

# RIPLEY ST THOMAS

A CHURCH OF ENGLAND ACADEMY



## RE Policy

Originator	F Ackroyd
Reviewed	October 2024
Next Review Date	October 2026

Ripley St Thomas CE Academy  
Ashton Road  
Lancaster  
LA1 4RS

**t** 01524 64496  
**e** [admin@ripley.lancs.sch.uk](mailto:admin@ripley.lancs.sch.uk)

**website** [www.ripleystthomas.com](http://www.ripleystthomas.com)

*An education for life*

## **RE Policy**

We aim for all members of our Christian community to flourish spiritually, academically and personally so that they can live life in all its fullness.

***'I have come in order that you might have life—life in all its fullness.'* (John 10:10)**

At Ripley, we realise our vision through our Christian values of faith, hope, love and service. Our commitment to the Christian faith and these values helps create our harmonious, kind and considerate school.

***'And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.'***  
**(1 Corinthians 13:13)**

When you join the Ripley community, a spark ignites. Through our values of faith, hope, love and service we nurture our very essence. We build our sense of purpose, confidence, empathy, awe and wonder. This enables us to see the beauty in all creation.

## **Our Vision for RE**

### **RE which reflects our school's Christian distinctiveness**

RE at Ripley St Thomas is central to our deeply Christian character. It is a key way in which the school works towards 'life in all its fullness' through growth in body mind and spirit. It aims to embody our vision. We study religion within a Christian context, reflecting the Anglican tradition of our school. We aim for the highest standards of excellence. We provide a safe space for each unique individual to explore their beliefs, whatever those beliefs might be. We aim to provide pupils with a mature understanding of the Christian faith alongside promoting love and understanding for people of other faiths. Young people gain understanding of Christian values through their study of RE. Their studies help them to understand why values such as faith, hope, love and service are important and help them to understand Christian theological teaching about these values. Behaviour is managed in line with our behaviour for learning policy. It is founded on the need for each individual to make informed choices about behaviour.

### **RE which is inclusive for all**

RE at Ripley St Thomas supports our commitment to meeting the needs of each unique individual for those with faith and those who are non-faith. We are committed to nurturing pupils who have a faith commitment as they develop their theological thinking. However, we also respect the differing views represented in our school and we are aware that we may all start and end our search for spirituality in different places. RE classrooms are spaces for thinking where all, including the teacher, are engaged in reflection. We encourage pupils to challenge questions about God, faith and our world. We are committed to being inclusive as Jesus was inclusive, prompting enquiry as Jesus prompted questioning and challenging pupils to evaluate issues for themselves.

## RE which develops religious literacy

In RE we seek to pursue academic excellence, supporting growth in body, mind and spirit. Our curriculum is progressive and builds skills and attitudes for religious literacy across all years. These include:

- Knowledge and understanding of diverse religious practice
- Interpreting sacred texts
- Philosophical and critical thinking skills
- Attitudes of respect for diverse beliefs, faiths and cultures
- A safe space for personal and moral development; faith development for pupils of faith

## RE which develops skills for learning and critical thinking

Our commitment to supporting the pursuit of academic excellence means that we seek to develop the skills pupils need for learning and which will equip them to lead a life in all its fullness. We aim to provide activities which meet the needs of pupils with different learning styles, including visual, audio and kinaesthetic learners. In providing opportunities for learners to express their ideas we take account of multiple intelligences. We provide opportunities for pupils to become resilient, resourceful, responsible, reasoning and reflective learners. We support pupils in developing the personal learning and thinking skills, such as independent enquirers; creative thinkers; reflective learners; team workers; self-managers; effective participators. Examples of learning activities which develop these skills are clearly identified within the schemes of work and we often review progress in these skills during plenaries. We encourage pupils to use generic skills developed in RE in other curriculum areas.

## Programme of Study

To ensure that the RE curriculum is challenging, accurate and balanced we follow the Blackburn Diocese Board of Education Framework for RE (Illuminating Pathways syllabus) at KS3. We have carefully considered each unit before choosing the units that we feel are pertinent to our school demographic and provide substantial challenge and enjoyment for our pupils. The spiral curriculum offered at Key Stage 3 ensures that whilst Christianity is the main religion of focus, opportunities to engage with other world faiths are given through a breadth and depth of study. This provides a good balance for our pupils to engage with religion on a global scale.

