



St Edmundsbury and Ipswich
Diocesan Multi Academy Trust

Policy for RE in the Diocesan MAT

Date Approved and Minuted	MAT Board	4 May 2023
Date of Next Review	MAT Board	May 2026

Policy for RE in the Diocesan MAT

A MAT vision for RE

All our schools should be beacons of outstanding practice in Religious Education, enabling pupils, staff and governors to speak about religious ideas confidently and in an informed way.

Our RE curricula should be vibrant, relevant and challenging, with pupils achieving the very best standards, and finding enjoyment and fulfilment in their lessons.

Our RE subject leaders should be encouragers, mentoring others both inside and outside the MAT, and looking to be involved in the wider RE community.

Our schools should be engaged with the RE Quality Mark programme, actively seeking excellence.

Policy pointers: The following paragraphs indicate the expectations for RE in the Trust's schools. It is for each school to take these expectations and personalise them into their own clear policy statement. The Principal / Headteacher of each school and its LGB are responsible for its implementation and review.

Provision

All schools and academies in England are obliged by statute to provide Religious Education. It is seen to be a key element of a child's education, a contributor to SMSC and a support to the understanding of British Values. Religious Education is a curriculum area; it not the same as Collective Worship or a school's ethos.

Religious Education in all Church of England schools and academies is seen as having equal standing with the core subjects.

- ***All schools in the MAT should fulfil the relevant requirements of the 'Statement of Entitlement' for RE as published by the Church of England Education Office in 2019. Provision should be guided by this document.***

The content, teaching, learning and attainment of RE in a church school are inspected as part of the SIAMS framework. In some schools this leads to a specific judgement as part of the report.

- ***All schools in the MAT should be familiar with what is asked about RE when schools are inspected. See the SIAMS Evaluation schedule: <https://www.churchofengland.org/education/church-schools-schools/siams-school-inspections.aspx>***

Aims

The broad aims of RE are set out in the Statement of Entitlement and the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus for RE. The primary aim of the subject may be described simply as promoting religious literacy.

Leadership and Management

RE in all church schools should be well-led and managed. Positive support from senior management and governance are expected and key to achieving excellence in the subject. Continuity in leadership helps ensure ongoing progress.

All MAT schools should:

- ***appoint an RE subject leader, and, where possible, a 'shadow' leader. In small schools, pairing subject leaders across schools is advised. The subject leader will develop the subject, support and mentor staff, and monitor pupil progress and perceptions***
- ***appoint a governor for religious education to support the subject leader (s) and monitor the subject***
- ***offer subject leaders appropriate training, support and a good level of resourcing to do their job***
- ***discuss progress in RE at least annually at staff / governing body meetings.***

There is evidence that a name change has been effective in raising the profile and status of the subject. School leaders might consider a change from RE to 'Beliefs and Values' or BV, or 'Beliefs, Religions and Values Education' (BRaVE).

Staffing

Teachers are entitled to professional support and development in their careers. Few staff have access to RE as part of their initial training. In church schools, priority is given to staff expertise and qualifications in religious education, so pupils receive high quality experiences.

- ***All MAT staff are offered appropriate and ongoing professional development in religious education.***
- ***All MAT schools ensure that where HLTAs are used to cover RE, this is normally a part of a rotation of subjects to ensure broad professional development for both teacher and HLTA.***
- ***All NQTs, and teachers new to the MAT, receive suitable RE training.***

The curriculum

Religious Education in church schools should contribute to the school's Christian character and teaching about Christianity, rooted in the person and work of Jesus

Christ, is at its heart. As inclusive communities, church schools encourage learning about and learning from other religions and foster respect for different world views.

All children are entitled to a broad and balanced curriculum and steps should be taken to ensure a range of teaching styles, groupings and resources to allow all children to make progress in RE.

- ***All schools in the MAT follow the Emmanuel Project, a scheme of work for EYFS to Y6, which follows an enquiry-based approach looking at the key beliefs and concepts which are important in different faiths. The scheme matches the Suffolk Agreed Syllabus.***
- ***Additional Christianity units should be used in KS2 to raise the level of Christianity to the 2/3 required in those schools formerly VA.***
- ***All schools in the MAT enrich their RE curriculum with creative and varied teaching methods and a range of visits and visitors, and aim to build a good bank of resources.***
- ***All schools enrich their pupils learning in RE with additional whole school theme days on aspects of Christian Faith e.g. Pentecost, The Lord's Prayer***

Assessment

Assessment in RE is an important tool by which teachers know that children are making good progress and which enables them to plan future work. Assessment is based on pupils' mastery of knowledge and understanding related to the key questions addresses in the curriculum. Standards in RE should be equal to, or exceed, those of other curriculum subjects.

- ***All schools should ensure assessment tasks offer proper levels of challenge and assess children's progress in RE, rather than English.***
- ***Class teachers should assess the work of their pupils and ensuring that this is done in a variety of ways.***
- ***Pupils should use self-assessment to develop their own sense of progress and to evaluate their own knowledge and understanding.***
- ***The Emmanuel Project offers a range of tasks in each unit to ensure teachers can measure the progress of their pupils.***

Monitoring, progress and standards

Subject leaders in all schools are responsible, alongside the Headteacher and LGB for monitoring the provision and standards in their subject area.

- ***The Headteacher will enable the RE subject leader to monitor provisions and standards on a regular cycle.***

- ***The RE subject leader will monitor provision and standards in RE through observation, looking at work, talking to children and reviewing the curriculum regularly with staff.***
- ***The subject leader will report annually to the LGB on progress and standards in RE and contribute to the school's self-evaluation, in readiness for SIAMS.***
- ***A member of the LGB will assist in monitoring the subject, for example, conducting pupil perceptions and learning walks.***

The withdrawal clause

In all schools, parents currently have the right in law to withdraw their children from the RE provided. This right does not extend to other areas of the curriculum where spontaneous questions may arise about religions or religious matters. Parents may arrange for their child to receive alternative religious education off-site as long as the Head is satisfied it only affects the start or end of a school session.

All MAT schools will:

- ***clarify for parents the educational nature of RE and ensure there is a clear procedure for requesting withdrawal***
- ***discuss with parents the management of their request for a child's withdrawal, noting whether it is complete or partial withdrawal***
- ***provide supervision for a withdrawn child remaining on the premises, but not additional teaching or materials which incur cost.***

Links with the Diocese, Cathedral and parish church

All schools are part of an Anglican parish and all children should have the opportunity to visit a local church as part of their RE. In Church of England schools, this entitlement should be broadened to include an interactive relationship with the local church, growing connections with the Cathedral through the Discovery Centre Team, and an awareness of some Diocesan events.

In MAT schools:

- ***all classes should visit the local parish church at least annually as part of RE***
- ***visits to the cathedral, or from the Discovery Centre Team, should take place for all children at least once during both KS1 and KS2***
- ***wider connections with the Diocese e.g. the annual schools' service, a visit from a Bishop or a Kagera Schools' Day, are encouraged.***