. Funding will also allow, where possible, visits to different places of worship and provide INSET for staff. All resources will be stored, be easily accessible and kept in good condition. Resource banks will be available for both staff and pupils on all major religions and world views as appropriate.

Assessment

In most cases, assessments will be based on or at least broadly in line with examination content and question styles and will be marked in accordance with the exam board mark schemes and sample assessment materials. Teachers will be trained in order to assess students work robustly and accurately. Standardisation and moderation of assessments is a department standard operating procedure.

Time allocation

At Key Stage 3, year 7 and 8 students receive 3 hours of RE per fortnight. At KS4 (GCSE), year 9 and 10 students receive 4 lessons per fortnight and in year 11 students have 3 lessons per fortnight. For those whom choose to study Religious Studies at KS5 (A-level), students have 10 hours of RS lessons per fortnight. Additionally, RE is delivered to the whole sixth form through 'Reflection' weeks during the academic year, supported by a complimentary sixth form worship programme. During 'Reflection' weeks, students explore RE topics in morning form time and additional sessions (for example off timetable for a morning or an afternoon).

Curriculum

In Key Stage 3, Bishop Justus has developed its own curriculum which follows key recommendations of the Bromley Local Agreed Syllabus⁵ and has selected the following religions and worldviews for focused study: *Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism, Secularism and post-modernism*. However, half of the curriculum is devoted to the study of Christianity utilising themes, resources and the methods from the 'Understanding Christianity' framework.

For the academic year 2019-20, the courses at KS4 and KS5 are listed below:

KS4

KS4 Eduqas Religious Studies GCSE Route A⁶:

Component 1 *Religious and Ethical Studies in a Modern World* (from Christian Perspective and non-religious perspective) (2 hour written exam from Summer 2020)

Component 2 Study of Christianity (1 hour written exam from Summer 2020)

Component 3 Study of Islam (1 hour written exam from Summer 2020)

KS5

In sixth form the **Eduqas Religious Studies A-Level (A120U30-1)**⁷ is taught, as a linear course with final assessment at the end of year 13:

Component 1: A Study of Religion (Option A: Christianity) 2-hour examination (2020)

⁵

<http://cde.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50015346/Bromley%20Agreed%20Syllabus%20for%20Religious%20Education%202013.pdf>

⁶ http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/gcse/eduqas-gcse-RS-spec-full-from-2016.pdf?language_id=1&dotcache=no&dotcache=refresh

⁷ http://www.eduqas.co.uk/qualifications/religious-studies/as-a-level/eduqas-a-level-religious-studies-spec-from-2016-c.pdf?language_id=1

Component 2: Philosophy of Religion – 2-hour examination (2020)

Component 3: Religion and Ethics – 2-hour examination (2020)

Right of withdrawal

Parents (or students who are over 18) have the right to withdraw their children either partly or wholly from RE. Our approach to RE, however, has been constructed in the hope that parents and teachers will rarely, if ever, wish to exercise their right of withdrawal. At present no students are withdrawn from RE. In the first instance parents are asked to contact the RE Subject Leader and/or the Headteacher to discuss the matter. Further guidance on withdrawal can be found In *Religious Education in English Schools: Non-statutory guidance*.⁸

⁸ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/190260/DCSF-00114-2010.pdf p.27