**RE in Year 7** acts as a **mirror** providing our pupils with chances to reflect on their own beliefs so that pupils can understand themselves better. Pupils learn about the core beliefs and practices within Christianity to secure and build upon their knowledge gained in a Primary setting before introducing the religion of Islam at the end of Year 7 which acts as a bridge into Year 8.

**RE in Year 8** acts as a **window** to help pupils look into the beliefs of others so that they can understand these in greater detail and to understand the diverse nature of spirituality and faith. The religions of Hinduism, Judaism and Islam are explored in depth in Year 8 and pupils can compare and contrast these religions using their secure knowledge of Christianity gained in Year 7.

**RE in Year 9** acts as a **door** into the beliefs of others, giving pupils the ability to study other people's world views on more complex issues such as conflict and how best to show stewardship of the earth. This enables pupils to engage with diverse philosophical and

ethical issues and prepares them for formulating their opinions which is an essential skill for completion of GCSE RE.

#### **Key Stage 4:**

All pupils follow AQA RS GCSE option A in KS4 (Christianity and Islam). As Islam is the fastest growing religion and second most populous religion in the UK, it is essential that our pupils understand the core beliefs and practices which are pertinent to so many people.

#### **Key Stage 5:**

Core RE at Key Stage 5 uses the Blackburn Diocese Board of Education Framework for RE (Illuminating Pathways syllabus) as a starting point and provides a challenging and fascinating 2-year course which allows pupils to flourish as curious minds and gain insights into the views of others, both inside and outside of the classroom.

We use up to date case studies to ensure that content is relevant to pupils and equips them with the ability to formulate their own opinions on a variety of topics such as courageous advocacy and Human Rights. Core RE aims to include pupils from a Christian background as well as those from other faiths or none – the content is invitational, challenging and reflective.

## **The Contribution of RE to the Wider School Life**

### **Collective Worship**

RE contributes to the work of the leaders of collective worship. Worship can take place anywhere: the classroom, outdoors, and in our actions wherever we may be. RE aligns to the aims of the school's collective worship in that it provides pupils with an awareness of how others and themselves carry out the following:

- communicate with God through prayer
- learn to be still with God and able to be reflective
- learn to see God in this community and wherever they may be
- increase our collective and personal knowledge of God
- understand what worship is and what people do when they worship
- develop a sense of awe and wonder at creation
- explore the mystery and the important questions about life and creation, including suffering, loss, death, evil, etc.
- explore that which is of value in life – faith, hope, love and service etc.

RE builds upon the themes of collective worship in that it enables pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of the Christian faith, so that they:

- learn about the place and significance of the Bible, Church life and Christian practice
- experience different forms of worship
- celebrate the festivals of the church year
- begin to understand the nature of God as revealed in Jesus and the significance of Jesus in their lives
- understand that God is concerned with all areas of life, big and small.

RE contributes to the general development of pupils by:

- providing them with the opportunities for Christian leadership
- exploring moral issues and concerns and the process of decision making with regard to morality
- helping pupils to reflect on their own values, commitments and beliefs
- helping pupils to reflect on the news and current affairs

- helping pupils to be aware of the needs of others.

Appreciate, celebrate and take note of the life of the school by:

- celebrating work undertaken by pupils in all areas of the curriculum
- building up the sense of community of the school
- developing and reflecting on the values of the school
- sharing the achievements, joys and difficulties of all members of the school community.

### **The contribution of RE to the Spiritual Development**

Spiritual development is an important aspect of living 'life in all its fullness'. Supporting spiritual development is an important part of our work in RE. RE includes opportunities for pupils to acknowledge awe and wonder at the natural world or to sit quietly and reflect. We regularly make use of music and art to prompt reflection and for pupils to express their own personal response to an issue and to empathise with others. We aim to use contemporary music or film whenever possible to enable pupils to see the relevance of their learning to their own lives. We work with other departments to enrich opportunities for spiritual development across the curriculum. Pupils are provided with opportunities to become courageous advocates and agents of change by challenging injustices and stereotypes, both local and global.

