



Religious Education Policy

Our Vision statement

(based on a statement made by a former Highcliffe Sixth Form student):

"I believe in using what you have, instead of mourning for that which you do not. In thirty years' time, I want to be able to look back at my youth and know that I used my talents fully: that I wasted nothing".

Our Goal

To ensure that all students learn to their potential in an informed, caring and supportive environment and that challenging learning experiences develop students as successful confident young adults.

Our Mission

"Our mission is to establish, for all students, a challenging and productive learning environment which is both academically and vocationally relevant.

We seek to share with our family of schools and our local community the opportunities, resources and expertise necessary to raise standards of achievement and participation at all ages.

We aim to equip our students of all levels of ability, with skills, knowledge and attitudes they need to enter into a rewarding employment or training as further steps along a path of life-long learning."

Religious Education

Religious Education is unique in the school curriculum in that it is neither a core subject nor a foundation subject but the 1988 Education Act states that 'Religious Education has equal standing in relation to core subjects of the National Curriculum in that it is compulsory for all registered pupils'

Highcliffe is a foundation school; the Governing Body has adopted and as a school we deliver RE in line with the Locally Agreed Syllabus 'REsearch' (Dorset) `

In Religious Education at Highcliffe School we aim that Religious Education will:-

- **Provoke challenging questions** about the meaning and purpose of life, beliefs, the self, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human. It develops students' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions, and religious traditions that examine these questions, fostering personal reflection and spiritual development.
- **Encourage students to explore their own beliefs** (whether they are religious or non-religious), in the light of what they learn, as they examine issues of religious belief and faith and how these impact on personal, institutional and social ethics; and to express their responses. This also builds resilience to anti-democratic or extremist narratives.
- **Enable students to build their sense of identity and belonging**, which helps them flourish within their communities and as citizens in a diverse society.
- **Teach students to develop respect for others**, including people with different faiths and beliefs, and helps to challenge prejudice.
- **Prompt students to consider their responsibilities** to themselves and to others, and to explore how they might contribute to their communities and to wider society. It encourages empathy, generosity and compassion.
- **Develop a sense of awe and wonder and mystery.**

The contribution RE makes to other curriculum aims in particular to community cohesion:

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Section 78 (1) of the 2002 Education Act states that all students should follow a balanced and broadly based curriculum which 'promotes the spiritual, moral, cultural, social, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepares pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of later life'. Learning about and from religions and beliefs, through the distinct knowledge, understanding and skills contained in RE within a broad-based curriculum, is essential to achieving these aims. Exploring the concepts of religion and belief and their roles in the spiritual, moral and cultural lives of people in a diverse society helps individuals develop moral awareness and social understanding.

Personal development and well-being

RE plays an important role in preparing students for adult life, employment and lifelong learning. It helps children and young people become successful learners, confident individuals and responsible citizens. It gives them the knowledge, skills and understanding to discern and value truth and goodness, strengthening their capacity for making moral judgements and for evaluating different types of commitment to make positive and healthy choices.

Community cohesion

RE makes an important contribution to a school's duty to promote community cohesion. It provides a key context to develop young people's understanding and appreciation of diversity, to promote shared values and to challenge racism and discrimination. Effective RE will promote community cohesion at

Each of the four levels outlined in DCSF guidance:

1. The school community – RE provides a positive context within which the diversity of cultures, beliefs and values can be celebrated and explored.
2. The community within which the school is located – RE provides opportunities to investigate patterns of diversity of religion and belief and forge links with different groups in the local area.
3. The UK community – a major focus of RE is the study of diversity of religion and belief in the UK and how this influences national life.
4. The global community – RE involves the study of matters of global significance recognising the diversity of religion and belief and its impact on world issues.

RE subject matter gives particular opportunities to promote an ethos of respect for others, challenge stereotypes and build understanding of other cultures and beliefs. This contributes to promoting a positive and inclusive school ethos that champions democratic values and human rights.

Approaches to teaching RE:

RE has an important part to play as part of a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum to which all students are entitled. High quality learning experiences in RE are designed and provided by careful planning through locally agreed syllabuses and in schools, taking into account the need to offer breadth of content.

