

Bentley CEVC and Copdock Primary Schools Religious Education Policy

Religious Education is governed by a locally agreed syllabus. It is helpful for all teaching staff to have basic information on the requirements of the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus as part of this policy document. From September 2023, Suffolk have a new syllabus called 'Where Do I Stand?' and this is the core document informing the content of this policy.

This policy should be read in conjunction with our Collective Worship Policy.

Introduction

Religious Education is part of the basic educational entitlement for all pupils. It is statutory for ALL schools but is not part of the National Curriculum. Its place in the school curriculum is an acknowledgement of the important role which beliefs and values play in people's lives, regardless of whether or not they have particular religious commitments.

It is widely acknowledged that the primary purpose of RE is to develop 'religious literacy', a skill much needed given the vast range of religious and secular worldviews in our global society. Religious literacy may be defined as the ability to 'hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief'. As a curriculum area, Religious Education offers pupils an opportunity to develop a better understanding of themselves, the people around them and the world in which they live.

Bentley School is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, and Copdock School is a Community School. For both schools, Religious Education is provided in line with the requirements of the relevant Education Acts.

These state that:

- The basic curriculum must include Religious Education provision for all pupils on the school roll.
- the content of Religious Education must reflect the fact that religious traditions in Great Britain are, in the main, Christian, while taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain.
- Religious Education must be provided according to the 2023 Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.

We recognise that our pupils come from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds and welcome this diversity. The Religious Education programme seeks to be sensitive to the home background of each child. It is not the function of Religious Education to promote or disparage particular religious views.

The requirements of the 2023 Suffolk Agreed Syllabus

We provide a religious education curriculum which is rich and varied and which enables learners to acquire both a thorough knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, and to find out about a broad range of other faiths and world-views.

The 2023 Suffolk Agreed Syllabus, 'Where do I stand?', aims to develop religiously literate citizens who:

- possess rich knowledge of the beliefs of different religions and worldviews, including how these may be differently interpreted or change over time.
- recognise that the 'lived reality' of different religions and worldviews is complex and diverse, and that generalities and assumptions must be treated with care.

- contribute constructively to debate about religious questions and shared human concerns, using their understanding of religion and belief.

The aims of Religious Education at Bentley and Copdock Schools

Within the framework of the Education Acts and the 2023 Suffolk Agreed Syllabus, our aims in Religious Education are:

- to enable each child to explore the human experiences people share and the questions of meaning and purpose, including the issues of right and wrong, which arise from those experiences.
- to enable pupils to know about and understand the beliefs and practices of some of the great religions of the world, and their influence on the lives and decisions of individuals, families, and communities. Among these, Christianity has a particular place, and is taught in each year of the primary phase.
- prepare pupils for adult life and employment, encouraging sensitivity and respect towards those whose beliefs differ, and seeking to combat prejudice and negative discrimination. .
- encourage pupils to develop their own sense of identity and belonging, and clarify their own worldview, enabling them to flourish individually as responsible citizens
- to provide opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

RE in schools is presented as a blend of academic disciplines, in particular theology, human and social science, and philosophy, 'Where do I stand?' sets out an RE curriculum with these three disciplines in mind.

Acquiring knowledge of religious and secular worldviews is central to religious education, but it is also vital that pupils develop positive attitudes if they are to 'hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and belief'. Teachers seek regular opportunities to develop the attitudes of self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness and appreciation and wonder.

As advised by the Diocese, we have used the units from the Emmanuel Project to support the development of our [Long-Term Plan for RE learning](#), following the Enquiry cycle model of Engage/ Enquire/ Explore/ Evaluate/ Express/Extend.

During each enquiry, children will:

- explore examples of the lived reality of the religion or worldview, through texts and stories, community practices e.g. celebrations, and individual lifestyles e.g. food rules.
- find out about an important belief or concept in the religion or worldview. This ensures the heart of the enquiry is theological.
- talk about the 'big' questions which will support philosophical thinking, allowing pupils to begin to understand their own and other peoples' opinions.

Children may explore ideas and practice through art and drama, debating, visits, visitors, posters, photos, artefacts, videos and interactive displays.

As a Church school, Bentley provides additional opportunities to engage in teaching about Christianity, promoting reflection on the life and work of Jesus Christ. Prayer and reflection activities contribute to and further support the development of the school's Christian character and ethos.

Programme of Study

The syllabus requires all maintained schools to provide:

EY (Early Years) 30 minutes of RE a week

KS1 36 hours a year (1 hr a week)

KS2 45 hours a year (1.25 hr a week)

As a Church School, Bentley provides additional teaching in Christianity through prayer space days and church-based activities such as 'Experience Easter'.

KS1

During Key Stage 1, pupils must enquire into:

Christianity, Judaism and Islam and one other religion or worldview as chosen by the school (Hinduism).

They learn about different beliefs about God and the world around them. They encounter and respond to a range of stories, artefacts and other religious materials. They learn to recognise that beliefs are expressed in a variety of ways, and begin to use specialist vocabulary. They begin to understand the importance and value of religion and beliefs for some children and their families. Pupils ask relevant questions and use their imagination to develop a sense of wonder about the world. They talk about what is important to them and others, valuing themselves, reflecting on their own feelings and experiences and developing a sense of belonging.

KS2

During Key Stage 2, pupils must enquire into:

Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Humanism.

