



*"Inspiring all to soar to new heights."*

*"But those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles." Isaiah 40:31*

Challenge ● Creativity ● Collaboration ● Critical Thinking ● Courage

## **Downham C of E Primary School**

### **RE Policy**

**September 2025**

Staff consulted: September 2025

Ratified by the Governing Body: Chair's Action

Review Date: *Annual review*

# Downham Church of England Primary School Religious Education (RE) Policy

## Vision and Ethos

At Downham Church of England Primary School, our vision is to provide a high-quality Religious Education (RE) curriculum that nurtures spiritual development, deepens religious literacy, and fosters a sense of personal reflection. “Inspiring all to soar to new heights.” (Isaiah 40:31).

As a Church of England school following the Essex Agreed Syllabus and the Diocese of Norwich’s approved planning, we are committed to embedding Christian values while developing respect and understanding for all faiths and world views.

## Aims and Objectives

Through our RE curriculum, we aim to:

- Inspire curiosity, deep thinking, and meaningful discussion about faith, beliefs, and world views.
- Provide children with a secure knowledge and understanding of Christianity, alongside other major world religions and non-religious world views.
- Encourage pupils to explore spirituality and reflect on their personal beliefs, as well as those of others in the wider world.
- Promote a respectful and inclusive approach to faith, culture, and diversity.
- Develop children’s ability to make informed moral and ethical decisions.
- Ensure that RE has a high profile within the school, supporting our distinct Christian character and values.

## Curriculum and Planning

The purpose of our Religious Education curriculum is to develop pupils who demonstrate religious literacy, enabling them to hold balanced and well-informed conversations about religion and world views. In Key Stage 1, pupils explore religious and non-religious world views that may be less familiar to them, supporting our Christian vision of fostering acceptance and understanding. Building on this foundation, Key Stage 2 deepens pupils’ knowledge by reflecting the local context and extending their prior learning. Pupils come to know and understand a broad range of religious and non-religious world views through theological, philosophical, and human/social science perspectives. Alongside acquiring knowledge, pupils develop skills rooted in these disciplines, enhancing their critical thinking and empathy. Religious Education plays a vital role, alongside other curriculum areas, in promoting pupils’ spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Our curriculum is carefully planned to connect with other subjects and our overarching ‘Big Questions,’ ensuring a coherent and meaningful learning journey. It reflects the aims of our school vision and is underpinned by our core Christian values of thankfulness, compassion, community, truthfulness, courage, and forgiveness.

## Spirituality and Reflection

At Downham Church of England School, rooted in Christian values, we believe spirituality is an essential part of every child’s growth. RE lessons, alongside our Forest School programme, provide rich opportunities for pupils to explore and reflect on their own spirituality, experiences,

and beliefs in a natural, peaceful environment. We believe that by linking RE with Forest School, pupils develop a deeper sense of spirituality and reflection, experiencing the Christian vision of humanity in relationship with God, others, and creation. This holistic approach supports their personal, moral, social, and spiritual growth, which is reflected in their attitudes, behaviour, and engagement with RE.

### **Spirituality in RE:**

Spiritual development is at the heart of Religious Education in our school. Through RE, pupils are encouraged to explore big questions about life, purpose, and meaning, develop a sense of awe and wonder, and deepen their understanding of Christian teachings alongside other world faiths. Pupils are invited to express their own thoughts, feelings, and beliefs in a safe and respectful space.

We actively develop children's spiritual awareness through reflection, prayer, and opportunities to explore life's 'big questions'. Pupils are encouraged to reflect personally and beyond, considering their place in the world and how faith can impact individuals and communities. Reflection spaces within the school provide opportunities for quiet contemplation and personal growth.

### **Forest Schools as a Spiritual Context:**

The Forest School approach complements and enhances spirituality and reflection by providing:

- **Connection with Creation:** Being in nature helps pupils experience God's creation firsthand, fostering awe, respect, and care for the environment as part of their Christian stewardship.
- **Quiet Reflection:** The natural setting encourages stillness and mindfulness, allowing children to reflect on themselves, their relationships, and the world around them away from classroom distractions.
- **Sensory Experiences:** The sights, sounds, smells, and textures of the forest stimulate spiritual awareness and curiosity, encouraging pupils to notice the wonder and mystery of life.
- **Exploration of Big Questions:** Forest School activities create a space for informal, meaningful discussions on themes such as forgiveness, peace, and belonging, linking directly to Christian values and RE themes.
- **Community and Belonging:** Working together outdoors fosters relationships, respect, and a sense of belonging within the school community, reflecting the Christian emphasis on fellowship and love.

