



Religious Education Policy Thornford Church of England School

Prepared by Mrs Kirsty Blencowe (RE Co-ordinator/Head of School)

Updated December 2024

Our Mission Statement

'Treat others as you would like to be treated yourself' Luke 6:31

Thornford School is a Church of England School; it is a caring community based on Christian principles and family values. The children are valued as individuals and encouraged to develop their full potential through a range of good quality educational experiences.

The school follows the Dorset Agreed Syllabus for RE which aims to ensure that all pupils A. Know and understand a range of religions and worldviews, so they can:

- Describe, explain and analyse beliefs and practices, recognising the diversity which exists within and between religious traditions.
- Identify, investigate and respond through enquiry into the questions posed and responses offered by religions and worldviews to ultimate questions about what it means to be human.
- Appreciate and appraise the nature, significance and impact of different ways of life and ways of expressing meaning.
- Express ideas and insights about the nature, significance and impact of religions and world views, so that they can:
- Explain reasonably their ideas about how beliefs, practice and forms of expression influence individuals and communities;
- Express with increasing discernment their personal reflections and critical responses to questions about identity, diversity, and ethical issues.

RE in the school curriculum

RE offers distinctive opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development as such RE also contributes to the development of British Values. RE lessons offer a structured and safe space during curriculum time for reflection, discussion, dialogue and debate as RE also contributes to the schools Prevent duty to combat extremism. RE lessons should also allow for timely and sensitive responses to be made to unforeseen events of a religious, moral or philosophical nature, whether local, national or global.

Subject Content

The law requires that a local authority RE agreed syllabus ‘must reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian, while taking account of the teachings and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain’. This means that from the ages of 5-19 pupils in Dorset Schools must follow a coherent and systematic study of Christianity. To reflect the needs of pupils in Dorset Schools pupils must follow a coherent and systematic study of Islam from ages 5-14 Pupils must be introduced to Judaism and other principal religions represented in the UK, including at least one tradition of Hinduism, Buddhism or Sikhism, but decisions 2 about the balance and which key stages these religions are introduced are left to individual schools. It is expected that Humanism and other worldviews will be introduced into RE enquiries as appropriate.

The curriculum of the Dorset Agreed Syllabus for RE incorporates a balanced and coherent suite of enquiries/content, built around the key areas of knowledge and understanding that lie at the heart of the subject. As pupils move through the RE curriculum they should gain greater understanding and command of this core subject matter of religious education. Three different areas of enquiry/content are used as a basis for a well-designed curriculum:

- Investigating the nature of religion and belief.
- Investigating Christianity
- Investigating other religions and worldviews

Early years/ Foundation stage

The RE curriculum for the Early Years should ensure that children have opportunities to find out about aspects of the following from Christianity, Islam, Judaism and a range of different religions and worldviews:

- Stories, poems, prayers and songs
- Festivals and celebrations
- Artefacts and places of worship, visitors and videos
- Their own ideas and questions about religion, belief, truth and right and wrong.

As all of the strands of the EYFS are interwoven, children may share their thoughts, ideas and feelings “through a variety of activities in art, music, movement, dance, role play and design and technology.” Effective RE will contribute to young children’s understanding of the world in which they live and help them to develop a positive sense of self.

Key Stage 1

Pupils should explore through enquiry so that they know and understand: The place of religion and belief in their local community – recognising diversity and the influence of those religions and worldviews, and exploring questions about the meaning, purpose and value of life reflective of the beliefs and world-views (in all Key Stages) of the local community. This could include exploring through enquiry questions such as:

- How and why do people have special ways of welcoming babies?
- How and why do people pray?
- What are the ingredients of a festival?
- Why is light such an important symbol?