### **Links with the Arts**

Ripley St Thomas has a strong arts department and many talented pupils. Art is encouraged as a medium through which pupils can sometimes choose to express their work. In Year 8 pupils participate in the national Spirited Arts competition. This is another important way in which pupils engage with spiritual development.

### **Cultural Development and Community Cohesion**

We seek to serve God and our community by helping pupils to respect diversity and engage in dialogue with people of other faiths and cultures. We believe that promoting understanding of other faiths and cultures is part of our Christian calling to love our neighbour. We are committed to considering the impact of faith on believers in the contemporary world and to encouraging pupils to celebrate the diversity of cultural practices which enrich life in the UK. We encourage learners to challenge the assumptions and stereotypes about different faiths often found in the media. We provide opportunities for pupils to visit local faith communities and to discuss issues of faith with local members of those communities. We encourage pupils to look at issues from a global perspective as they consider the Christian calling to work for justice.

### **Citizenship, PSHE and RSE**

Serving others is an important part of serving God and of 'life in all its fullness'. RE makes significant contributions to the way in which pupils develop as responsible citizens through opportunities for cultural development and inter-faith dialogue and through consideration of moral issues and the responses to these of people of differing faith perspectives. In Year 7 pupils complete the Archbishop's Young Leaders Award which provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to serve others and to become courageous advocates. British Values are embedded in our approach and underpinned by Christian teaching where appropriate.

## Literacy

Assessment tasks require written responses and effectively support the development of pupils' writing skills and stamina. Oracy plays an important part in lessons. We involve pupils in articulating their views through work in pairs, small groups or whole class discussions. Because young people often discuss issues about which they feel passionate, RE provides a particularly powerful tool for developing literacy. We provide literacy targets for assessments and when giving feedback on GCSE written work.

## Links to the Wider Curriculum and Co-Curriculum

RE makes significant contributions to the wider curriculum in school and regularly liaises with other subject leads to build upon the curriculum and taught content, e.g. geography, science and history. There are educational visits throughout KS3 to build upon and enrich the curriculum.

## Assessment in RE

We apply the principles of 'assessment for learning' in our planning and teaching in order to ensure that pupils know what they need to do to make progress and why they have achieved. Following an assessment and some other pieces of work, pupils will be given dedicated improvement and reflection time (DIRT) and will often be asked to improve their work making use of the purple pen of progress. In years 10-11, all pupils follow the AQA GCSE course Religious Studies Specification A. There is ongoing assessment in KS5 through the modules with summative assessments at the end of each unit.

## Curriculum Time

In line with the school ethos, Religious Education is delivered as a core academic subject.

### **Key Stage 3:**

Year 7 pupils have 4 RE lessons per fortnight (maximum 50 lessons) which constitutes 8% curriculum time. The additional lesson is to allow for the RE department to deliver part of the Archbishop's Young Leaders Award – this is now in its 4<sup>th</sup> year of delivery and has contributed significantly to pupils' enjoyment and priority given to RE. RE provision is also given during PSHE days throughout the year to allow Year 7 pupils to carry out their school projects which contribute towards their Young Leaders Award. The RE department has been recognized nationally as a centre of excellence for the delivery of the Archbishop's Young Leaders Award, with a case study written to highlight our achievements.

Year 8 and 9 pupils have 3 RE lessons per fortnight (maximum 50 lessons) equating to 6% curriculum time.

### **Key Stage 4:**

All pupils study GCSE RE as a core subject. Year 10 and 11 pupils have 4 Religious Studies lessons per fortnight (maximum 50 lessons) equating to 8% curriculum time.

### **Key Stage 5:**

Students in the Sixth Form study Core RE which is delivered to all students and is essential to the school's vision in helping our young people flourish spiritually, academically and personally. Year 12 and 13 pupils have 2 x 30-minute CORE RE sessions per week plus 1 day per year off timetable for an RE Conference (= 5% curriculum time).

## **Resources**

RE is taught by a team of five RE specialists. Staff enjoy support from advisors and other teachers, both from the diocese and the local authority. There are designated RE teaching rooms, each equipped with audio-visual facilities. The department is well-resourced. Resources include a wide-ranging collection of books and artefacts, multi-media resources as well as other resources developed by individual members of the department.