### **Supporting SEN and Disadvantaged Pupils in RE**

We are committed to ensuring that all pupils, including those with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and disadvantaged backgrounds, have full access to a high-quality Religious Education. Our approach is inclusive and tailored to meet individual needs, ensuring that every child can engage meaningfully with the curriculum.

Adaptive learning strategies are used to support diverse learning styles and abilities. This includes differentiated tasks, additional scaffolding, and the use of multi-sensory resources to make learning accessible and engaging. We work creatively to provide various ways for pupils to express their understanding and reflections in their RE books. Pupils may demonstrate their learning through drawings, diagrams, drama, storytelling, mind maps, or digital media alongside traditional written work. This flexibility encourages confidence, creativity, and personal expression

while allowing all pupils to showcase their knowledge and spiritual insights in ways that suit them best.

Our staff receive ongoing training to develop strategies that support SEND and disadvantaged pupils effectively, ensuring that barriers to learning are minimized and that every child's voice is valued and heard in RE.

### **Assessment and Progression**

Pupils' progress in Religious Education is carefully monitored and assessed through a variety of methods, including discussions, written work, creative responses, and reflection tasks. Teachers use questioning and engagement with key concepts to evaluate understanding, while also tracking pupils' development on Insight. The impact of RE is measured not only by academic progress but also by pupils' ability to articulate their thoughts clearly, demonstrate respect for others, and apply their learning to real-life situations. Through RE, pupils learn to make sense of the religions and world views around them and begin to understand the complex world in which they live. They are encouraged to become free-thinking, critical participants in public discourse, capable of making academically informed judgements about important matters of religion and belief that shape the global landscape. Pupils express ideas and insights about the nature, significance, and impact of religious and non-religious world views through a multidisciplinary approach, deploying skills rooted in theology, philosophy, and human/social science to engage critically and thoughtfully.

### **Collective Worship and RE Links**

Our daily Collective Worship is thoughtfully planned to support and reinforce the themes explored in Religious Education, creating a cohesive and meaningful spiritual experience for pupils. We actively link RE with Personal, Social, Health, and Economic (PSHE) education, which enriches pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. Engagement with our local church community is a vital part of school life, with clergy regularly contributing to both RE lessons and Collective Worship. Additionally, pupils benefit from visits to the Buddhist Centre and the Mosque in Chelmsford, which broaden their understanding of different faith traditions and promote respect and appreciation for religious diversity.

### **Leadership and Monitoring**

The RE Lead, working closely with the Senior Leadership Team and the Chelmsford Diocese, ensures that high standards of teaching and learning are maintained across the school. Regular monitoring, targeted staff training, and pupil voice activities are integral to our commitment to continuous improvement in RE provision. Governors actively oversee Religious Education, engage with pupil voice feedback, and ensure that RE remains a key priority within the school development plan. To support consistency and clarity, we have established a set of RE expectations, which can be found in the appendix of this policy.

## Appendix 1

### RE Expectations at Downham Church of England Primary School

	Currently	Action to be Taken	Date due
<b>RE is taught weekly</b> , irrespective of special events/ assessments.			
<b>RE is clearly scheduled</b> on each class's weekly timetable.			
RE is taught <b>in accordance with the Essex Agreed Syllabus</b> – following the Norfolk planning guidance.			
There is an <b>overview</b> glued into each child's book <b>at the start of each half-term</b> . This includes useful vocabulary.			
There should be <b>one piece of work each week, clearly dated</b> in each child's RE book.			
Each piece of work should have a <b>clear WALT</b> (written or on a sticker) which links the activity to the skill being taught.			
Every class should have an <b>RE display</b> with a clear focus on the half termly <b>BIG QUESTION</b> , vocabulary, the children's learning and their reflections. Interactive displays are strongly encouraged!			
<b>Y5/ 6 – texts</b> used in class should be glued into RE books as evidence.			
<b>Marking / Feedback</b> – please acknowledge work completed in books and provide feedback in line with the school's marking policy.			

If using a CAPTURE BOOK, please make sure that it is JUST about RE and does not include Collective Worship. CAPTURE BOOKS are useful but – if used – should be mentioned in RE books, e.g. "evidence in RE capture book" written / on a sticker under the appropriate date.