



## **The Northumberland Church of England Academy**

### **The Academy Religious Education Policy**

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| <b>Responsibility:</b>        | <b>Primary/Secondary RE Subject Leaders</b> |
| <b>Date of origin:</b>        | <b>October 2013</b>                         |
| <b>Latest review:</b>         | <b>June 2017</b>                            |
| <b>Review:</b>                | <b>Annually in December</b>                 |
| <b>Approved by Governors:</b> | <b>Ethos Committee</b>                      |
| <b>Statutory requirement:</b> | <b>YES</b>                                  |



# The Northumberland Church of England Academy

## Religious Education Policy

### 1.0 Links to Mission, Aims and Values

#### Inspiring Achievement – Encouraging Compassion

1.1 The Northumberland Church of England Academy seeks to inculcate a culture of learning, success, high expectations, aspiration, challenge and inclusion in all aspects of Academy life and through that to encourage life-long aspiration. This is reflected through the curriculum, the leadership and daily practices of pupils and staff, aspiring to be compassionate global citizens with a sense of community and social responsibility.

#### 1.2 Values Statement

Let your light so shine...’ [Matthew 5:16]

The Northumberland Church of England Academy strives to:

- Provide a distinctively Christian inclusive and diverse learning environment which honours God. Every pupil, adult and child, is enabled, nurtured and challenged to be the best they can be.
- Encourage staff and pupils to aspire to fullness of life [John 10:10] that they may achieve their full potential.
- Promote the spiritual, moral, social, cultural, personal and physical development of individuals within a Christian framework.
- Sustain a community in which everyone is respected and valued.

In so doing we hope to enable all within our extended community to **let their LIGHT shine** and to ensure that the NCEA’s values of **LOVE, INCLUSIVITY, GOODNESS, HOPE** and **TRUTH**, are well served by all the work we do.

1.4 This policy, and its associated procedures and protocols, is based on these key principles.

1.5 The Northumberland Church of England Academy seeks to provide an inclusive and diverse learning environment with a distinctive Christian ethos that shows respect for God. In order to achieve the best for each child we are fully committed to developing with them our core values of learning, community and leadership. The RE policy makes an invaluable contribution to this by:

- Instilling respect amongst pupils for themselves and others; especially those of other religious backgrounds, cultures and traditions different to their own;
- Developing self-discipline through recognising and upholding the values of the local, national and international religious communities;
- Being able to challenge injustice with compassion and courage; equipping pupils with the skills by which to this fairly and justly;
- Promoting the moral, personal, physical, social and spiritual development of individuals within a Christian framework;
- Providing each pupil with the opportunity and skills to ask and explore ‘big questions’ and begin to formulate responses to these questions.

1.6 Accountability for the implementation of this policy is located with the Primary and Secondary RE Subject Leaders.

## **2. Statutory Framework**

### **2.1 Religious Education**

- 2.2 Section 352 of the Education Act 1996 requires that religious education forms part of the basic curriculum for all pupils registered at a school. This includes any pupils who may be in the Sixth Form.
- 2.3 The content of the RE courses should follow the agreed syllabus for the area, which is drawn up by a local conference of teachers, local churches, faith groups and the local authority. As a Church of England Academy within the Diocese of Newcastle, The Northumberland Church of England Academy has decided to follow the agreed syllabus developed by the Northumberland SACRE.
- 2.4 In accordance with legal requirements (ERA 1988) the agreed syllabus and the Academy Schemes of Work reflect the Church of England's sponsorship and stated mission of the Academy. However, they also take full account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in the UK, reflecting not only the diverse nature of our society but also the range of faiths, and those of no faith, at the Academy and within our community.
- 2.5 The DCSF, in partnership with QCA, issued a non-statutory national framework for RE in October 2004, which supports those with a responsibility for RE in maintained schools and sets national standards and expectations to help promote higher standards in teaching and learning. The Academy will ensure that the statutory core content is taught at each key stage.

## **3. Purpose**

- 3.1 The Academy is committed to Religious Education as an important element of learning in its own right and because of the significant contribution it makes to other aspects of the curriculum and the Academy's ethos. In particular, Religious Education helps to prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of adult life within a pluralist society by actively promoting positive attitudes to cultural and faith diversity.

### **3.2 Core Attainment Targets in RE at NCEA**

- 3.3 The RE curriculum at NCE is rooted in two-core attainment targets. Each individual pupil's progress is monitored and assessed through the use of these attainment targets.

#### ***Attainment Target 1 (Learning about religion)***

This target refers to how each pupil develops his or her knowledge, skills and understanding with reference to:

- beliefs, teachings and sources;
- practices and ways of life;
- forms of expression.

