

Religious Education Policy

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Review cycle	Annually Policies will be reviewed in line with DEMAT's internal policy schedule and/or updated when new legislation comes into force
Description of changes	This is a new policy. It applies to all DEMAT schools who use the trust curriculum.

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1. Introduction and Purpose of this policy

Religious Education (RE) provokes challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and nature of reality, moral issues and what it means to be human. It develops knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and other world views that offer answers to such questions. It offers children opportunities for personal reflection and spiritual development.

In our academies we seek to empower all to fulfil their potential and flourish as agents of positive change in the world. Our curriculum provides pupils with the knowledge, understanding and skills they need to fulfil their potential. Through addressing key questions, engaging in critical thinking, and seeking wisdom, our curriculum supports pupils to flourish. The DEMAT RE curriculum focuses on substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge that unlocks pupils' worldview literacy and empowers them to engage with the lived reality of religious and non-religious worldviews with wisdom, self-awareness, and critical analysis. We acknowledge that RE plays a crucial role in preparing pupils for adult life, employment, and life-long learning.

As a trust we recognise the core place that RE occupies as part of a broad and balanced curriculum. We also understand the contribution of effective RE to our journey towards realising our distinctively Christian vision. We recognise the variety of religious and non-religious backgrounds that make up our school communities and we respect this variety of backgrounds in the spirit of Christian welcome. We are glad to have good relationships with faith and belief practitioners from a range of religious and non-religious worldviews, and we value their contribution to our provision of effective 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. We challenge racism and all forms of prejudice, and we see RE as one curriculum area in which our pupils can encounter and critically reflect on a range of worldviews.

2. Relationship with DEMAT Values

The application of this policy must be always applied in a way that reflects the values of DEMAT and its Christian Ethos:

Vision

To Learn. To Know. To Lead Out. “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Philippians 4:13)

Values

Love – We engender love and tolerance between and for our staff, pupils, and others to foster an inspiring atmosphere of mutual support.

Community – We are committed to ensuring our academies are a living part of the community and contribute positively to its needs.

Trust – We acknowledge accountability and responsibility for our actions and ensure that we encourage each other to make brave decisions and then learn from any mistakes.

Ambition – We are determined that our academies offer a place for the joy of learning, enabling those of all abilities to thrive and go on to lead rewarding lives.

Respect – We do everything to provide a caring, safe, and secure place for our staff and pupils to be happy and respected in our academies so they may achieve their potential.

3. Scope

This policy applies to DEMAT Members, Trustees, Staff, Governors, and all volunteers.

4. Legislation and Guidance

The following legislation and regulations apply in respect of this Policy:

The Church of England Education Office’s Statement of Entitlement

<https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf>

and the National Content Standard <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/national-content-standard-1st-edition-2023/>.

5. The RE Curriculum

5.1 The Aims of RE

RE at all DEMAT academies will be provided within legal requirements. These are as follows:

1. The Basic Curriculum must include provision for RE for all pupils registered on the school roll, including those in Reception class who are less than five years old.

2. The content of RE must reflect the fact that the religious traditions of Great Britain are, in the main, Christian; it must also reflect the teaching and practices of the other principal religious traditions represented in Great Britain.
3. The RE curriculum provided will be delivered in accordance with the Church of England Education Office's Statement of Entitlement <https://www.churchofengland.org/sites/default/files/2019-02/re-statement-of-entitlement-for-church-schools.pdf> and the National Content Standard <https://religiouseducationcouncil.org.uk/resource/national-content-standard-1st-edition-2023/>.

Within this framework our aims in RE are for pupils to:

- Acquire and develop knowledge and understanding of Christianity and a range of world faiths and worldviews.
- Develop an understanding of the ways in which religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, values, and traditions influence individuals, communities, societies, and cultures, from the local to the global contexts.
- Develop the ability to make reasoned and informed judgements about religious and moral issues, with reference to the beliefs, teachings, practices, sources of authority and ways of living associated with the principal religions represented in the UK.
- Develop positive attitudes of mutual respect for and tolerance of those with different faiths and beliefs.
- Enhance their spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development by:
 - Considering the 'big questions' raised by human experience and reflecting on how religious and other traditions respond to them.
 - Responding to such questions with reference to religious and non-religious beliefs, teachings, practices, values, and traditions, relating them to their own understanding and experience.
 - Reflecting on their own beliefs, values, and experiences in light of their study of religious and non-religious worldviews.
 - Become informed, active, responsible citizens through developing a positive attitude towards other people, towards living in a diverse society and towards religion as a significant element of human experience.

5.2 RE Curriculum Design

A multidisciplinary approach to curriculum design provides a balance between theology, philosophy, and the human/social sciences.

- **Theology.** This examines where beliefs come from, how they have changed over time, how they are applied differently in different contexts and how they relate to each other.
- **Philosophy.** This is about finding out how and whether things make sense. It deals with questions of morality and ethics. It takes seriously questions about reality, knowledge, and existence.
- **Human/Social sciences.** This explores the diverse ways in which people practice their beliefs, both now and in the past. It engages with the impact of beliefs on individuals, communities, and societies. These three disciplines provide lenses through which each enquiry question is approached.

