



# Davenant Foundation School

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**Last Reviewed:** November 2024

**Next Review:** November 2026

This policy has been reviewed and to the best of our knowledge we do not feel that it impacts on any group or individuals' equality rights within our school community

### Policy Details

Policy Name	Religious Education	Committee responsible	Curriculum
Status	Discretionary	Committee Person i/c	JDN
Produced by	ME	First Agreed	June 1996
Date Produced	March 2005	Last Review Date	November 2024
References	See endnotes	Next Review Date	November 2026

In accordance with the School's Ethos, Religious Education in its broadest sense is integral to the life of the School. It can be seen to underpin all that the School does, and makes an important contribution to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development of our students. Clearly, Christian education is delivered through the whole School curriculum, not just through RE and worship. However, this policy primarily concerns curricular RE.

The teaching of RE must be recognised as fundamental to the ethos of the School. Students should be aware of the basis which guides the actions and statements by which the School stands. As a Christian Ecumenical School, RE must have an important place within the curriculum throughout all ages and that, in turn, must be substantially, though not exclusively, Christian.

### Legal Requirements

*'The Education Reform Act 1988 sets out as the central aim for the school curriculum that it should promote the spiritual, moral, cultural, mental and physical development of pupils and of society, and prepare pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of modern life.'*

(DFE 1/94a. Religious Education and Collective Worship para.1)

*'Every school must by law provide religious education and daily collective worship for all its pupils.'*

(DFE 1/94a. para.5), including those in Post 16 education.

*'Religious education in schools should seek: to develop pupils' knowledge, understanding and awareness of Christianity, as the predominant religion in Great Britain, and the other principal religions represented in the country; to encourage respect for those holding different beliefs; and to help pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.'*

(DFE 1/94a. para.16)

*'RE is required to be included, alongside the National Curriculum, in the basic curriculum which all maintained schools must provide for their registered pupils... The special status of RE as part of the basic but not National Curriculum is important. It ensures that RE has equal standing in relation to National Curriculum subjects within a school's curriculum.'*

(DFE 1/94a. para.20)

*'The 1988 Act requires all syllabuses to reflect the fact that the religious traditions in Great Britain are in the main Christian whilst taking account of the teaching and practices of the other principal religions represented in Great Britain.'*

(DFE 1/94a. para.31, referring to section 8.3 of ERA 1988)

Parents can choose to withdraw their children wholly or partly from RE. However, in applying for a place at Davenant Foundation School it is made clear that all students are expected to attend RE lessons.

The Reverend Ralph Davenant set out his wishes when he said the school would be *'for the educating and bringing up of poor children in the principles of Religion...'*

### **The Contribution of Religious Education to the School Curriculum**

(see *Religious Education: the non-statutory national framework*, QCA/DFES 2004, pp.8-9; *Religious Education in Essex: the agreed syllabus for religious education*, ECC 2003, 1.2; 2.1-2.14)

#### **[A] Supporting the aims of the curriculum**

*Aim 1: The school curriculum should aim to provide opportunities for all pupils to learn and achieve.*

Religious education should be a stimulating, interesting and enjoyable subject. The Knowledge, skills and understanding outlined in the national framework are designed to promote the best possible progress and attainment for all pupils. Religious education develops independent and interdependent learning. It makes an important contribution to pupils' skills in literacy. Religious education promotes an enquiring approach in which pupils carefully consider issues of beliefs and truth in religion. It also enhances the capacity to think coherently and consistently. This enables pupils to evaluate thoughtfully their own and others' views in a reasoned and informed manner.

*Aim 2: The school curriculum should aim to promote pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and prepare all pupils for the opportunities, responsibilities and experiences of life.*

Religious education has a significant role in the promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development (see below). At the heart of the Non-Statutory National Framework for Religious Education is a focus on ultimate questions and ethical issues. This focus enables pupils to appreciate their own and others' beliefs and cultures and how these impact on individuals, communities, societies and cultures. Religious education seeks to develop pupils' awareness of themselves and others. This helps pupils to gain a clear understanding of the significance of religions and beliefs in the world today and learn about the ways different faith communities relate to each other.

