Religious Education Policy

Creeting St Mary CEVAP School

Through God, all things are possible.
Matthew 19:26 (The Bible)

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We seek to create a Christian community based on Christian values, which are reflected throughout the life of the School. We aim, through Collective Worship and R.E., to give our children an opportunity to gain an understanding of the Christian Faith and other world religions. We recognise the importance of partnership with parents, the Church and the wider community.

Introduction
Religious Education (RE) is a core subject that lies at the heart of our curriculum at Creeting St Mary School. We believe that RE should be of the highest standard, always striving for excellence, and that it should reflect our school’s distinctive Christian character.

Creeting St Mary is a Voluntary Aided Church of England Primary School and RE is the responsibility of school governors. Religious Education is a legal entitlement for every pupil and forms part of the basic curriculum (National Curriculum and RE). RE supports the values and aims of the school curriculum. We recognise that our pupils come from a variety of religious and secular backgrounds and welcome and celebrate this diversity.

At Creeting St Mary:
- RE is a high priority for the leadership team and for the governing body and, as such, is well-resourced. The standards of teaching, learning and achievement are at the highest level.
- All teaching staff are encouraged and expected to attend courses to extend their expertise
- Pupils are encouraged to talk confidently, listen to other’s talk about their beliefs and to take their knowledge and enthusiasm with them into their future lives
- Close links with church communities are encouraged so pupils can see Christian life, worship and commitments at first hand

We believe that RE in church schools should help pupils to:
- Explore the questions of life and death, meaning and purpose;
- Reflect critically on the truth claims of Christian belief;
- See how the truth of Christianity is relevant today and face the challenge of Jesus’ teaching in a pluralist and post modern society;
- develop the skills to understand the Bible;
- recognise that faith is not based on a positive balance of probabilities but on commitment to a particular way of understanding God and the world;
- respond in terms of beliefs, commitments and ways of living;
- develop a sense of themselves as significant, unique and precious;
- experience the breadth and variety of the Christian community;
- engage in thoughtful dialogue with other faiths and celebrations;
- become active citizens, loving and serving their neighbour;
- find reasons for hope in a troubled world; and understand how faith can sustain them in difficult circumstances and in the face of opposition.

The RE Curriculum

In our school, we use the Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education in Suffolk as a basis for RE learning. For all RE teaching across the school, we use The Emmanuel Project plans which are produced by the Diocese of St Edmundsbury and Ipswich. The syllabus is built around two Attainment Targets: Learning about religion and belief and Learning from religion and belief.

As required in a Voluntary Aided school, this framework has been developed so that Christianity plays the central role in the RE curriculum. As such, at least 2/3rds of RE teaching focuses on Christianity. Seven learning themes are explored: Believing, Belonging, Prayer and Worship, Leaders and Teachers, Stories and Books, Celebrations and Symbols and Artefacts. Other faiths and world views are also taught namely Judaism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Humanism and Sikhism. We also learn about Christianity in other countries and compare similarities and differences. More information on the RE curriculum can be found on the long-term plan, which is available on our school website.

Governors and our local church play an important role in supporting and enriching our RE curriculum. We have a nominated governor responsible for liaising with the RE Subject leader to help develop and monitor RE. Along with statutory guidelines, all children in the foundation stage receive regular RE teaching. This is in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus which recommends the equivalent of 30 minutes per week of RE for reception children. The programme of study for reception class at our school is in line with the early learning goals.

Time Allocation and Resources

We make a point of marking the celebrations of the Christian Year. Each class is taught RE for the equivalent of one hour each week, either taught weekly or as a block of over 6 hours per half term. This is supplemented by our RE days. The school is well resourced for the teaching of RE. There are many teachers’ books, pupils’ books, posters and artefacts covering the main themes and religions studied. We take full advantage of resources provided by the Diocese.
Attitudes, Values and Contribution to Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development

The development of positive attitudes and values is an essential part of our school life and RE has a particular contribution to make. It deals specifically with issues of belief, with things which are valuable or precious to people; as a result, the attitudes and values of staff, pupils, parents or particular religious groups are often under discussion.

In this situation it is important that:

- Pupils feel they are working in a secure atmosphere where it is safe to share their thoughts and ideas.
- Religious views, traditions or customs are not subject to ridicule or criticism simply because they are ‘different’.
- Staff draw on their pupil’s own experience of life in order to help them understand more specifically religious stances.

These are areas of a pupil’s development to which all subjects are expected to contribute. RE plays an important part in:

- SPIRITUAL - developing an awareness of a ‘spiritual’ dimension to life (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
- MORAL - providing a forum for pupils to develop and evaluate their own beliefs and moral values and to examine the beliefs and values others have chosen to live by
- SOCIAL - encouraging interest in and understanding of other people, relationships with others, respect for those with different lifestyles and beliefs, and developing a sense of community.
- CULTURAL - 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, evaluating the riches that diversity offers

Experiences and Opportunities

The syllabus recommends that children have a range of experiences and opportunities. Visits and visitors provide powerful learning experiences for pupils. We have regular visits to our linked church. Visits to other places of worship have a focus on stories, symbols and feelings and pupils are encouraged to listen, respond to visitors from faith communities, including church leaders. Children regularly experience times of celebration and reflection within school and church. They are encouraged to encounter secular world views and share their own beliefs, ideas and values.
**Special Needs and Inclusion**
RE at Creeting St Mary is accessible for all, including those with Special Educational Needs. We have good resources enabling all of our pupil’s needs to be met.

**Provision for Withdrawal of RE**
Parents may ask for their child to be totally or partially withdrawn from RE or Collective Worship in accordance with the Education Act 1944, sections 25 (4) and 30, which were re-enacted in 1988. Reasons for withdrawal do not have to be given. A pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving RE provided by the school may receive RE of the kind desired by the parent elsewhere, provided it will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil on any day except at the beginning or end of a school session. A pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving RE provided by the school may receive RE of the kind desired by the parent on the school premises provided it does not entail any expenditure by the responsible authority.

All teachers at Creeting St Mary are required to teach RE because we are an Aided School.

**Assessment and Reporting**
All parents receive a yearly report concerning their child’s progress in RE. As with other subjects in school, pupils’ progress is monitored. They are assessed on attainment targets, not on personal faith.

**Monitoring and Review**
The RE subject leader is responsible for monitoring the quality of teaching in RE and supporting colleagues in this. They are also responsible for informing colleagues about current developments in the subject and for providing lead and direction for RE in school. The subject leader is responsible for reviewing this policy.

**RE and its Relationship to Collective Worship**
In law, RE and collective worship are distinct. RE is part of the school curriculum; it has to be delivered appropriately for pupils of different ages and abilities. It cannot be delivered in assembly, but stories, from the Bible and Christian and other traditions, are told and enjoyed during collective worship and these enhance the RE curriculum. Festival days and celebrations are also often promoted in collective worship.