



WEST GRANTHAM

Church of England Secondary Academy

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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Introduction

The introduction of the National Curriculum has facilitated the need for all SACREs (Standing Advisory Council for Religious Education) and therefore Religious Education (RE) departments to provide a broad and balanced curriculum for all pupils, which promotes “their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development and prepares them for adult life”.

This policy document is intended to outline how the RE department at The West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy will put the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education into practice. It seeks not only to give a rationale for development, but also to give clear and detailed guidelines for effective implementation of RE for all pupils.

The lead for RE and all members of the department have the responsibility to implement the policies enshrined here to the best of their ability.

The School Context

The West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy's vision is to champion and rejoice in those we serve, creating an environment where excellence is achieved and potential fulfilled. We strive to achieve this through our mission statement:

- Deliver a world-class education that equips children for an aspirational future of life-long learning.
- Equip our students with a strong foundation built on Christian values.
- Celebrate the Christian faith through education, worship, and personal exploration.
- Place no limits on what can be achieved, ensuring opportunities are not restricted by self-belief or circumstance
- Provide knowledge, skills and experiences that enable our students to make meaningful choices.
- Develop positive and conscientious global citizens of great character, who take responsibility for their future
- Provide a safe and inclusive learning environment where all can thrive.

Our core values are:

- Integrity
- Love
- Ambition
- Courage
- Belief

The Subject

RE seeks to identify and develop skills, concepts, knowledge, understanding and evaluation:

- Skills - Pupils should develop the ability to explore and make meaning from religious experiences, their own and others, and be able to respond to those experiences.
- Concepts - Pupils will be given opportunities to communicate in a variety of ways, with teachers and other pupils on an individual and group basis. This will provide material for comment on school reports.
- Knowledge - Pupils will be expected to know, select, and present relevant information about religion in an organised manner.
- Understanding - Pupils will be expected to show an understanding of language, terms and concepts used in religion; to recognise the role and importance in religion of special people, writings, and traditions; to consider meaning given to belief and how these are related to the personal and corporate practice of religion; to reflect on questions about the meaning of life and the variety of responses given to them.
- Evaluation - Pupils will be encouraged to be aware of differences and similarities in religion and evaluate based on evidence and argument, issues of belief and practice arising from the study of religion. Evaluation is not intended to test the validity of a viewpoint, but only to assess the extent to which they are able to express and support an opinion coherently.

The Aims of RE

The aims of RE can be expressed as follows:

- To help a pupil to explore religion to achieve knowledge and understanding of religions, their beliefs, experiences, and practices.
- To contribute to the development of a pupil's own beliefs and values.
- To encourage a pupil to respect the rights of other people to hold beliefs different from their own.

- To raise awareness of life experiences and the questions they raise.
- To explore and respond to religions and life-experiences and develop positive and caring attitudes.

These aims will be pursued alongside the three areas of development work in RE:

1. The phenomenological approach or explicit approach – the idea that RE is about studying religions. (Theology)
2. The implicit approach – the importance of pupils' own experiences and making RE relevant to them. (Philosophy)
3. The moral approach – RE is valuable if it helps pupils develop their own ideas, beliefs, and values. (Human/Social Sciences)

Taken together, the aims and development work give a broad picture of what RE is all about, in the educational context of school. The RE syllabus will incorporate these elements.

RE and Spirituality

Spirituality in RE is a key aim. It provides opportunities for pupils to:

- Develop an awareness of the human quest to make sense of the world and the human predicament and to seek an ultimate meaning and purpose.
- Become aware of ultimate questions and learn about and be challenged by different questions offered by Christianity and other religions to these questions.
- Learn about beliefs and values and different understandings of the spiritual life, spiritual development, and practices in religious and other traditions.
- Evaluate for themselves the truth claims made by religious and spiritual traditions.
- Encourage an understanding and respect for those who hold views different from their own.
- Develop their own beliefs and values.
- Respond to religious stories, artefacts, and places of worship.

In our school community, we aim to make wise choices, guided by examples we are shown by others and lead by example.

What contribution does RE make to the wider life of the school?