Pupils learn about Christianity and other religions, recognising the impact of religion and belief both locally and globally. They make connections between differing aspects of each religion and consider different forms of religious expression. They consider the beliefs, teachings, practices and ways of life central to religion. They learn about sacred texts and other sources and consider their meanings. They begin to recognise diversity in religion, learning about similarities and differences both within and between religions, and the importance of dialogue between people of different beliefs. They extend the range and use of specialist vocabulary. They recognise the challenges involved in distinguishing between ideas of right and wrong, and in valuing what is good and true. They communicate their ideas clearly, recognising other people's viewpoints. They consider their own beliefs and values and those of others, in the light of their learning in religious education.

Assessment, recording and reporting

It is important to note that pupils' work in Religious Education should be assessed. We are not assessing degrees of spirituality but their knowledge, skills and understanding. It is important that their progress is acknowledged, just as in any other subject. We are also required by law to report on pupils' progress and attainment in Religious Education to parents. We assess children against the expectations for each Year Group, provided with each unit in the Emmanuel Project. Pupils use self-assessment to develop their own sense of progress and to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding. At the end of the year, we judge whether each child has met the expectations for their Year Group based on assessments from each unit of work throughout the year. We transfer this information onto the next class teacher and to the receiving school when pupils leave.

Pupils' progress and attainment must be assessed in relation to:

- the aim of RE - Are pupils becoming more religiously literate i.e. increasingly able to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and worldviews?
- the RE curriculum - Are pupils able to remember more about religion and worldviews? Are they making progress in all three disciplines of RE i.e. theology, human and social science, and philosophy?

Professional development for staff

We have developed strong links with the Diocesan Centre and advisory staff are contacted for advice as necessary. Staff receive updates regularly.

Visits and visitors

Visits and visitors can provide powerful learning experiences for both teacher and pupils. All visits and visitors are organised through the subject leader. Visits to places of worship as part of curriculum entitlement and enrichment are encouraged. Bentley and Copdock visit the Christian churches in the vicinity of the schools. Clergy and other members of the community meet with children and deliver Collective Worship, including Open The Book, at both schools. We aim to enable pupils to visit a place of worship from another religious tradition, alongside other educational visits to enhance awareness of religious belief and practice.

Contribution to spiritual, moral, social, cultural development

These are areas of a pupil's development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. At Bentley and Copdock Schools, Religious Education should play its part by:

- developing an awareness of a spiritual dimension to life through personal beliefs, the search for meaning and purpose, the sense of awe and wonder and in offering opportunities to discuss this area in a structured way. (Spiritual)
- providing a forum for pupils to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by. (Moral)
- encouraging interest in and an understanding of others, respect for those with different beliefs, and a sense of community. (Social)
- evaluating the influence of Christianity on daily life in Britain, on the pattern of the year, on public occasions, festivals and ceremonies, architecture, laws, art, music, drama and literature and in considering other cultural and religious expressions in British society and by evaluating the riches that diversity offers. (Cultural).

Provision for withdrawal from Religious Education

Two provisions of law need to be noted:

- Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from religious education. Reasons for withdrawal do not have to be given and the school must enable parents to exercise this legal entitlement. The school prospectus advises parents of the current provision for Religious Education. They are asked to contact the Headteacher if they wish to withdraw their child. It is hoped that, in discussing their requirements, an understanding can be reached and arrangements for alternative Religious Education or supervision made. In this case, the school will provide supervision for a withdrawn child remaining on the premises, but not additional teaching or materials which incur cost.
- Teachers may withdraw from religious education. Their classes, however, are legally entitled to Religious Education. The headteacher is responsible for alternative provision for pupils. Staff are not required to give reasons for withdrawal. Currently no member of staff exercises this right.

Religious Education and its relationship to collective worship

In law, Religious Education and collective worship are distinct. Religious Education is part of the school curriculum; it has to be delivered appropriately for pupils of different ages and abilities. It should not be delivered during collective worship. However, during collective worship at Bentley and Copdock Schools, stories from the Bible, Christian and other traditions, are told and enjoyed, festival days and celebrations are often mentioned, and we enjoy assemblies led by members of religious communities. These complement and bring depth to our Religious Education programme. A separate policy is available for collective worship.

Bentley as a Church School

RE in all church schools should be well-led and managed. Positive support from senior management and governance are expected and key to achieving excellence in the subject. Additional ideas, information and guidance on Religious Education suited to the particular needs of a church school are sought from the diocese. There is a close link with the church community, so pupils can see Christian life, worship and commitments at first hand, and we make a point of marking the celebrations of the Christian year. As a Church School Bentley has to have a RE Leader, this is currently managed by Ali Robinson and Joanne Austin, Headteacher, who leads RE across both schools. The subject leader will receive appropriate training and support from the Leadership Team and Governors, including the Foundation Governors appointed by the Diocese and on the Ethos Governor Committee, which meets every half term. The subject leader will develop the subject, support and mentor staff, and monitor pupil progress and perceptions through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum regularly with staff. Progress in RE will be discussed at least annually at staff and governing body meetings.

Church Schools have nearer to 10% of curriculum time dedicated to RE including prayer space days and church based activities such as 'Experience Easter'. Two thirds of RE in a Church School should be Christian based. We are advised as a church school by the Diocese to use the Emmanuel project units of learning. Our aim is that the children at Bentley School will visit Bury St Edmunds Cathedral at least once during their primary education.

Bentley School has additional prayer space activities to develop the Christian Ethos of the school and stronger links to the local churches. Our Christian Ethos is taken from Matthew 28:20: 'Know that I am with you always'. Our vision is for all children to be confident individuals, successful learners and responsible citizens, knowing that God is with them always.

Appendix

R.E. Long Term Plan for both schools

Religion and Worldviews Journey at Bentley and Copdock: 2 year plan