#### **[B] Supporting the values of the curriculum**

Religious Education actively promotes the values of truth, justice, and respect for all and care of the environment. It places specific emphasis on:

- pupils valuing themselves and others
- the role of family and the community in religious belief and activity
- the celebration of diversity in society through understanding similarities and differences
- Sustainable development of the earth.

Religious education also recognises the changing nature of society, including changes in religious practice and expression, and the influence of religion in the local, national and global community

#### **[C] Supporting learning across the curriculum**

Religious Education also makes a significant contribution to learning across the curriculum by promoting

- spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
- personal, social, health and citizenship education
- key skills
- thinking skills
- other aspects of the curriculum including education for sustainable development and stewardship

## Principles

- All staff specifically appointed to the Religious Studies department will be Christians.
- The RS Department adopts an approach of '*responsible nurture*'; a 'middle way' between education and instruction. It is not merely training the mind; still less is it closing the mind. It acknowledges the place of rationality but does not raise it above all other human capacities. It recognises the value of community, and mutual interdependence and the legitimacy of our traditions. The department wishes to help our students appreciate and identify with the values of their faith community. We want students to understand their beliefs and practices and to value them. A general aim is '*to guide people to and in discipleship of some kind within the context of a faith community*' (Hughes; 2000, p.43).
- In addition to the knowledge, skills and understanding that are central to RS, it is vital that the department encourages pupils to develop positive attitudes to their learning and to the beliefs and values of others. The following four attitudes are essential for good learning in RS and should be developed at each stage or phase of religious education:
  - self-awareness
  - respect for all
  - open-mindedness
  - appreciation and wonder.

(*Religious Education: the non-statutory national framework*, QCA/DFES 2004, p.13)

- In the planning and teaching of RE, the Department should have '*due regard to the following principles*'...
  1. **Setting suitable learning challenges –**
    - *teachers should aim to give every student the opportunity to experience success in learning and to achieve as high a standard as possible;*
    - *suitably differentiating learning activities for those students who fall significantly below, and those that considerably exceed, expected levels of attainment*
  2. **Responding to students' diverse needs –**
    - *when planning, the department should set high expectations, provide opportunities for **all** students to achieve, and plan approaches to teaching and learning so that all students can take part in lessons, fully and effectively*
    - *the Department should be aware of the requirements of equal opportunities legislation;*
    - *the Department ought to respond to diverse needs by*
      - *creating effective learning environments*
      - *securing student motivation and concentration*
      - *providing equality of opportunity through teaching approaches*
      - *using appropriate assessment approaches*
      - *setting targets for learning*
  3. **Overcoming potential barriers to learning and assessment for individuals and groups –**
    - *The Department must take account of particular learning and assessment requirements which go beyond those described in 1 and 2 e.g. as a consequence of a special educational need or a disability – enabling such students to participate effectively in these activities*
    - *The Department must take account of the type and extent of students' difficulties, whether SEN,*

*disabilities or students learning English as an additional language*

- *The Department ought to provide access to learning for students with special educational needs by*
  - *Providing for students who need help with communication, language and literacy*
  - *Planning, where necessary, to develop students' understanding through the use of all available senses and experiences*
  - *Planning for students' full participation in learning and in physical and practical activities*
  - *Helping students to manage their behaviour, to take part in learning effectively and safely*
  - *Helping individuals to manage their emotions and to take part in their learning*

*(Religious Education in Essex: the agreed syllabus for religious education, ECC 2003, 4.1-4.8)*

- Students will be taught in RS to express themselves correctly and appropriately and to read accurately with understanding, developing the elements of writing, speaking, listening and reading in Standard English (ECC 2003, 4.9)
- Where possible students will be given opportunities to apply and develop their ICT capability through the use of ICT tools to support their learning in RS e.g. the setting of homework and revision on Google Classroom.