The key features of Christianity – This could include the study of key Christian concepts such as Creation, Incarnation and Salvation through enquiry questions such as:

- What can we find out about Christianity by visiting a local church?
- Why do Christians celebrate Christmas?
- What happened when Jesus went to Jerusalem? (Palm Sunday to The Resurrection)
- What does the Creation Story tell us about the nature of God?
- Why did Jesus tell the parable of the Lost Sheep? 3

The key features of Islam and at least one other religion or non-religious worldview- This would include the study of key Islamic concepts through enquiry questions such as:

- What are the Five Pillars of Islam and why are they key to Muslim beliefs?
- It should include enquiry questions for other religions and world-views, selected as appropriate:
- Who was the Buddha?
- Why is Shabbat important in some Jewish families?
- What can the story of Bhai Lalo (the milk and the blood) tell us about Guru Nanak?
- What can we find out about Sikhism by exploring a gurdwara?
- (alternatively Islam / a mosque; Judaism / a synagogue; Hinduism / a mandir; Bahá'í Faith / a house of • worship, etc)
- What makes us special? (Humanist study)

Key Stage 2

Pupils should explore through enquiry so that they know and understand enquiries about the nature of religion and belief– recognising diversity and the influence of those religions and worldviews, and exploring questions about the meaning, purpose and value of life.

This should include exploring through enquiry questions such as:

- Can religion help people find peace?
- Is happiness the purpose of life?
- Does prayer make a difference?
- Why do some people make pilgrimages?
- What different things do people believe about how the world began?

The key features of Christianity

This could include the study of key Christian concepts through enquiry questions such as:

- If God made the world, why isn't it perfect?
- Why did Jesus tell parables about forgiveness?
- What if God were one of us?
- What is good about Good Friday?
- Why myrrh? How are the Christmas and Easter stories connected?
- What can people learn from the story of Daniel?
- Why do Christians celebrate the same thing in different ways? (The Last Supper)
 - What does the parable of the Good Samaritan mean for Christians today?
- Why do Christians call Jesus 'Saviour'?
- Why do Christians believe God can be Father, Son and Holy Spirit?

The key features of Islam and at least one other religion or non-religious world view.

This could include the study of key Islamic concepts through key enquiry questions such as:

- Why is Muhammad called the 'Messenger of God'?
- And could include enquiry questions for other religions and worldviews, selected as appropriate:
 - Why are the Buddha, the Dharma and the Sangha seen as the Three jewels for some Buddhists?
 - What can the stories and images of deities tell us about Hindu beliefs?
 - What are some of the different ways Hindus worship?
 - What does dharma (duty) mean to many Hindus?
 - How and why do some Muslim / Christian / Jewish organisations help those in need?
 - What is the Torah, and why is it important to some Jews?
 - Why salt water? What connects Passover to freedom?
 - What does sewa (service) mean to Sikhs? 4
 - What is Khalsa and why is it so important to many Sikhs?
 - How do Humanists mark rites of passage?
 - How do Humanists decide what is true?

As of September 2024, at Thornford Primary School we have adopted 'The Emmanuel Project' to enable us to deliver our curriculum. This has supported us in the delivery of high-quality RE lessons, covering all the key religions and world views over a 2-year cycle.

For each half term, we follow a unit of work that is structured as a cycle:

Engage / Enquire / Explore / Evaluate / Express.

All the units expand the EXPLORE section into three areas:

scriptural text or narrative / community practice / daily living

This ensures a balanced approach to religious material, rather than an approach that focuses solely on religious festivals or sacred stories.

There is a focus on key beliefs / concepts of six different faiths and a non-religious worldview, as the driver to get to the heart of faith and link together stories, practices, festivals and ways of life and engaging starters link children into the key beliefs at the start of the unit. Each unit utilises a key question, often including the key concept, as the title of the unit and more questions throughout to help structure the learning and activities.

Assessment and Recording of RE

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her pupils through marking work set. Pupils' work is assessed in line with Thornford Church School's normal practice, for example, using AfL and key assessment tasks are used to level work done in RE. The class teacher will ensure that each pupil is set work that is appropriately challenging, often differentiating it for the range of ability in the class. The annual report to parents in the Summer Term will include information on each child's progress in RE. Assessments are now recorded on INSIGHT alongside the other core subjects.

Monitoring standards of teaching and learning in RE and School Self Evaluation

The co-ordinator will monitor RE within the school through analysis of assessment data and also liaises with teachers to ensure the curriculum is covered. The co-ordinator will also monitor and update resources, most of which are stored centrally.

The right of Withdrawal from RE

At Thornford Church School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children religious education on the grounds of conscience. 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 such as history or citizenship. 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 at Thornford school.

Date of policy review: Summer Term 2026 or as appropriate