

St Nicolas' CE Combined School



Religious Education Policy

Date of Policy: May 2026

Review Date: May 2027

Members of staff responsible:

Head teacher

RE Lead

Curriculum committee

Chair of Governors

Introduction

St Nicolas' is a Church of England school, with close links to the Parish of St Nicolas' Taplow and the Diocese of Oxford. Formerly voluntary aided, since 2012 it has been a single academy trust. Religious Education plays an important part in expressing the theologically rooted Christian vision of the school. RE reflects the ethos and values that are held and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and worldviews, whether religious or not. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

Our vision

Jesus said, "I am the vine you are the branches". Nourished by God, we want to grow together drawing on His strength to live out our Christian values. Courage, honesty, love and friendship, peace, respect and thankfulness are reflected throughout our curriculum. Children are taught to consider and respect religious and non-religious worldviews and reflect honestly and openly on their own views and beliefs. St Nicolas is a community of active learners who go above and beyond in everything they do, equipped to make a difference in their own lives and the lives of others.

The Legal Position

Every school in England must provide a basic curriculum (RE, sex and relationship education and the National Curriculum). This includes provision for RE for all registered pupils at the school, except for those withdrawn by their parents (see paragraph below). The school, in accordance with its Trust Deed, provides religious education for all pupils registered at the school. *Following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the governors decided that religious education in our school should be based upon the ODBE Locally Agreed Syllabus* while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in September 2026. The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate RE and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the school and look for evidence of the quality of teaching, progress and assessment, alongside the priority, provision and profile of RE as expressed through the quality of the curriculum. Religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects.

Purpose and Aims of RE

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious worldviews that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and none. This is religious literacy.

Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied. To grow as branches on a vine with Courage, Honesty, Love and Friendship, Peace, Respect and Thankfulness.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Curriculum and Time Allocation

The RE curriculum at St Nicolas' Church of England Combined School, has been approved by the governors. Christianity is taught in every year group, with key concepts revisited on a spiral curriculum. At least 50% of the time is devoted to Christianity. Other religions are covered according to the syllabus, e.g. Foundation Stage study Christianity and one other religion as appropriate, Key Stage One study

Christianity, Judaism and Buddhism. Key Stage Two study Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and non-religious faiths. The total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught in dedicated lessons or cross curricular settings as appropriate. The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship. In KS1 this will amount to approximately 36 hours per year; in KS2 this rises to 45 hours per year.

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

RE is taught using an enquiry-based approach that is challenging and robust. Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths and worldviews are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils will encounter believers and visit places of worship.

The curriculum is organised into three strands of Beliefs & Questions, Community & Identity and Reality & Truth, within which Big Questions are used to promote research, discussion and reflective thinking.

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate to enable all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability or background. This will be in line with our SEN and Equal Opportunities policies as well as taking guidance from *Valuing All God's Children* and *Mental Health and Wellbeing* documents from the Church of England and the National Society for Education's *Flourishing for All* (2024).

Assessment procedures will be robust and in line with the relevant objectives from the curriculum. Marking and feedback will be in line with the procedures and policy of the school. Students will engage in a variety of activities which will also enable teachers to assess what they have learnt and retained. Assessment will largely be used to assess the effectiveness of the curriculum and of teaching and learning. Judgements about the children's attainment and progress will also be used to inform planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The RE subject leader and SLT will monitor teaching and learning in RE in accordance with school policy. The RE subject leader will observe teaching, conduct book and planning reviews and pupil interviews when appropriate to assess the quality of teaching and learning. The headteacher and governors will ensure that adequate monitoring takes place and that the impact of such activity is assessed.

Resources

The RE subject leader will ensure that RE resources are kept up-to-date and that staff are informed when new resources are purchased or made available electronically.

Resources will include source materials (e.g. Bibles, visitors, artefacts) where appropriate and be treated with respect by all staff.

The Right of Withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can also exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school.

This right of withdrawal exists for all pupils in all types of school, including schools with and without a religious designation. Students aged 18 or over have the right to withdraw themselves from RE. Parents also have the right to withdraw their child from part of RE and can do so without giving any explanation. Teachers also have the right to withdraw from the teaching of RE. However, this does not apply to teachers who have been specifically employed to teach or lead RE. If a teacher wishes to withdraw from the teaching of RE, a letter requesting this must be submitted to the head of the school and its chair of governors. If a teacher withdraws from the teaching of RE, the school must still make provisions for the pupils to receive their entitlement to RE.

Parents who wish to withdraw their children must provide written notification to this effect and provide suitable activities for their children. When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request. The school will keep pupils safe but will not provide any work or reading material for pupils who have been withdrawn.

When a request to withdraw is received by a school, the request should be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school must make clear that the parent's right to withdraw their child has been granted and that parents are not required to give reasons for their request.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed regularly in line with schools' procedures. An annual review is recommended, if possible, but review must be done within a 3-year period.