## Programmes of Study

### Key Stage 3

The Department continually monitors and reviews the curriculum, sometimes taking note of the Essex Agreed Syllabus, the QCA recommendations including the Non-Statutory Framework for RE, and the special nature of its Christian ecumenical foundation. It is the responsibility of the departmental link governor to be aware of the curriculum for KS3, and if significant changes are made to the curriculum, they should be discussed at governor's level.

Learning about religious beliefs includes enquiry into, and investigation of, the nature of religion. It focuses on beliefs, teachings and sources, practices and ways of life and forms of expression. It includes the skills of interpretation, analysis and explanation. Pupils learn to communicate their knowledge and understanding using specialist vocabulary. It includes identifying and developing an understanding of ultimate questions and ethical issues. Learning through thinking about religion (and philosophy) is concerned with developing pupils' reflection on, and response to, their own experiences and learning about religion. It develops pupils' skills of application, interpretation and evaluation of what they learn about religion, particularly questions of identity and belonging, meaning, purpose, truth, values and commitments, and communicating their responses. Learning about religious practices is concerned to show the different expressions of religious belief around the world and to encourage students to appreciate and respect the diversity of religious affiliation not only in our own locale and country but in a globalised world.

Programmes of study are designed to ensure that assessment is compatible with the 'Flight Path' system of tracking, introduced to the school in September 2016.

### Key Stage 4

All students follow the AQA GCSE Syllabus Spec A. This covers the main tenants of Christian and Islamic beliefs and practices. In addition, topics of War, Crime, Relationships and the existence of God are also covered from both an Islamic and Christian viewpoint. This criteria is laid out by the exam board. The department feels that this is the best course to provide a relevant and contemporary understanding of the place of religion in modern Britain. The department, alongside the Senior Leadership Team, will monitor changes in specifications made by all the exam

boards to ensure that the best course for the school's needs is always being utilised. Therefore, following discussions and appropriate procedural scrutiny, if needs be, the department might change the way in which the GCSE syllabus is being followed.

For the 2 months following completion of the GCSE at the end of Year 10, students formerly studying RS use their timetable allocation here to consolidate work toward their English and Mathematics GCSE courses, supplemented by occasional PSHCE lectures as a whole cohort in the school hall.

In Year 11, following completion of the GCSE course in May of year 10, students enjoy fortnightly seminars on the theme of 'Faith Making a Difference', involving guest speakers who stimulate thought and reflection, as well as inspiration, on the subject of how faith makes a difference to individuals and society in the modern world.

Post 16

The Department currently offers  
OCR GCE A Level in Religious Studies.

The specifications in Religious Studies encourage students to:

- develop an interest in and enthusiasm for a rigorous study of religion
- treat the subject as an academic discipline by developing knowledge and understanding appropriate to a specialist study of religion
- use an enquiring, critical and empathetic approach to the study of religion.

Plans are underway to expand the religious provision for Sixth Form students in a sensitive and appropriate way for those who do not opt to study the RS A Level.

### Monitoring and Evaluation

The Department continually monitors and evaluates its work in line with whole School Policy and Practice. Regular reviews take place via the Department meetings both formal and informal. The Head of the Department regularly meets with the departmental Line Manager. The aims, objectives and principles, as well as the content of programmes of study for Religious Education, are developed in greater detail in the Departmental Handbook. With the change to Academy status in 2011 the school has agreed that the Department will be reviewed by the Chelmsford Diocese

### Documents that informed this policy

- *Education Reform Act 1988*, The Stationery Office 1988
- *DFE Circular 1/94 Religious Education and Collective Worship*, DFE 1994
- *School Standards and Framework Act 1998*, The Stationery Office 1998
- *SCAA Model Syllabuses for Religious Education– Model 1 Living Faiths Today*, 1994; reprinted by QCA, 1998
- *Religious Education – Non-statutory guidance on RE*, QCA 2000
- *Religious Education: the non-statutory national framework*, QCA/DFES 2004
- Hughes, F (2000) 'Religious Education in State and Faith Community Schools' in Wright, Brandom (2000) Learning to Teach Religious Education in the Secondary School RoutledgeFalmer; London