#### ***Attainment Target 2 (Learning from religion)***

This target refers to how each pupil, in light of his or her learning about religion, expresses their responses and insights with regards to questions and issues about:

- identity and belonging;
- meaning, purpose and truth;
- values and commitments.

#### **4. Aims**

4.1 The aims of Religious Education are:

- To help individual pupils clarify and communicate their own beliefs about religion, spirituality and moral values.
- To help individual pupils to acquire knowledge, understanding and insight into differing religious beliefs and practices, thereby encouraging empathy and respect for other people regardless of their religious, ethnic or social background.

#### **5. Objectives**

5.1 In order to achieve these aims RE at NCEA should help pupils to:

- Understand the role that religious beliefs play in the lives of individuals, families and communities;
- Develop an understanding and knowledge of the traditions and beliefs of Christianity and their significance for our culture and moral values;
- Develop an understanding and knowledge of other major faiths represented in Britain today. These should include Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism and Sikhism. Consideration of non-religious and philosophical worldviews are also fostered through the RE curriculum in Key Stages 3-5;

5.2 This policy provides a framework to enable teachers, specifically those teaching RE, to understand the Academy's approach to RE and to plan accordingly.

5.3 While parents may choose to exercise their right to withdraw their child from Religious Education, parents are expected to support the Academy approach to religious tolerance and personal and spiritual development.

#### **6. Implementation**

6.1 At the Northumberland Church of England Academy Religious Education will be taught as a separate and clearly identifiable subject in the curriculum. This will result in the equivalent of one hour per week in both Key Stages 3 and 4 and more flexibly depending on schemes of work between Foundation and Key Stage 2. This is in line with RE statutory requirements as outlined in the DFE Circular 1/94 para 39: 'a conference should assume that the head teacher and governing body will make reasonable time available for the study of RE... recommendations assume that 36 hours per year will be devoted to RE at Key Stage 1, 45 hours at Key Stage 2 and 3, and about 5% of total curriculum time at Key Stage 4'. Key areas covered are outlined within the Schemes of Work across the Academy.

#### **7. Early Years Strategy**

7.1 There are seven areas of learning and development within the Early Years Foundation Stage that must shape educational programmes in the early years. All areas of learning and development are important and inter-connected and Religious Education is part of that interconnection. Three areas are particularly crucial for igniting children's curiosity and enthusiasm for learning, and thus learning about and from RE, and for building their capacity to learn, form relationships and thrive. These three areas, the prime areas, are: communication and language; physical development; and personal, social and emotional development.

7.2 The RE curriculum is embedded in 'Personal, social and emotional development'. Children must also be supported to strengthen and apply the prime areas into the four specific areas, one of which is 'Understanding the World'; 'Expressive Arts and Design' would also feature in RE.

7.3 The RE curriculum will be developed within the context of 'Understanding the World' and 'People and Communities': it is very much reflective of their own and shared lives and experiences.

7.4 Pupils will encounter and become familiar with religious stories through these areas of development, especially 'Communication and Language', which lays down the foundation of all RE for later stages.

7.5 Pupils regularly explore Christian Festivals and the festivals of other faiths. RE is encouraged by using stimuli within the environment such as prayer and book corners. RE naturally dovetails with personal, social and emotional development but distinctions are made, when formal learning is appropriate.

## **8. Primary Phase**

8.1 In the Primary phase, RE can be taught within the structure of foundation subject activities, where appropriate, but should still be clearly identifiable. Key Stage 1 and 2 use the appropriate units and objectives from the adapted and developed Diocesan Syllabus.

8.2 The units work on a two year rolling programme to avoid repetition and to dovetail with mixed-aged classes. Themes may be specific to religious life or draw out exploration of themes common to beliefs, religious and non-religious. The emphasis is on key questions, practical experience, partner talk and reflection driven by AT1 and AT2.

8.3 Assessment and target-setting is undertaken using the appropriate parts of the '8 Level Scale' criteria for AT1 and AT2 and the 'I can statements intrinsic to the units of learning.

## **9. The Centre**

9.1 In the Centre, RE is taught through a cross curricular approach with the younger pupils within topic lessons. For older pupils, a more subject-based approach is used with defined RE lessons. The aim for all pupils is to raise their awareness of the diversity of religions, beliefs and cultures within our society and around the world. There is also an emphasis on developing respect and consideration for others. The curriculum is modified according to the pupil's individual needs and much use is made of studying the subject using practical examples, e.g. using real objects and a multisensory approach.