As a Church of England School, we recognise the core place that RE occupies in relation to our Christian distinctiveness. The Diocese of Lincoln recognises the opportunities that RE offers for pupils to encounter a range of religion and worldviews.

We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds that make up our school community and we respect this variety of backgrounds in the spirit of Christian welcome. We are glad to have good relationships with faith practitioners from a range of world faiths and continue to support this development, we value their contribution to engaging RE. We actively seek to prepare our pupils for life in modern Britain. As such we promote key British values, including respect for and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs.

The RE department seeks to contribute to the wider life of the school in several ways:

1. The intention for the department is to run and organise a variety of opportunities for students to experience first-hand different faiths and beliefs. Throughout their school career, pupils will have the opportunity to visit Christian denominations and Church of England in Grantham and beyond. Some are invited into school as speakers.
2. In terms of extra-curricular activities, the department is concerned with promoting Human Rights' awareness and the art of debate.
3. The department is developing its links with university faculties.
4. The department contributes to the Charity Fundraising in the school.

Entitlement

All pupils should have an education that is:

- Balanced and broad
- Promotes their spiritual, moral, cultural, mental, and physical development
- Prepares them for adult life

Every Local Authority is required to have a Locally Agreed Syllabus for RE. Any new syllabus drawn up after the Act must

- Reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian; and,
- take account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.

At The West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy, in support of our Christian distinctiveness, we teach RE to all pupils in each year group, whatever their ability and individual needs. RE forms part of our commitment to provide a broad and balanced education for all children. Through our RE teaching, we provide learning opportunities that enable all pupils to make good progress. We strive to meet the needs of all pupils and we take all reasonable steps to achieve this. There is an option for KS4 students to choose to study a full-course RE GCSE option (Theology, Philosophy and Ethics) and this will be made available to them, with further information, at our annual Year 9 options evening. In the full-course, students will continue their study of RE, but will also be taught Theological, Philosophical and Ethical concepts that are taken from KS5 subject content in order to inspire and encourage students to continue their study of RE post-16.

The religious education map

The Lincolnshire RE syllabus identifies several concepts, at each key stage, which are central to the teaching of RE. This syllabus will incorporate all these concepts as they embody good, balanced practice in relation to the content of RE teaching.

- Theology
- Philosophy
- Human/Social Science

During each key stage the syllabus recommends reference should be made to Christianity, Hinduism, or Islam.

Groups to whom entitlement may not apply

The legal requirements concerning withdrawal from RE state that “a parent of a pupil may request that the pupil may be wholly or partly excused from receiving Religious Education given in accordance with the school’s basic curriculum” (ERA 1988 s9(3)).

The Lincolnshire Religious Education Agreed Syllabus also gives guidance for those parents and pupils who do not wish to take up the RE and Collective Worship entitlement offered by the school.

Since parents and carers chose to send their children to this Church of England school, we hope that they would not wish to withdraw their children from RE. However, there is a policy in place to address this, should the need arise.

Procedures for withdrawal at The West Grantham Church of England Secondary Academy

The Academy’s values and website clearly sets out its position in relation to RE and Collective Worship. RE is taught in accordance with the Lincolnshire Agreed Syllabus and is, therefore, educational. Collective Worship is held in accordance with the school’s trust deed and is Christian Worship. It is however, understood that parents have a right of withdrawal on conscience grounds from either or both activities. If parents insist upon withdrawing their children from RE and/or Collective Worship, this will be requested in writing to the Assistant Principal Teaching and Learning.

The Assistant Principal will contact the parents of the pupils referred who have indicated that they may withdraw from RE and/or Collective Worship. They will be invited into the Academy to discuss these matters, the Agreed Syllabus and the syllabus relating to West Grantham, to meet their concerns. Parents of withdrawn pupils will then be asked to provide alternative material of a religious nature, which will constitute their child's RE. Tasks can then be completed during timetabled RE periods and seen by parents. The school will not be required to comment upon the academic performance of these pupils in RE. As it is impractical for pupils to be unsupervised in school, withdrawn pupils may be asked to work in Student Support and/or ILU.