In order to make Religious Education a lively, active subject we employ a variety of teaching methods including art, music, discussion, the development of thinking skills, drama, the use of artefacts, pictures, stories, and the use of periods of stillness and reflection.

How RE is organised?

At Highcliffe School RE is organised in line with the National Framework for RE (text from the National Framework document is in italics)

Supporting the aims of the curriculum

Aim 1: *The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.*

Aim 2: *The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.*

Religious Education plays an important role in the school curriculum at Highcliffe School. We use as a basis for our planning the Dorset Agreed Syllabus for RE. The time designated to the teaching of RE is on a par with that for the teaching of the other humanities subjects. It is taught to all Key Stage 3 students and to students in Key Stage 4 as a full GCSE course.

The national framework aims to promote religious understanding, discernment and respect and challenge prejudice and stereotyping. Religious Education is committed to exploring the significance of the environment, both locally and globally, and the role of human beings and other species within it. A central concern of Religious Education is the promotion of each pupil's self-worth.

Students are valued and treated as individuals in RE at Highcliffe School. They are encouraged to take a full part in their RE lessons and their contributions are always valued. Student books are looked after and their work is displayed with pride and care. Students are encouraged to respect different viewpoints, but also not to be afraid to challenge ideas where they may disagree. The RE course explicitly covers the issues of racism and prejudice.

The purposes of the national framework

The national framework for Religious Education has four purposes, which mirror those of the National Curriculum.

1 To establish an entitlement.

All students at Highcliffe School have an entitlement to study RE, irrespective of their social background, culture, race, religion, gender, differences in ability and any disabilities.

2 To establish standards.

All teachers of RE in the school have clear schemes of work to follow, to ensure that standards are consistent across teaching groups. Resources are kept under review by the Head of Department and support is made available to non-specialist teachers of RE.

In Key Stage 3, students complete an assessment task for each topic they cover. The work is marked, feedback is given to each student and students are encouraged to set targets for future improvement.

3 To promote continuity and coherence.

RE schemes of work and Key Stage 3 unit assessments at Highcliffe reflect the attainment targets in the Agreed Syllabus for RE in Dorset, REsearch.

4 To promote public understanding.

The RE Department contributes to the wider life of the school in Open Evenings, school newsletters, etc.

The legal position

Religious Education must be taught to all registered pupils in maintained schools, including those in the sixth form, except to those withdrawn by their parents.

RE is an entitlement to all students in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. A small number of students have been withdrawn from RE by their parents (more in Key Stage 4 than in Key Stage 3).

Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 (ages 5–14)

The national framework follows the same format as the National Curriculum programs of study with sections on knowledge, skills and understanding and breadth of study.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

The knowledge, skills and understanding identify the key aspects of learning in religious education. These are described as 'learning about religion' and 'learning from religion'.

Learning about religion

RE at Highcliffe School includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion, its beliefs, teachings and ways of life, sources, practices and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Students learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It also includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues.

Learning from religion

Students are encouraged to reflect on and respond to their own and others' experiences in the light of their learning about religion. Students are also encouraged to question and evaluate what they have learnt about religion and make their own value judgments.

To make sure the requirements are met and the curriculum is broad and balanced:

- *Christianity should be studied throughout each key stage*
- *The other principal religions represented in Great Britain (here regarded as Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism) should be studied across the key stages.*

Units of work focusing on Christianity are in each year, 7 & 8, along with at least one other unit each year focusing on other world faiths. The Key Stage 4 (Years 9,10 & 11) courses include Christianity as a major, but not the only feature.

It is also essential that religious education enables pupils to share their own beliefs, viewpoints and ideas without embarrassment or ridicule.

Students in RE at Highcliffe are treated as individuals and their feelings, beliefs and contributions are valued by their RE teachers. Students are encouraged to reflect on the topics covered and come to their own conclusions.

Experiences and opportunities

Pupils should be provided with a range of experiences and opportunities that can enrich and broaden their learning in religious education.

