

JESUS SAID,
I HAVE COME SO THAT YOU MAY HAVE

LIFE IN ALL ITS FULLNESS

JOHN 10:10

Religious Education Curriculum
Vision and Rationale

Religious Education Vision and Rationale

Federation of St Alphege Schools

Let Your Love Show

Our Vision for Religious Education

At the Federation of St Alphege Schools, Religious Education is a vital expression of our Christian vision: **Let Your Love Show**.

Rooted in the belief that every person is uniquely created in the image of God and deeply loved by Him, we seek to provide an education that enables every child to flourish and experience life in all its fullness. Through Religious Education, pupils are encouraged to develop wisdom, compassion, dignity, hope and understanding so that they may become courageous advocates, responsible citizens and compassionate world shapers.

Religious Education lies at the heart of our commitment to **Loving Community, Loving Learning** and **Loving Service**.

Through RE, children learn to value diversity, celebrate difference and recognise the dignity and worth of every individual. They explore the beliefs, practices and lived experiences of people from a range of religions and worldviews, developing the knowledge and understanding needed to navigate an increasingly diverse society with respect, empathy and confidence.

Inspired by the example of St Alphege, whose life demonstrated courage, reconciliation, sacrifice and service, we encourage pupils to consider how faith and belief can influence individuals and communities to challenge injustice, serve others and contribute to the common good.

Our Religious Education curriculum enables pupils to engage with some of humanity's deepest questions:

- What does it mean to be human?
- Why do people believe?
- How do beliefs shape lives and communities?
- What gives life meaning and purpose?
- How should we live together?

Through the exploration of these questions, we aspire for every child to become a thoughtful, reflective and compassionate learner who is equipped to engage positively with the world around them and confidently let their love show through the way they live, learn and serve.

Curriculum Purpose: Why study Religious Education?

Religious Education prepares children for life in a diverse and interconnected world by developing religious literacy, theological understanding and respectful curiosity.

As a Church of England Federation, Christianity forms the foundation of our curriculum. Through the study of biblical texts, Christian theology and lived Christian experience, pupils encounter the unfolding narrative of the Bible and develop a secure understanding of the core concepts that underpin Christian belief.

Alongside Christianity, pupils study a range of religions and worldviews including Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism, Buddhism and Humanism. Through these encounters, children gain meaningful knowledge of different traditions while recognising the diversity that exists both within and between faith communities.

Religious Education enables pupils to:

- acquire rich and accurate knowledge of religions and worldviews;
- develop understanding of key theological and philosophical concepts;
- explore how beliefs influence values, actions and ways of living;
- investigate questions of meaning, purpose, identity and belonging;
- understand the role of religion and belief in contemporary society;
- appreciate diversity and challenge prejudice;
- reflect thoughtfully upon their own beliefs, values and experiences;
- develop empathy, respect and understanding for others.

Through this learning, children develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions required to contribute positively to their communities and wider society.

Curriculum Rationale: Why study Religious Education in this way?

Our curriculum has been carefully designed to enable pupils to develop both depth and breadth of understanding.

Research and inspection evidence highlight that effective Religious Education is built upon secure knowledge, careful progression and opportunities for meaningful reflection. Rather than encountering isolated facts about religions, pupils develop increasingly sophisticated understanding of significant concepts, beliefs and practices over time.

The Federation's curriculum combines the strengths of **Understanding Christianity** and **The Emmanuel Project** to provide a coherent and progressive learning journey from Early Years to Year 6.

How are Religious Education lessons delivered at the Federation of St Alphege Schools?

Religious Education is a statutory subject for all pupils and is taught in accordance with current legislation. Parents retain the right to withdraw their child from all or part of Religious Education in line with Section 71 of the School Standards and Framework Act (1998).

Religious Education is taught weekly throughout the Federation and forms a central part of our curriculum offer alongside Collective Worship. Our curriculum is carefully planned to ensure pupils develop secure knowledge, deep understanding and meaningful personal reflection. Through a combination of Understanding Christianity and the Emmanuel Project, children engage with significant religious concepts, beliefs, practices and worldviews through enquiry, discussion and exploration.

Lessons are designed to be engaging, inclusive and intellectually challenging, providing opportunities for pupils to learn through a range of approaches including discussion, debate, drama, role play, storytelling, art, research, investigation and written reflection. Teachers adapt learning to meet the needs of all pupils, building upon prior knowledge and responding to children's experiences, interests and understanding.

We believe Religious Education should enable children to both learn about religion and worldviews and learn from them. Pupils are encouraged to ask questions, explore different perspectives, think critically and make connections between their learning and their own lives. Through the Understanding Christianity approach, children progress through the stages of Making Sense of the Text, Understanding the Impact and Making Connections, developing increasingly sophisticated theological understanding as they move through the school.

Spiritual development is woven throughout the curriculum. Children are given regular opportunities for reflection, discussion and contemplation, encouraging them to explore questions of meaning, purpose, identity and belonging. We seek to nurture curiosity, awe and wonder while creating safe spaces where children can express their ideas respectfully and learn from the experiences of others.

