Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust
St Mary's Convent
Denchworth Road, Wantage
Oxford, OX12 9AU
odst.governance@oxford.anglican.org
www.odst.org.uk

Statutory:	Policy provided centrally for adoption by schools with minimal amendment to the core text. Changes are allowed to the text where indicated

Religious Education Policy

Approved by:	**Ethos & Governance Committee**
Date:	**June 2026**
Next review date:	**31 July 2029**

Adopted by school:	**St John's CE Primary School**
Date:	**September 2026**

Contents

Introduction 2
The Legal Position 2
Purpose and Aims of RE 2
Curriculum and Time Allocation 3
Teaching, Learning and Assessment 3
Monitoring and Evaluation 3
The Right of Withdrawal 3
Policy Review 3
Former Voluntary Aided Church of England schools within ODST 4

Introduction

We believe that the teaching of Religious Education (RE) reflects the ethos and values that are held in our school and promotes understanding of people of all faiths and none. RE has the same high status as any other subject and contributes to the overall development of our pupils from all backgrounds and traditions.

The Legal Position

Every school in England must provide the National Curriculum, RE, and Relationship, Sex and Health Education (RSE). See paragraph below for the information about the right of parents to withdraw from RE. ODST Trustees have determined that religious education in our school should be based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus:
Reading RE Syllabus 2026 final
(https://decisionmaking.westberks.gov.uk/documents/s127518/Draft%20syllabus%20v33%20FINAL.pdf) , while also, in Church of England schools, reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the National Society for Education in September 2026.

For Church of England schools, the statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate the quality of RE provision and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the school. *See Appendix for additional note for former Voluntary Aided (VA) schools.

Purpose and Aims of RE

The purpose of RE is to teach children about the religious and non-religious world-views that they will encounter in modern Britain and enable them to engage in meaningful and considered dialogue with those of all faiths and none. This is religious literacy.
Therefore, the aims of RE in our school are:

- To know about and understand Christianity as a diverse global living faith through the exploration of core beliefs using an approach that critically engages with biblical text.
- To gain knowledge and understanding of a range of religions and worldviews appreciating diversity, continuity and change within the religions and worldviews being studied.
- To engage with challenging questions of meaning and purpose raised by human existence and experience.
- To recognise the concept of religion and its continuing influence on Britain's cultural heritage and in the lives of individuals and societies in different times, cultures and places.
- To explore their own religious, spiritual and philosophical ways living, believing and thinking.

Curriculum and Time Allocation

The RE curriculum at our school, has been approved by the Local Governing Body (LGB). In accordance with the law, Christianity predominates across the RE curriculum offer.

In line with the locally agreed syllabus, it is suggested that the total time for RE is between 5% and 10%, and it is taught in dedicated lessons/blocks/cross-curricular settings as appropriate. **The time dedicated to RE is separate from the time given to Collective Worship.**

Teaching, Learning and Assessment

RE teaching is challenging and robust, taught using an enquiry-based approach focused on Big Questions, discussion and investigation. Learning will be organised to encourage the development of attitudes such as self-awareness, respect for all, open-mindedness, appreciation and wonder, as well as providing opportunities to engage appropriately with Fundamental British Values. All faiths are treated respectfully, and opportunities will be made to engage in age-appropriate, meaningful discussion. Where possible pupils will encounter believers and visit places of worship.

A variety of resources, styles, and techniques will be used as appropriate to enable all children to make progress in RE regardless of their starting points, ability or background.

Assessment procedures will be robust and in line with the assessment procedures and feedback policy of the school, meeting the requirements of the previously noted syllabus or scheme that has been adopted. Pupils will engage in a variety of activities which enable teachers to assess what they have learnt. Records kept will include information about pupils' experiences and judgements about their attainment and progress, as well as being used to inform planning.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The headteacher and LGB will ensure that effective monitoring takes place according to the school's policies, and that the impact of teaching and learning is assessed. Monitoring activity may include lesson visits, book and planning reviews, and pupil interviews when appropriate.

The Right of Withdrawal

Pupils may be withdrawn from RE or part of RE by a parent or guardian in accordance with Schedule 19 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; teachers can exercise their right to withdraw from teaching the subject. However, we hope that all parents and teachers will feel comfortable with the type of religious education being taught at this school. When a request to withdraw is received, the request will be granted without delay. The school may offer to speak with the parent to try to understand the basis for the withdrawal but only after the request has been granted. The school will make clear that the parents' right to withdraw their child has been granted and that they are not required to give reasons for their request. The school will keep pupils safe during RE lessons, but is not required to provide any work or reading material for pupils who have been withdrawn.

Policy Review

This policy should be reviewed regularly in line with the school's procedures, at least every three years.

Former Voluntary Aided Church of England schools within ODST

The trustees of Oxford Diocesan Schools Trust (ODST) recognise that the Christian character of its Church of England schools is held in the vision, values, curriculum and traditions maintained by each school. These values and traditions are reflected through the outworking by all in each school community and are cherished and celebrated across the trust as a whole.

The ODST aspiration to serve with a 'Common Vision for the Common Good' likewise reflects the inclusive ethos of the trust, also reflected in the admissions policy, providing equality of opportunity and access for all regardless of background and faith. Trustees recognise the importance of providing rich opportunities for exploring spirituality for all ODST pupils (and staff) through the curriculum offer in each school, and within collective worship.

The ODST scheme of delegation makes clear the local responsibility of LGBs (local governing bodies) to monitor the provision, outcomes and impact of RE and collective worship within each school. This mirrors the accountability model for our former VA schools.

Trustees are mindful of the Trust Deed of each former Voluntary Aided school when taking on accountability for the RE curriculum to be taught, and of the importance of equal access for all pupils to high quality teaching and learning. Therefore, following advice from the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education, the Trustees determine that RE in all our schools should be based upon the Locally Agreed Syllabus while also reflecting the requirements of the Statement of Entitlement for Religious Education published by the Education Office of the Church of England in February 2019. Trustees recognise the right to withdraw from RE and this is made clear in the RE model policy (page 3, above) provided for all schools within ODST.

The statutory section 48 (SIAMS) inspection will evaluate RE and the way that it expresses the Christian vision of the schools and will look for evidence of progress and attainment in Church of England schools. Religious education has the same status and importance as any other subject and, as such, the same high standards are applied to this as to other subjects as may be inspected by Ofsted.

Priority is given to RE curriculum development, support and enhancement provided both by the Oxford Diocesan Board of Education RE Adviser, and through the School Improvement offer from the Trust. This includes RE Subject Leader Network meetings, training for LGB members on their monitoring of the effectiveness of RE, specific curriculum training, and induction for RE subject leaders and teachers.