The RE Department looks to give students opportunities to broaden their experiences in RE. Past examples have included: guest speaker (Holocaust

Survivor), international trips (two trips to Italy organised by the Head of RE a visit to Amsterdam has also been offered to Year 9 students beginning GCSE), trips to local places of worship (synagogue visit). Lessons are complemented by varied experiences such as music, food, artifacts, costumes and drama. Plans for Year 7 to experience a Hindu day are also in progress. The use of ICT in RE is also increasing.

Ages 14–19

This framework sets out an entitlement for all students to study Religious Education and to have their learning accredited.

Attitudes in Religious Education

All teachers of RE at Highcliffe firmly believe that they are encouraging students to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others through:

- *self-awareness*
- *respect for all*
- *open-mindedness*
- *appreciation and wonder.*

Promoting spiritual, moral, social and cultural development through Religious Education

The Ofsted report for Highcliffe (2004) recognised that RE makes a very good contribution to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This has continued – students focus on these areas throughout their RE studies and are encouraged to make a personal response.

Promoting citizenship through Religious Education

Students learn about diversity in the UK in their RE lessons and are always encouraged to show respect and tolerance to faiths and practices different to their own.

Promoting personal, social and health education through Religious Education

Oral feedback from the last Inspection also stated that RE provides students with significant opportunities for personal growth and development and this remains the case.

Promoting key skills through Religious Education

RE at Highcliffe provides students with opportunities to develop the key skills of:

■ communication

Key words and the development of a religious vocabulary are important parts of each unit of work. Aspects of sacred texts are studied and focus is put on different ways texts can be interpreted. Opportunities are made available for students to undertake extended writing. A various times in the course students are encouraged to put forward their own views, backed up with clear and reasoned arguments.

■ application of number

There are some opportunities for students to their use of number, for example when looking at religious dates and calendars as well as collecting statistical data.

■ information technology

This is a developing area in the RE Department. A number of students' pieces of work are completed using ICT, through word processing, PowerPoint presentations, DVDs and Media Player presentations. All classrooms make use of

the data projectors in them and wide use is made of the Internet by both teachers and students. RE has a section of the school website that includes a lot of useful information for students. All Key Stage 3 assessments can be accessed by students via the School website, enabling them to continue work at home and in other places outside the classroom more easily. A number of RE lessons involve the use of ICT rooms and a variety of RE teaching resources can be found on the School network.

■ ***working with others***

Students are regularly encouraged to work with each other to share ideas, and discuss beliefs, values and practices.

■ ***improving own learning and performance***

After each assessment in Key Stage 3 students are encouraged to reflect on the piece of work they have completed and set targets for improvement next time.

■ ***problem solving***

Students are encouraged to form their own conclusions and explain why religious and non-religious people may act in the way that they do.

Religious Education and inclusion

The RE course explores diversity through its study of a wide range of religious beliefs and practices. Students are encouraged to develop the sensitivities of tolerance and respect. All students are valued in RE lessons and efforts are made to include students with particular learning needs.

Attainment targets

The Key Stage 3 schemes of work in RE are written in the light of the attainment targets from the Dorset Agreed Syllabus. Each assessment focuses on selected attainment targets and students' assessments are marked using levels. Level descriptors are displayed in RE rooms and in student exercise books. Student progress is reported to parents through annual School Profiles.

RE provision at Highcliffe School

In accordance with the structure of the locally agreed syllabus RE is taught in all years as a discrete subject.

KS3

Year 7

Term 1 - Ultimate Questions

Looking at questions of meaning from a variety of religious, and secular perspectives.

Term 2 - A study of Hinduism – looking at beliefs, values, and practices,

Term 3 - A Study of Sikhism – looking at beliefs, values and practices

Year 8

Term 1 - A study of Christianity in today's society with a focus on beliefs, values and practices and the challenges raised by scientific thought.

Term 2 - A study of Islam – looking at beliefs, values and practices – the challenges of belonging to a religion

Term 3 - A study of Buddhism – looking at beliefs, values and practices.

KS4 (Delivered in short course time over three years)

In Year 9, 10 and 11 all students (unless withdrawn from RE) study the OCR full course GCSE in Philosophy and Ethics, from a Christian and secular perspective.

