



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

November 2016

1. Religious Education at King Edward VI School

King Edward VI School is a Voluntary Controlled School with a genuine Church of England ethos and set of values. Such a Christian ethos aims to provide an excellent framework for the intellectual, moral and spiritual development of our students. The teaching of Religious Education follows the statutory requirements as presented in the Suffolk Locally Agreed Syllabus.

At KS3, Religious Education is taught as a discrete subject to all Year 7, 8 and 9 students. The Philosophy and Ethics component of the GCSE Religious Studies course is a popular GCSE option choice at KS4 and we have a thriving Philosophy and Ethics A Level course. Other students currently receive their RE provision through other means. At KS4 Religious Education is primarily received through the Personal Development Programme and through bespoke sessions and visiting speakers at KS5.

2. The Rationale and Aims for Teaching Religious Education

At King Edward VI School, we consider Religious Education to be a highly significant area, both as an academic pursuit, and for the contribution it makes to the wider programme of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Religious Education contributes to a wide range of educational areas and human experience (such as ethical, political, social and environmental), and is not restricted to the teaching of RE as a discrete subject, but is embedded in the wider curriculum too.

Religious Education should aim to;

- provoke challenging questions about the ultimate meaning and purpose of life, beliefs about God, the self and the nature of reality, issues of right and wrong, and what it means to be human
- develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of Christianity, other principal religions and world views, which offer answers to such questions
- develop pupils' awareness and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practices, forms of expression and the influence of religion on individuals, families, communities and cultures
- encourage pupils to learn from the diversity of different religions, beliefs, values and traditions, whilst affirming their own faith or search for meaning
- challenge pupils to reflect on, consider, analyse, interpret and evaluate issues of truth, belief, faith and ethics and to communicate their responses
- encourage pupils to develop their sense of identity and belonging and enable them to flourish individually within their communities, as citizens in a pluralistic society and global community
- play an important role in preparing pupils for adult life and employment, enabling them to develop respect and sensitivity to others, in particular those with different faiths and beliefs, and to combat prejudice and negative discrimination.

Furthermore, Religious Education has the twin aims where students are encouraged to Learn *about* religion and belief and also learn *from* religion and belief:

Learn about religion and belief (AT1):

- acquiring knowledge and developing understanding of Christianity and the other principal religions represented in Great Britain

- developing an understanding of the influence of beliefs, values and traditions on individuals, communities, societies and cultures, and of how religion can influence the lives of people who embrace it
- developing the ability to consider and reflect on religious and moral issues in order to make informed choices in the context of a growing knowledge of the teachings of the principal religions represented in Great Britain.

Learn from religion and belief (AT2):

- developing awareness of the fundamental questions of life raised by human experiences, and of how religious teachings can relate to them
- responding to such questions with reference to the teachings and practices of religions, and to their own understanding and experience
- reflecting on their own beliefs, values and experiences in the light of their study.

(taken from Agreed Syllabus for RE in Suffolk 2012).

3. The Organisation and Teaching of Religious Education at King Edward VI School

KS3: In Years 7, 8 and 9, the majority of classes are taught by either the RE Subject Leader or the other RE specialist. There is also a small number of non-specialist staff who mainly teach Year 9 groups. Schemes of Work, lesson plans and resources are located on the school's J:Drive for all RE teaching staff to access. The learning style for this course is very enquiry based and designed to encourage thought-provoking discussion. Units covered tend to be theme-based (e.g. Religious Leaders) and include the perspectives of a variety of religious and secular perspectives.

KS4: The Philosophy and Ethics GCSE is taught by RE specialists and follows the specification of the AQA Religious Studies A Level course. The two main religions studied are Christianity and Buddhism but students also learn about a range of themes from a variety of religious and secular perspectives. These themes include Religion and Life, Crime and Punishment and Human Rights. The schemes of work, lesson plans and resources are also located in J:Drive and the learning style is also very enquiry based, encouraging good quality debates and discussions.

KS5: In Sixth Form, the A Level Philosophy and Ethics course is also taught by RE specialists. This course follows the new AQA Religious Studies A Level. Christianity is the religion that features most prominently in the course, but other religious beliefs are examined in topics such as *Life After Death*.

4. The Management of Religious Education

The RE Subject Leader is responsible for:

- Producing detailed schemes of work showing how each lesson links to the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus
- Supporting staff in their delivery of RE, and offering guidance and advice where needed
- Helping to promote and maintain the status of RE within the school
- Keeping in touch with developments in RE-related issues and updated resources accordingly
- Monitoring RE provision, practice and outcomes e.g. observing lessons, moderating assessments etc.

- Ensure students' work is regularly marked and that teachers of RE are following the departmental and school marking policy
- Checking that assessments are added to Go4Schools and monitoring the progress of students, providing intervention where appropriate
- Updating the RE SEF and Action Plan
- Accountability for RE standards in the school.

5. Arrangements for assessment, recording and monitoring of the standards of teaching and learning in RE

Within their Religious Education, students are regularly assessed and their progress monitored by their subject teacher and the RE Subject Leader. In Year 9 students sit a Benchmark Assessment within the first few weeks of joining the school, and their progress is monitored in relation to that assessment. At KS3, students are expected to complete an assessment at least once every term, and their progress is recorded on Go4Schools. Students are required to respond to the feedback they are given and demonstrate progress as a result of this feedback. They also evaluate their performance in assessments, and set their own targets based on their performance. These targets are taken from the RE assessment grid.

At KS4, students have tracking sheets at the front of their books which track their progress in assessments in relation to their FFTD data. After each assessment (at least once every half term) students complete an *Assessment for Learning* sheet that evaluates their understanding of a topic, includes a teacher target and also their own personal target. Assessments are recorded on Go4Schools, where progress is carefully monitored. Similarly at KS5, students have tracking sheets which are completed by the student after each essay has been returned. Students use this sheet to record their grade, WWW (what went well) and EBI (even better if). They can also comment on whether any further action is needed. Assessments take place at least once every half term, but usually after a topic has been completed. This is also recorded on Go4schools where progress is monitored and interventions put into place where required.

6. Legal Requirements and Parental Right of Withdrawal from RE

The legal requirements are that:

- 1) Religious education must be provided for all registered pupils in full-time education except those withdrawn at their parents' request.
- 2) Religious education must be taught in accordance with an agreed syllabus in community schools, foundation schools and voluntary controlled schools (i.e. Suffolk Agreed Syllabus).
- 3) The Headteacher, along with the Governing Body and the local authority, is responsible for the provision of religious education in foundation and community maintained schools, and in voluntary controlled schools.

According to the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus a parent may request:

- that their child be wholly or partly excused from receiving religious education given in accordance with the agreed syllabus

- that a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving religious education provided by the school may receive religious education of the kind desired by the parent elsewhere, provided that it will not interfere with the attendance of the pupil on any day except at the beginning or end of a school session
- that a pupil who is wholly or partly excused from receiving religious education provided by the school may receive religious education of the kind desired by the parent on the school premises provided that it does not entail any expenditure by the responsible authority

7. Further Documentation

Also see '2016 Subject SEF & Action Plan Philosophy & Ethics'.