## **10. Secondary Phase**

10.1 In Key Stage 3 all pupils follow a tailored programme of RE study alongside their wider study of Humanities subjects (History, RE and Geography). Topics, schemes of work and individual units of study reflect both the Northumberland LAS and the needs of pupils in Key Stage 3.

10.2 The Northumberland LAS requires that every secondary school provide a course of study for all pupils in Year 10 and 11. NCEA supports this. As of September 2016, each student in Year 9 will participate in the Archbishop of York's Youth Leader Award (YLA). Each student will be offered the chance to study GCSE [(Full course) Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics – AQA)]. The full course programme of study will run from September 2016. There will also be a Core programme of Religious Studies followed by all students in Year 10 in 2016. There is, at present, a full cohort of Year 10 students following Full Course AQA Religious Studies.

10.3 In Key Stage 5, each pupil has the opportunity of studying AS/A2 Religious Studies (Philosophy and Ethics – OCR). RE is also taught as part of the overall enrichment curriculum at Key Stage 5. RE, philosophy and ethics conference days run each term with an emphasis on moral, ethical and spiritual issues appropriate to the age and maturity of all pupils in the sixth form. Attendance at the sixth form RE conference days is a compulsory component of sixth form education for all pupils in Key Stage 5.

10.4 Teaching staff are expected to be sensitive to the needs of different faith groups when teaching religious education. They must ensure that the teaching of Religious Education is relevant and meaningful for all pupils and actively promote the development of religious tolerance and respect for the beliefs and teachings of other faith groups. NCEA adopts a 'non confessional' approach to RE, yet seeks to promote the personal, social and spiritual development of all pupils in each and every RE lesson.

10.5 Teachers should provide learning opportunities that enable pupils to explore their own spirituality and their personal response to religion and the spiritual aspects of life.

10.6 The Academy will ensure that, where possible, core faiths and cultural traditions and festivals are respected and celebrated within the annual cycle of Academy life. This will form one of a number of strategies to ensure that RE is inclusive in its content and approach. Special consideration for major Days of Obligation to other faiths will also be observed for both pupils and staff.

10.7 Under the leadership of a line manager, the RE subject leader should ensure pupil entitlement to high quality provision by providing high quality strategic leadership and operational management for RE across the key stages for which they are responsible. In addition, the RE subject leader is expected to:

- Uphold the role, responsibilities and core tasks as outlined in the NCEA job description for RE Subject Leader.
- Ensure that schemes of work support the development of an understanding of the nature of religious conflict, community cohesion and tolerance in society.
- Ensure that teaching and learning in RE encourages and enables pupils to become more self-aware and aware of the views of their peers and wider society.
- Support a positive approach to moral, social, spiritual, philosophical and ethical issues in other areas of the curriculum.
- Establish links with local faith communities as a key part of the learning curriculum for RE across the key stage(s) for which they are responsible.

## **11. Planning and staff development**

11.1 The Academy will appoint appropriately qualified and motivated teachers to teach Religious Education to pupils of all ages within the Academy.

11.2 In common with the Academy's approach to other areas of the curriculum this approach to RE will require highly effective planning to ensure continuity and progression of knowledge, understanding, concepts, skills and attitudes. Liaison within the RE team and across key stages, as well as rigorous staff development will be provided to ensure that all staff involved in the delivery of RE are fully aware of the subject requirements and are appropriately supported and skilled to develop learning in an interesting and challenging manner.

## **12. The use of outside speakers and visits**

12.1 The Academy will actively seek to make use of outside speakers to develop a wider perspective on faith and cultural diversity. All outside speakers will be made aware of appropriate Academy policies and in particular our policy on equal opportunities and Religious Education. Outside speakers will be given appropriate support and induction into Academy routines and expectations. A senior member of staff will also be consulted before outside speakers are invited to work with pupils and where possible parents and carers will always be informed of visiting speakers in advance.

12.2 The Academy will also seek to expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of different faiths and customs by organising appropriate visits as part of the core entitlement.

12.3 In common with all other aspects of the Academy curriculum parents will be informed regularly of their child's progress in RE.

## **13. Monitoring and evaluation**

13.1 Monitoring and evaluation will include quality of provision and impact in relation to:

- Experiences of learning beyond the Academy;
- Educational visits;
- Involvement/engagement with community groups;
- SMSC development;
- Religious intolerance;
- Emotional literacy;
- Self-esteem.

13.2 This policy will be reviewed in line with SACRE (Northumberland LAS) and NCEA guidelines and the RE policy review schedule.

#### **14. Links with other policy areas**

14.1 This policy relates directly to other key Academy policies, namely:

- Assessment;
- Curriculum;
- Teaching and Learning;
- Collective Worship.