First-hand experiences are an important part of our RE curriculum. Through our strong partnership with St Alphege Church, clergy and members of the parish regularly support learning, helping children encounter lived faith and belief. Pupils also engage with visitors from a range of faith communities and visit places of worship, enabling them to develop authentic understanding of religious diversity and the role faith plays in people's lives.

Throughout their RE journey, children are encouraged to demonstrate respect, empathy and open-mindedness, recognising the dignity and value of all people. By exploring religions and worldviews through knowledge, enquiry, reflection and encounter, pupils develop the religious literacy and understanding needed to flourish in a diverse and changing world.

Deepening understanding through three forms of knowledge

Our curriculum is designed around three complementary dimensions of learning.

Substantive Knowledge

Children learn the significant beliefs, concepts, teachings, practices, stories, texts and traditions that shape religions and worldviews.

This knowledge enables pupils to understand what people believe and how those beliefs are expressed in everyday life.

Disciplinary Knowledge

Children learn how knowledge about religion is constructed, interpreted and understood.

They explore questions such as:

- How do believers interpret sacred texts?
- Why do members of the same faith tradition sometimes hold different views?
- How can we learn about religion through theology, philosophy and the human sciences?
- What can artefacts, worship, rituals and lived experiences tell us about belief?

This develops critical thinking, enquiry skills and religious literacy.

Personal Knowledge

Children are encouraged to reflect upon their own experiences, values, beliefs and assumptions.

They learn to express their views thoughtfully, respectfully and with increasing confidence whilst recognising that people may hold different perspectives.

This reflective element enables children to make meaningful connections between their learning and their own lives.

Understanding Christianity

Understanding Christianity provides the theological framework that underpins the teaching of Christianity across the Federation.

Children progressively explore the 'Big Story' of the Bible through eight core concepts:

- God
- Creation
- Fall
- People of God
- Incarnation
- Gospel
- Salvation
- Kingdom of God

The curriculum revisits these concepts throughout the primary years, enabling pupils to develop increasingly deep theological understanding and make connections across the Christian narrative.

Through the Understanding Christianity approach, pupils learn to:

Make Sense of the Text

Develop secure understanding of biblical texts and stories.

Understand the Impact

Explore how Christians respond to these beliefs in their lives, worship and communities.

Make Connections

Reflect on the significance of these ideas and connect them to wider questions about life, belief and human experience.

The Emmanuel Project

The Emmanuel Project complements Understanding Christianity through enquiry-led exploration of world religions and worldviews.

Children investigate carefully sequenced "Big Questions" which encourage curiosity, critical thinking and deep reflection.

Through these enquiries, pupils develop understanding of:

- religious beliefs and practices;
- sacred texts and traditions;
- identity and belonging;
- ethics and values;
- diversity within faith communities;
- religion as a lived experience.

This approach supports children in developing both knowledge and understanding whilst engaging respectfully with different perspectives.

Learning about religion and learning from religion

At St Alphege, Religious Education involves both learning about religion and learning from religion.

Children develop secure knowledge and understanding of religious traditions whilst also reflecting upon the significance of beliefs, values and experiences in their own lives.

Through discussion, debate, enquiry and reflection, pupils learn to:

- ask thoughtful questions;
- consider multiple viewpoints;
- justify opinions using evidence;
- make connections between beliefs and actions;
- reflect on their own worldview and experiences.

This balance ensures that Religious Education remains both academically rigorous and personally meaningful.

Spiritual Development

Spirituality is woven throughout our Religious Education curriculum.

As a Federation committed to enabling full flourishing, we create opportunities for pupils to experience:

- awe and wonder;
- reflection and contemplation;
- curiosity and questioning;
- gratitude and appreciation;
- connection and belonging;
- hope and aspiration.

Children are encouraged to pause, reflect and consider life's deeper questions. Through engagement with sacred texts, worship, art, music, prayer, stories and encounters with people of faith, pupils develop the language and confidence to articulate spiritual ideas and experiences.

We recognise that spiritual development is unique to every individual. Religious Education therefore provides safe and inclusive spaces where children can explore questions of meaning, purpose and identity while respecting the beliefs and experiences of others.

Learning through encounter and experience

We believe Religious Education is enriched through authentic encounters.

Children learn through:

- visits to places of worship;
- visitors from faith communities;
- engagement with sacred texts;
- exploration of artefacts;
- discussion and dialogue;
- enquiry and investigation;
- reflection and debate.

Our close partnership with St Alphege Church and our links with local faith communities enable pupils to encounter lived faith and belief first-hand, deepening understanding and bringing learning to life.

Religious Education aims

By the time pupils leave the Federation of St Alphege Schools, they will:

- demonstrate secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a range of religions and worldviews;
- understand and apply key theological concepts;
- use subject-specific vocabulary accurately and confidently;
- interpret and evaluate religious beliefs, texts and practices;
- recognise diversity within and between faith communities;
- engage respectfully with differing viewpoints;
- ask informed and thoughtful questions;
- reflect critically on their own beliefs, values and experiences;
- understand how faith and belief influence identity, behaviour and community;
- appreciate the importance of justice, service and the common good.

Most importantly, pupils will leave St Alphege as respectful, reflective and compassionate young people who understand their value as individuals, recognise the dignity of others and are equipped to let their love show in the way they learn, serve and contribute to the world around them.