KS5

Highcliffe School offers both AS and A2 courses in Religious Studies – Religious Philosophy and Ethics.

Assessment and Recording of RE

RE is marked in line with the school policy on assessment and recording

It is expected that each teacher will be responsible for the regular assessment of his or her students through marking work set.

At KS3 - Three times a year each student will complete an agreed key assessment task that will form part of his or her work done in RE. The class teacher on a separate pro forma will record the level achieved by each student. The level achieved will be used by the co-ordinator to track student progress through the school and will be used by the class teacher to ensure that each student is set work that is appropriately challenging.

At KS4 Students are regularly assessed using examination style questions.

Responsibilities for RE within the school (Headteacher and Governors):

As well as fulfilling their legal obligations, the Governing Body and Head teacher should also make sure that:

- all students make progress in achieving the learning objectives of the RE curriculum
- the subject is well led and effectively managed and that standards and achievement in RE and the quality of the provision are subject to regular and effective self-evaluation
- those teaching RE are suitably qualified and trained in the subject and have regular and effective opportunities for CPD
- teachers are aware of RE's contribution in developing students' understanding of religion and belief and its impact as part of the duty to promote community cohesion
- where appropriate, students have opportunities to take courses leading to an accredited qualification in the subject
- teachers explore how new pedagogies and technology can be fully utilised to support RE learning objectives and promote community cohesion
- clear information is provided for parents on the RE curriculum and the right to withdraw
- teachers are aware that they do not have to teach RE unless specifically appointed to do so
- RE is resourced, staffed and timetabled so that the school can fulfil its legal obligations on RE and students can make good progress
- where there are insufficient teachers in the school who are prepared to teach RE, the Headteacher ensures that students receive their entitlement to RE. [In these circumstances, the Headteacher might wish to seek advice from the LA or SACRE.]

The Right of Withdrawal from RE

At Highcliffe School we wish to be an inclusive community but recognise that parents, of course, have the legal right to withdraw their children from Religious Education on the grounds of conscience. 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 students or there are issues related to religion that arise in other subjects such as history or citizenship.

We would ask any parent considering this to contact the Headteacher to discuss any concerns or anxieties about the policy, provision and practice of Religious Education at Highcliffe School.

Managing the right of withdrawal

- The school will ensure that parents who want to withdraw their children from RE are aware of the RE syllabus and that it is relevant to all students and respects their own personal beliefs, its learning objectives and what is covered in the RE curriculum and should be given the opportunity to discuss this, if they wish.
- The school may wish to review such a request each year, in discussion with the parents.
- The use of the right to withdraw should be at the instigation of parents (or students themselves if they are aged 18 or over), and it should be made clear whether it is from the whole of the subject or specific parts of it. No reasons need be given.
- Parents have the right to choose whether or not to withdraw their child from RE without influence from the school, although the school will ensure that parents or carers are informed of this right and are aware of the educational objectives and content of the RE syllabus. In this way, parents can make an informed decision.
- If students are withdrawn from RE, the school has a duty to supervise them, though not to provide additional teaching or to incur extra cost. Students will usually remain on school premises.

At Highcliffe School, students who have been withdrawn from RE in KS3 will use the time to manage their other studies – this may be within the classroom, in the Learning Resource Centre, or in our Learning Support accommodation.

Students in KS4 who are withdrawn from RE may follow a short course GCSE in sociology as an alternative to the full course in RE.

Learning Support Framework	Revision number:
Adopted by: The Governing Body May 2010	Revision date: Autumn 2011 (unless required through changes to National Legislative Framework or the recommendations of SACRE) MYP June 11

(Reviewed by MYP – July 2014)

*This Policy document has been developed based on Religious Education in English Schools: Non statutory guidance 2010
DCSF <http://publications.teachernet.gov.uk/>*

This policy should be read in conjunction with the school's Safeguarding Policy and Procedures (including Child Protection). All our practice and activities must be consistent and in line with the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures noted above. Any deviations from these policies and procedures should be brought to the attention of the Headteacher so that the matter can be addressed.