In EYFS a broad range of worldviews are studied, at KS1, the principal religious worldviews studied will be Christianity and Islam; at KS2, the principal religious worldviews studied will be Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, and Islam. It is not expected that pupils will study all six major world religions in depth, although they will have learning opportunities that allow them to encounter a range of religious worldviews. It is expected that pupils will also engage with non-religious worldviews, such as Humanism, as part of the RE curriculum.

We carry out curriculum planning for RE in three phases (long-term, medium-term, and short-term). The long-term plan maps the sequence of learning in RE; the medium-term plan gives details of each unit of study delivered to each Key Stage, clearly identifying the different types of knowledge developed through the sequence of learning. (As some academies have mixed-age classes, we carry out the medium-term planning on a two-year cycle.)

6. Implementation

6.1 Time Allocation

It is the expectation of the Church of England Education Office that RE should constitute a minimum of 5% curriculum time. This is in line with the recommendations made by the Dearing Report (1994). We meet this expectation by providing the minimum time of 36 hours per year for KS1 and 45 hours per year for KS2. This time is arranged in a range of ways, including discrete weekly/fortnightly lessons and RE days. RE forms part of the planning at EYFS; although there is no expected time allocation at this level, we expect that there will be connections made between RE and the Early Years areas of learning. RE curriculum time does not include PSHE lessons, collective worship, or assembly.

6.2 Curriculum Implementation

We ensure that teaching and learning in RE meets the needs of all pupils; the implementation of the curriculum focuses on ensuring all pupils develop the expected substantive, disciplinary and personal knowledge in RE. The impact of this is monitored through regular formative and summative assessment processes. We identify RE as one of the core subjects through which our pupils can develop spiritually, morally, socially, and culturally, but we do not limit the delivery of SMSC to this subject alone. We provide an annual report for parents on each child's progress in RE. This report will be based on regular monitoring of work in RE using a variety of methods, including verbal feedback, evidence folders and written comments on individual pieces of work. The subject leaders in each academy will monitor RE provision and standards within the academy through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum with staff. The subject leader is responsible for contributing to the academy's self-evaluation process.

6.3 Entitlement and Inclusion

All children are entitled to access a broad and balanced curriculum at an appropriate level in line with the trust's principles for education. Teachers should include a range of teaching adaptations and groupings to allow all children to make progress. Every child should be given opportunity to develop their skills independently and in groups, enhancing their own confidence and self-esteem. Teachers ensure that the learning activities employed in RE are adapted to meet a variety of learning needs. RE forms part of our commitment to provide a broad and balanced education to 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.

6.4 Visits and Visitors

We consider that an essential element of the delivery of effective RE is encounter with a range of religious and non-religious worldviews. We encourage our pupils to participate in visits to places of worship when the opportunity arises; these visits are arranged in line with the programme of study for RE and provide pupils with the chance to encounter world religions as living faiths in modern Britain. We also encourage members of different religious and non-religious worldviews to visit.

6.5 Inspection

The effectiveness of the RE curriculum is inspected as part of the Section 48 SIAMS (Statutory Inspection of Anglican and Methodist Schools) inspection. It is the responsibility of the academy's RE Subject Leader to review and maintain evidence for the RE elements of this inspection, with appropriate support from the head teacher.

6.6 Withdrawal from RE

We acknowledge the right of parents/guardians to withdraw their children from RE lessons. 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 PSHE. We acknowledge that parents/guardians do not need to provide a reason why they wish to withdraw from the subject, however, we would ask any parent considering this to contact the headteacher of their academy to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision, and practice of religious education. Should a parent/guardian wish to withdraw their child from RE lessons or a teacher wish to refuse to teach RE, we require that written notice be sent to the headteacher. Should a parent/guardian request that their child be withdrawn from RE, we will endeavour to clearly communicate the place of RE within a broad and balanced curriculum to ensure that they are in possession of all the necessary information before confirming their decision. However, we will not attempt to persuade them to alter their decision. If a pupil is withdrawn from RE lessons, the academy is required to provide supervision but should not incur any additional cost in so doing. Any queries regarding withdrawal from RE should be directed to the RE Subject Leader in the first instance, and thereafter to the headteacher.

The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents, and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it.

7. Monitoring and Compliance

Monitoring, review, and evaluation of the Policy is the responsibility of the Trust leader with responsibility for RE. Those responsible for governance will ask for information relating to the effectiveness of the policy when it is monitored. Information will be gathered from Head Teachers, the RE Leaders, and children to inform judgements about effectiveness. The policy will be comprehensively reviewed every year, or sooner if an issue or incident occurs which warrants it. Information gathered to inform the comprehensive review may include information about pupil progress and attainment, feedback from the teachers about the curriculum provision and staff confidence, any parent/carers comments and concerns, level of parent/carers withdrawal from Religious Education

8. Legal duties under the Equality Act 2010

The Equality Act 2010 prohibits discrimination against an individual based on the protected characteristics, which include, sex, race, religion or belief, and gender reassignment.

It is not considered that provisions of this policy would create the risk of discrimination as contemplated under this Act.

9. Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed every year.